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[00:00:05] We're in Genesis Chapter 37 today. If you have your Bibles, turn to Genesis Chapter 37. And listen, I am going to read the whole chapter. Oh, my gosh. I love this. You guys are so great because the deal is I'm going to read about Joseph's life today and some of you, maybe you've never even heard of Joseph. You don't know his story. And instead of just explaining it to you, it's just better for us to read the whole chapter. So it's going to take a little bit of time. If you have a hard time standing, it's OK. You can sit down and I'll try not to blow this. Here we go. Verse one. Now, Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger- in the land of Canaan. And this is the history of Jacob. Joseph, being 17 years old was feeding the flock with his brothers, and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. Problem there, obviously. And Joseph brought a bad report to them, to his father. So Joseph, like right off the bat, Joseph is a son of integrity. Things were probably not being handled with integrity by his brothers, and so Joseph let his dad know. Now Israel, that is Jacob, loved Joseph more than all of his children- that's a problem- because he was a son of his old age. Favoritism is a problem. Also, he made him a tunic of many colors, but when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers- so here here you can see what kind of damage favoritism causes in a family. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all of his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

[00:01:47] Now, Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers, and they hated him even more. So he said to them, Please hear this dream, which I've dreamed. There we were binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright. And indeed, your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf. And his brothers said to him, Shall you indeed reign over us, or shall you indeed have dominion over us? So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers and said, Look, I dreamed, obviously he's really not getting the point here or the picture. But just to throw salt on the wound. Look, I dreamed another dream, and this time the Sun, the moon and the 11 stars bowed down to me. So he told it to his father and his brothers, and his father rebuked him and said, What is this dream that you've dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you? And his brothers envied him. But his father, who knew something about dreams, kept this matter in mind. Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them. So he said, here I am, probably just a little check up on what what the boys were doing. Then he said to him, Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks and bring that word to me. So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron and he went to Shechem.

[00:03:24] Now a certain man found him and there he was, wandering in the field and the man asked him saying, What are you seeking? So he said, I'm seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they're feeding their flocks. And the man said, They have departed from here for I heard them say, Let's go to Dothan. So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan. Now, when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. Then they said to one another, Look, the dreamers coming. Come. Therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit. And we shall say, Some wild beast has devoured him. We shall see what will become of his dream. So obviously these guys were pretty messed up. But Reuben heard it and he delivered him out of their hands and said, Let us not kill him. And Reuben said, Shed no blood but cast him into this pit, which is in the wilderness and do not lay a hand on him that he might deliver him out of their hands and bring him back to his father. So it came to pass when Joseph had come to his brothers that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him. Then they took him and cast him into a pit and the pit was empty. And there was no water in it. What did they do after that? And they sat down to eat a meal. Like, what the heck? You know, they're like, Hey, let's kill him, throw him in the pit. And then, Hey, I want some pita and hummus. What do you guys think? Crazy. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead with their camels bearing spices, balm and myrrh on their way to carry them down to Egypt.

[00:04:57] So Judah said to his brothers, What prophet is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Right? So hey, we could probably make some money off this kid. Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and let not our hand be upon him for he's our brother and our flesh and his brother's listened. Then Midianite traders passed by, so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit and sold him to the Ishmaelites for 20 shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt. Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed, Joseph was not in the pit and he tore his clothes and he returned to his brothers and said, The lad is no more and I, where shall I go? He's the oldest brother. He's responsible. So they took Joseph's tunic, killed the kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, We have found this. Do you- total liars, right? We have found this. Do you know whether it's your son's tunic or not? And he recognized it and said, It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him without doubt. Joseph is torn to pieces. Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him. You know those boys- total liars. But he refused to be comforted and said, for I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning. Thus, his father wept for him. Now the Midianites- meanwhile. Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.

[00:06:36] And God today, thank You for this story and this- for sure- piece of history. God, we know it to be true. God, we know it also to be meaningful to us today. For God, we know that oftentimes in our lives, you do things in a way that we would never do them. God, you do things in a way that sometimes leaves us scratching our heads, God, wondering what it is that you're doing, wondering where you are. And father, in these moments, I pray that you would teach us, God, teach us to anchor ourselves to Your revelation. God, I pray today that for those among us who just may be spinning, God, we are walking through circumstances that have just brought confusion into our lives. And maybe even to the extent where we're beginning to question You. Father, today by the power of your Holy Spirit, we pray that you would speak to every heart. And help us, God, to respond to adversity in a way that would enable us to lean closer into you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[00:07:51] You can have a seat. Alright, I want to make a confession, it's not a big confession to you today, but it is a confession. You know? When I was a Patriots fan. And I say "was" because I'm a Raiders fan now, right? I mean, they're the local team. This is the way it works. I know. Just come on, man. And I grew up right outside of Oakland. So for me, it's kind of homecoming. But when I was a pretty diehard Patriots fan, I would get so stressed out during games like no joke and Rachel would, too. But this is about me, not her.

[00:08:35] I'd get so stressed out that oftentimes what I would do is I would wait until the game was over to know what the score was before I would watch it. And, you know, so for me, like I watch games on NFL Game Pass because I don't have three hours to watch a whole football game. You can watch on NFL game pass. It condenses it into 35 minutes, literally like play to play to play to play. And then in addition to that, it only does it after the game's over. So I would wait until the game was over. That way if a pass was dropped, if there was a turnover, if you know, I wouldn't have to go through the ups and downs of the anxiety and the stress. And listen, you know, I used to do that. That's why I'm bald. I lost all my hair in that process. So, you know, sometimes- my point is this: sometimes it's easier knowing how the story ends. Right? And by the way, for those of you who are stressed out today because you know, there's war and there's rumors of war and there's, you know, supersonic missiles that are being used that could carry nuclear warheads, and you're all stressed out and you're all filled with anxiety, I just want to encourage you to read the book of Revelation. Because what you learn is in the end, God wins, right? I mean, it's how the story ends. And so it's not like you're on the string, like a yo-yo. You don't get all torn up over the news of the day because, you know, at the end of the day, God wins. And so, what in the world does that have to do with this story? Well, if you're just reading this story for the first time, man I mean, it can produce a lot of anxiety.

[00:10:11] You know, it seems as if- here you have the Bible saying, this is the story of Jacob, but then it goes straight into Joseph, straight into Joseph. And the way this chapter rolls out, I mean, it seems like the chapter should be over. The story of Joseph should be over. Not that it has a bad beginning because it begins pretty solid, right? I mean, it seems like Joseph's life has a solid start, but there are storm clouds. There's favoritism. There may be a little bit of pride in Joseph's heart. And then we see this hatred in his brothers to the extent of betrayal, to the extent of murderous intentions, to the extent of this quasi-deliverance where he's sold into slavery. And he's basically a victim. He's basically a victim. And if you don't know how the story ends- like a lot of us, we're like, Oh, well, look, I know- we know what happens. We know how God elevates and exalts Joseph. We know that Joseph's life is used in such a powerful way. But if you don't know that, there is just a sense of, Man it's over. Like, how in the world could God turn something like this around? But God does. What we don't realize if you're reading this for the first first time is that in Joseph's life, this is what God does. God raises up a hero. He preserves a nation. He fulfills a covenant. And HS foreshadows a savior. I don't get that from Chapter 37. I'm just saying. I read Chapter 37, and I think, There's no way. Like if you told me that this was God's plan for Joseph's life. He's going to raise up a hero, preserve a nation, fulfill a covenant and foreshadow a Savior, I'm thinking, You're crazy. I'm thinking, You're crazy. I'm thinking, I wouldn't do it like that, right?

[00:11:56] As you look at Joseph's life and how the the details of his life unfold, I think the honest response is, you know, it's hard to understand how God could bring that to pass because this is not the way we would plan it. You know, how many times have you been in a situation in your life where God has been doing things and you've said to him, You know what, God, if I were you, I wouldn't do it like that, you know? And the truth is this: there are times in our lives where God doesn't make sense. There are times in our lives where God doesn't make sense. And if you have walked with Christ, you know, beyond a superficial level for any length of time, you know, there have been times in your life- circumstances that have transpired where you have thought, God, what? What are you doing? Like this doesn't make any sense to me. And God, You don't really make any sense to me right now, either. When you go through those moments, what are you anchored to? When your world turns upside down? Where the unexpected happens? When the very thing that you have been fearing comes to pass? You know, in those moments, oftentimes, if we're not anchored to the right things, we think that's where our story ends. And I want to tell you that is not where your story ends, if you are in fact anchored to the right thing. So for Joseph, you know, it seemed to start well, but we can see that storm clouds are beginning to gather.

[00:13:26] He was loved by his father, which was a great thing. The problem was that that Jacob really showed a lot of favoritism to Joseph, to the extent where it in some sense caused his brothers to envy him. It's possible, some scholars say that Jacob's plan was, in fact, to give the inheritance to Joseph. I'm not going to get into the details of this, but Reuben was the oldest son, and so really the birthright belonged to him, but he had disqualified himself from it. Joseph was further down the line, but it would seem that it was Jacob's intention possibly to make Joseph the heir. And maybe this coat of many colors indicated that that was his intention. And so the brothers seeing this time and time again began to have an attitude of hatred towards Joseph. Not only that, but Joseph was a young man of integrity. I don't think necessarily that he was a tattletale. But when his brothers were operating in a way that was not with integrity or with good character, he let his father know about it because they were doing things for the family business that reflected poorly upon his father. And so not only was there favoritism, but you know how it is. When you walk in integrity, when you walk with good, godly character, sometimes for those who are not walking in that way, it offends them. Because it convicts them of their shortcoming. And that certainly was the case for Joseph's brothers. And then on top of that like to compound the problem, he has these dreams. And the dreams are absolutely clear. They indicate that even though he's not the eldest, he in some sense is going to be exalted. And Joseph has no problem sharing these dreams with his brothers.

[00:15:17] You know, I don't know. I kind of toggle back and forth, you know, maybe he's just honestly naive. You know, he's just excited to share what it is that God has shared to him with his brothers not realizing like the implication. And then on the other hand, you know, maybe there was just a little bit of pride in Joseph's heart. You know where where he was happy to share it because it put him on top and them on the bottom. Whatever the case may be, they began to develop envy and malice in their heart towards their brother. I want to say this just really quickly about envy and malice. It's not really the topic of our discussion today, but they're very dangerous. Warren Weirsbe- he said this some years ago. He said, Envy causes inward pain when we see others succeed, and malice produces an inward satisfaction when we see others fail. Like both of those responses to people's success are wrong. We know that right. So we should never be in a place like if we're really walking with God and we're walking in the spirit, we sincerely love other people. We should never be in a place where when other people succeed, it hurts us. It hurts us because we want what they have. You know, you see someone succeed in ministry or you see someone succeed in business. And instead of being able to rejoice in the blessing that they have, you are filled with a sense of pain because you want that for yourself. And then you begin to ask God, Look, God, you know what? I know the way they roll. How come you bless them like that and not me? Bad place to be. In addition to that, though, malice produces an inward satisfaction when we see other people fail.

[00:16:57] So this is important today because I do think that in our culture, there is something that I call a failure lust. It's prevalent in our culture. And you know, you see it in different forms of media and television programs and things that are, you know, on the internet. When people fail, it's almost like you're attracted to it. You take pleasure in the failure of others. There's a satisfaction because somehow their failure makes you feel better about yourself, and that, in addition to envy, is a really bad place to be. What God does for Joseph is he gives him a revelation of His plan through dreams. Alright? Albeit a mini revelation, right? It's just in miniature. It's a snapshot. You couldn't even make a movie trailer out of the dreams that God gave Joseph, but they were important for Joseph. Number one, because the dreams prepared him for what God was going to do. He didn't have all of the information, but Joseph had a small glimpse of what it was that God was going to do- the direction that his life was heading. I thnk in addition to that, this revelation that God gave to Joseph sustained him. It also gave him something to hold on to when he was in the midst of real difficulty. Now we all go through hard circumstances, and I'm not here today to compare our circumstances with Joseph. But I will just say, Joseph went through some really difficult stuff, and it was the revelation that God gave to him that sustained him in those moments and provided hope for him when he was living in darkness. And then in addition to that, I would say that the revelation was part of the process. It was part of the process of shaping Joseph's character for the great work that God had in store.

[00:18:50] All of that to say God's revelation to us is what anchors us to him in the midst of the storm. Do you know that today, when you go through the storm, you have to have something that anchors you to God? Sometimes, sometimes we don't get beyond the way that we feel. It's our feelings. It's our emotional response to the circumstances that we're in. And we wonder why our life like a ship is being tossed to and fro. We wonder why we seem to be spinning every day. While the reality is we've untethered ourselves from our anchor point and our anchor point is God's revelation. You say, Well, what is God's revelation? Fundamentally, God's revelation is the Bible. From Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22 21, it is the personal revelation of the father through his son. Because look, as you consider Joseph's life, everything seems to be going well. And then it happens. It happens in Joseph's life. The bottom literally falls out. The unexpected becomes his reality, and, you know, when that happens, like I said, when that happens in our lives and we're not really anchored to the right thing, sometimes we begin to spin. Sometimes we begin to drift spiritually. You know, we're so hurt. The pain is felt in such an existential way that it begins to produce space between ourselves and God. We begin to allow questions in our life. We'll talk about these questions in just a minute. But we begin to let questions like, God, where are you? We begin to let those questions dominate the way that we think to an extent where instead of leaning in to God and falling back on what we know is true, those questions begin to create distance between ourselves and God.

[00:20:40] We begin to head in a direction that isn't pointed towards him. We feel buried under our circumstances. The stone in a proverbial sense has been rolled over our lives. Now today, what we're going to do is I want to give you four anchor points that will steady you during the time of a storm in your life. I'm not saying that these anchor points are going to take the storm away. And oftentimes this is really our request. We just want Jesus to stand on the the helm of the boat and say, Peace, be still. Right? Cause the wind and the wave to stop, like I can't take anymore. And honestly, today, this may be hard to swallow, but I want to say to you, he doesn't oftentimes do that. He doesn't oftentimes do that. To get us to our destination, oftentimes, we're not going around the storm, we're going through the storm. And it's because he takes us through the storm that we have to find ourselves anchored to the right things. And so what we're going to do today is we're going to talk about four natural responses that we have to adversity in life. And then I'm going to follow those natural responses up to four anchor points, things that we need to anchor ourselves to. And I'm framing these things as confessions. They're statements, they're statements from the heart to God, right? Because listen, you can dwell up here theologically and you can know how you're supposed to respond to certain things. In fact, I'll say things to you today that you might be thinking, Well, duh, you know, I know that, pastor. I knew that when I was two years old in the Lord.

[00:22:19] But knowing it in your brain and it being articulated through your heart and through your mouth as a confession and a decision, right? As a decision. Like, you know, God, it's all spinning and I'm spinning and I feel buried, and it's just darkness, God. But.. right? This is like an intersection in our life. It's the point where we say, even in spite of all of this, a choice is being made. Now the truth today is this: you may not be going through adversity right now. And I'm not speaking a negative confession over your life. But the fact is, you will at some point in your future be walking through difficulty and adversity. So if you're in it right now, this is going to help you while you're in it. If you're not in it right now, this is going to help you when you are in it. So either way, there's something to learn. You with me? Number one today is this. Sometimes when we go through adversity, we can't connect the dots. We ourselves can't connect the dots. And so the conclusion from an emotional standpoint, and sometimes even from like a reasonable, logical standpoint, is this: this just can't be right. This can't be right. Everything falls apart. The bottom falls out. The plan derails like Joseph's life. He goes from favored. He goes from this coat of many colors. He goes from potentially being the heir. He goes from having these dreams about being exalted to being hated, despised, where there's murderous intention. He's thrown into a pit and then he's sold into slavery. Now listen, if you're Joseph and you've got two points, right? Point one is the dream where God has said, you're going to be exalted, not just over your brothers, but also over your parents.

[00:24:08] And then the other point is, the fulfillment of that dream. The other point is the fulfillment of it where you're actually experiencing it. And now, right in the middle, it's the exact opposite. I'm sure if Joseph is anything like us, he was probably thinking, God, how can this be your will when it's the exact opposite of what you told me was going to happen? How could this possibly be your plan when this is working directly against the dreams that you gave me? And I want to say to you today, I know this is- I'm going to distill it to the most- in the most simple way that I can. And I want to say to you, our ways are not God's ways. Our ways are not God's ways. The Bible says in Isaiah 55:8, if you could bring that up, thanks. I know it's a little out of order, but God says this. This is just such a solid verse to anchor yourself to. God is speaking to Israel, and he says, My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. Right? Okay, so we get that. God's God, we're not. Well, how different are his thoughts from my thoughts? How different are his ways from my ways? For as the heavens are higher than the Earth? Like, I just want you to think about that for a second. God says to his people, You know, my ways are different than your ways. Let me tell you how different they are. Let me tell you. Let me just give you an illustration. You know how you got the heavens up here and you got the earth way down here? And there's a huge gap between those two things? God says to his people. He says, It's just like that. So are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

[00:25:54] In other words, God is going to do things in your life that make absolutely no sense to you, but you have to conclude, right? This is this is the confession that we make to God: God, even if it doesn't make sense to me, I trust and am at peace knowing that it makes sense to you. I don't have to understand to trust you. That's the anchor point. Listen, when you're spinning and you're looking at circumstances, and it doesn't seem to be that they line up with what you think God's will for your life is you have to conclude because God is sovereign and because God is a God who loves you and because God does have a plan for your life that he is fulfilling, you have to anchor yourself to what you know is revealed in the scripture about God and his work in your life and say this as a confession to him: God, even if it doesn't make sense to me, I trust and am at peace, knowing that it makes sense to you. And this is a huge one right here: I don't have to understand to trust you. I don't have to understand to trust you. I'll tell you sometimes I think as Christians, we hold God hostage to our understanding. Sometimes we hold him hostage. We go through difficulty and it's like, You know what, God? I will trust you when you explain this to me. You know, God, when you tell me what's going on here, you know when when you disclose a little bit more information, then you know what, God? Then I will be at peace, then I will trust you.

[00:27:22] And the truth is real faith is saying, God, I don't have to- I don't have to worship at the altar of understanding. I don't have to worship at the altar of understanding. Because you know what, God? I'm not going to. I'm not going to lift up my own understanding as an idol in my life. Trust in the Lord with all of your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. Look, I mean with our kids, there are times, you know, where- hey, guys, this is what we're doing. This is what we're doing. Well, dad, I don't understand. Well, you don't have to understand. You don't have to understand. I love you. And so, you know, there are times where for sure, I'm going to explain. But the fact is this: when we lay this out as the direction, guess what? This is the course that we're taking. Whether you understand or you don't understand, you need to just trust that the right decisions are being made. And that should be enough for you. So listen, number one is this: when you're looking at circumstances in your life and you're concluding that they can't be right, remember that God's ways are not our ways and we don't have to understand to trust him. The second thing is this: When God keeps us in the dark, we're tempted to wonder where he is. When God keeps us- so in a way connected to the previous point, but a little more elaboration. When God keeps us in the dark, we're tempted to wonder where he is. So I'm talking about- I'm talking about when you're going through circumstances and you know, in the midst of your circumstances, God keeps you in the dark with respect to his presence.

[00:29:02] I'm talking about those moments where God is silent. I'm talking about those moments where you can't feel the presence of God. You know how often I get this as a pastor? You know, somebody is really struggling. They're going through a difficult time. And, you know, more often than not, one of the first things they say to me is, You know what? I can't feel God's presence. I'm having a hard time hearing his voice. Pastor, why is God so silent? Why is God so silent? And you know, in your life as a Christian, because Christianity is not about- it's not about religious ritual. Christianity is about relationship. And so when you're in communion with the father and it seems like he's gone deep on you, he's gone silent on you, that is the hardest thing in our Christian life to handle because that communion with the father is what sustains us. And yet there are times. There are times where God will be silent. You say, Well, where's an example of that? Garden of Gethsemane. Garden of Gethsemane. Father, if there's any way, let this cup pass from me, you know? Dot dot dot dot dot. What did he hear from heaven? The Son heard nothing from heaven. There was silence from heaven because this was the will, the way, the purpose of the father. You know, this is not easy to hear. And this is even- especially for those of you who are struggling today- this is a challenging thing for me to say, and I don't want to sound insensitive, but it is God's prerogative to conceal His plan in our life. It's God's prerogative to conceal his plan.

[00:30:40] And what I'm saying to you- God has the right to give us as much information as he wants to give us. God has the right to reveal as much of himself as he wants to. The Bible says in Isaiah 45:15, Truly, you are a God who hides himself. And Deuteronomy 29:29 says, The secret things belong to the Lord our God. And if you read the life of Job and you go all the way through that book, what you learn is that Job's most intense frustration- remember, he lost everything. He lost his family. He lost his fortune. He lost his physical health. And yet, as you read the book, what you discover is that his greatest frustration was his inability to find God. It was his inability to find God. There was silence from heaven in Job's life some say for just about 12 months. What did Job have? He had a bunch of miserable friends, right? Miserable counselors who just came alongside and basically told Job that everything that he was going through was his fault. And, you know, God dealt with those counselors. When you come alongside somebody who is suffering and you're the one who's going to give counsel, make sure you're wise with what you say. At the end of the day, God did reveal himself to Job, but we learn from Job's experience that the Lord can be trusted even when he can't be tracked. The Lord can be trusted even when he can't be tracked. In those moments. In those moments where you don't feel the presence of God, you need to remember the promises that he has given to you. You know, I think about it. When I go through times like this, the picture in my mind is when we would cross the street and we'd have our kids, maybe we just parked the car and we're heading into a store. And you know, what we would do is we would reach our hand out and we would grab the hand of one of our kids, and then we would walk them across the street. Like they're totally oblivious, right? I mean, they're going to walk across the street on their own, they're for sure going to get hit because they're not even aware of the realities of what is happening around them. And so as a loving parent, what you do is you reach your hand out and that little kid instinctively- it's just instinct- reaches up and grabs the hand of mom or dad.

[00:33:05] And that's what the father- if you're in the midst of struggling and adversity and difficulty, that is the father's disposition towards you right now. That, in fact, is what the father is doing. I can't feel him. It doesn't matter. I can't see him. It doesn't matter. I can't hear him. Listen, he is present with you. The Bible says in the book of Hebrews- this guy is ministering to Christians who are under such great persecution. Their adversity is- they're allowing it because they're not anchored to Christ and the revelation. They're allowing the adversity to move them just slightly in the other direction. And so the whole book of Hebrews is about getting these people anchored back to the person of Christ and the revelation that the father is given. And in the end, Hebrews 13:5, he says, Listen, you don't have to fear what man can do to you because the Bible itself says- God himself says, I will never leave you or forsake you. I will never leave you or forsake you. And so listen, in moments like that, when those are the feelings that you feel, you're wondering where God is because you can't hear, you can't see, you can't feel.

[00:34:15] You have to anchor yourself to this reality, and you have to make the confession: God, I don't see you or feel you, but I'm choosing to believe that you are with me. I'm choosing to believe that you are with me based upon what your word has said, based upon how you have previously revealed yourself to me in my life. I'm placing my hand in the hand of the father, and I'm choosing to walk one single step at a time because sometimes that's all that God gives.

[00:34:47] In those moments, I want to encourage you. Those are the moments to lean into prayer. Those are the moments to lean into the people of God. Those are the moments to pursue God even more. And those are the moments to persevere. Look, I think that particular emotional response can be the most dangerous because if we allow it to fester like a cancer, it leads us away from the Lord. And so sometimes you have to discipline yourself to do the right thing, even when you don't feel like it. I don't want to go to church. No, I meant this morning, I did not want to come here. No, I'm just kidding. Pastors feel that way, too. Pastors feel that- because pastors are people. That just sounds so stupid. I can't even believe I said it out loud. But you know, there are times where I- you don't feel like praying, you don't feel like singing. In those moments where my mouth is shut, I know that I need to open my mouth and give praise to God. I know- those are the moments you have to do it. The third response sometimes that we have when we're going through real difficult circumstances is that we feel like the circumstances are unredeemable.

[00:36:06] They seem- and I use the word "seem" because it really is an illusion of our emotion. They seem unredeemable. But I want to tell you today that God redeems what seems unredeemable to us. God redeems what seems unredeemable to us. When we're in that moment and we're thinking it's impossible. We have to remember that, with God, all things are possible. And when I say the word "redeem", I mean that God can take the evil and pain in life and use it for his good purposes. Right? Let me just say that a little slower so it can sink in. God can take the evil and pain in life and use it for his good purposes. That's what our God is able to do. You know, I look at Jeremiah's life, a man who was faithful to the mission that God had him on. And yet he was persecuted. He was rejected by his family, by his colleagues, by the people that he was preaching to. He was rejected. He was thrown into a pit, but his life was redeemed by God. I think about Daniel. And you remember that there was envy and malice in his colleagues' hearts- those other Magi who were envious of Daniel's exaltation. And remember they had concocted this idea and swayed the heart of the king, king Darius, so that if anyone prayed to any other God besides him, they would be thrown to the lions and their houses destroyed. And you remember Daniel heard it. And so what did he do? Well he was faithful. He was faithful to God in prayer. Consequently, he was thrown into a pit, and in that pit there were lions, and the angel of the Lord was present and God did something miraculous.

[00:37:57] I think about the life of Christ and the perfect life that he led and how he was scourged and crucified on a cross. He was dead and buried and thrown in that dark tomb. And it was in that context that God worked his greatest miracle when the hope of Israel had been vanquished completely. I'm saying to you today that oftentimes our prayer is this: God, work the miracle. I want to see the supernatural. God, I want the early church experience. I don't want to just go through the motions. I want revival. I want awakening. God, You are the God who not just hears from heaven, but you answer on Earth. I want to see it manifested before my eyes. And God says, Really? Really? Is that what you want? Because if that's what you want, I'm going to allow circumstances to happen in your life that are going to seem unredeemable. I'm not going to take you under the storm or over the storm or around the storm. I'm taking you through the storm. I'm going to allow things to happen in your life that will be painful. And in those moments, you have a choice to make. Maybe you're there today. Maybe there are circumstances in your life that just seem totally unredeemable because you've lost sight of what God is able to do. I want to encourage you to anchor yourself to the truth of God's word and to make this confession to him. God, even though this hurts, I'm trusting that you are using this for your good purposes. Can you make that confession today? God, even though this hurts, I'm trusting that you are using this for your good purposes.

[00:39:36] These verses have really blessed me recently. They're from Habakkuk Chapter three. And I want- you can read, but don't read ahead, okay? You can read to the hyphen, but stop. Okay? The Bible says this, Though the fig tree may not blossom nor fruit be on the vines, though the labor of the olive may fail and the fields yield no food, though the flock may be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls. So I read all of that and you're like, Well, that doesn't apply to me because I don't like figs, and I really- I don't need a flock and I don't have any stalls, so it doesn't matter. But this is what's happening: the people of Israel are making a confession here. And so in ancient ways, they're saying, God, if you strip everything away, if you strip everything away. Modern vernacular: God, if you empty my 401k. God, if my cryptocurrency investment takes a total nosedive. God, even if all of the equity in my house totally evaporates. Right? This is the context that we're talking about here. God, if you take it all away. Now listen, if that's you today, how are you going to respond? How are you going to respond? Because you know, we have being preached to us today in our American Christian culture, this idea of conditionality, like as long as God does it the way we want him to do it, we will be Christian. Right? As long as God- as long as God fulfills my dreams, as long as God keeps my bank account full. As long as God takes care of me the way I want to be taken care of. But this is talking about a different type of following God.

[00:41:21] Notice this: even if you strip it all away "hyphen", yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation. Why? Because the Lord God is my strength, right? The Lord God is my strength. Finally, today. By the way, I have two finallys and I'm a pastor so I can have as many finallys as I want to. But finally, today, sometimes dreams and visions from God have to die so that he can resurrect them. Sometimes the dreams and visions that God has given to us, they have to die so that he can resurrect them. And we know this is true from scripture. Right? Abraham's calling and Abraham- the covenant had to die so that God could resurrect it. Moses was called to deliver the children of Israel. That didn't go the way that he thought. Joseph- the vision, the dream that God gave him died four times. He was sold into slavery. He was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife. He was thrown into prison. He was forgotten by Pharaoh's butler. Like, he was in this place of being buried for 13 years. And yet we're reminded of what Jesus said. Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it produces much grain. What does that mean? That means that when the dream or the vision that God has given dies and he resurrects it, it demonstrates that it is the power of God. It's not our ability. It's not our intellect. It's not our business skills. It's not our capacity to network. It's not our own personal discipline or willpower. When something in our life that's God-given dies and he resurrects it, it demonstrates that it's his power. Not by might, not by power, but by My spirit, says the Lord.

[00:43:14] And in that place, it's a revelation that it's God and not us. Don't you want that? It's a revelation that it's God and not us. I think about how the disciples watched all of their hopes die when Christ was scourged and crucified and ultimately buried. But as he was dead and buried and resurrected by God the father, it was evident that he was more than a rabbi. He was more than a prophet. He was not just some good example to follow, but like Thomas said, as Thomas put his hands in the holes in his wrist and the hole in the side. As Thomas said, My Lord and my God, my Lord and my God. The resurrection revealed that Christ was not just a rabbi or a prophet, but that he, in fact, was God incarnate. And so listen, anchor yourself to this. Maybe you have a dream or a vision that you felt was God given, but somehow it's died. You need to make the confession. God, I believe that you are able to take what's dead and bring it back to life. God, I believe. God, I don't know how it's going to happen. It feels dead to me. But I know God, that you're able to resurrect it. And God, I want you to, because at the end of the day, I want people to know it's your power- that you are the one, God who is behind this. So that this thing, whatever it is, may draw people to Christ. And the second finally today is that- it is that when we read about Joseph, we have to remember that it really isn't about Joseph at all. It's about Jesus. It's about Jesus. Now. Now, listen, I want to- there are at least 50 ways that Joseph foreshadows Jesus Christ and is a picture, right? Is a picture.

[00:45:04] We have the New Testament. We know how the story goes. But when you had the Old Testament and you were looking for Messiah, all you had were these glimpses. And I want to share a number of those that we see in Chapter 37. And then I'll follow it up with a little application. So Joseph was a shepherd. Jesus is the Great Shepherd. Joseph was opposed to an exposed evil. Jesus was opposed to an exposed evil. Joseph was loved by his father. Jesus was beloved by the father. Joseph was hated by his brothers. Jesus was hated by his brothers. Joseph was hated for his words. Jesus was hated for his words. Joseph was envied by his brothers. Jesus was envied by his brethren. Joseph was sent by his father. Jesus was sent by the father. Joseph was conspired against. Jesus was also conspired against. Joseph's brothers did not believe his dreams. Jesus: his family did not believe his words. Joseph was stripped of his coat. Jesus was stripped of his garment. Joseph was cast into a pit. Jesus was placed in a tomb. Joseph was taken out of the pit alive in his body. Jesus was bodily resurrected from the tomb. Joseph was sold for the price of a slave. Jesus was sold for 30 pieces of silver, the price of a slave. Judah suggested the idea of selling his brother. The Greek name for Judah is Judas. Judas sold Jesus to the Pharisees. Joseph's blood sprinkled coat was presented to his father. Jesus is our scapegoat and his blood was presented to the father as a sin offering. So today as I wrap up, I just- look it all really does come to this point right here: Lord, it is not all about me anyway. It is not all about me anyway. The adversity, the difficulty, the difficulty in trying to track your ways. God, ultimately, it's not about how I feel or my life experience. It is all about you. And what I want in my life is for you to be magnified and glorified. And so, Christ, if that means take me through the storm, then take me through the storm. Let's pray together.

[00:47:20] Father, thank you today for your word. And God, we do ask that you would help us, especially when we feel overwhelmed. And God, we thank you for our feelings and we thank you that we're made in your image and that we have the capacity for emotion. But father, help us to not be swept away. Help us to not continue to spin. Help those of us, God, who just feel buried- that the proverbial stone has been rolled over the pit or the tomb. And God, we've just lost sight. God help those today who are drifting. God, whose lives- the trajectory of their lives are really not pointed to you anymore. Who are not leaning in, but they're leaning away. God, we pray that we can sincerely and honestly ask this from you, we know today, God, we pray that you would help us. You are our ever present help in time of need. And maybe today our need is known to others, maybe it's not. It doesn't matter, God, it is seen and known by you. And so, Lord, supply the comfort and the strength and the hope. God as your word says, Strengthen the feeble knees and the arms that hang down. God infuse your people today with a fresh experience of your Holy Spirit, God, to press on for one more day.

[00:49:06] Today, as our eyes are closed and our heads are bowed, maybe today you- you're here at church, and I'm so thankful that you're present with us, but you know you're not a Christian. You yourself have never taken that step of faith and trusted in Christ. You've never turned away from your unbelief and sin and come to Jesus for forgiveness. Today, you know, I would say to you that God has been allowing, I'm sure, circumstances in your life to lead you to a place where you're beginning to pursue him. And you know that that emptiness in your heart has compelled you to wonder if there's more to life than what you've been experiencing, and I want to say to you today there is. And it's all found in a Person. Really, what your heart has been longing for is Jesus Christ, and today God has brought you divinely to this place, not to get religion, but to enter into a relationship with him- to take a step of faith and trust in his son. And as you do that, what's been broken between you and God in a moment of time is going to be healed. A bridge is going to be established and you can have a real, sincere, genuine relationship with God, the father as you leave this place. Today, if you want to put your trust and faith in Jesus Christ. I want to pray for you today, and I'm going to ask you right where you're sitting. If this is you, you'd say, Pastor, I need God in my life. I've spent enough time in my life living without him. Now I want to begin my journey with him, right where you're sitting today, I want to pray for you. Would you raise your hand up high so I can see who you are? Give me the opportunity today to pray for you. God bless you right here in the center. Thank you for raising your hand. Over here on my right, thank you for raising your hand. Over here in the back on my right, thank you. Here in the center, over here on my left, I see your hand. Right here on my left as well, thank you for raising your hand right here. The center in the back. Listen, he loves you. He loves you and you need him today. Take a step of faith and come just as you are. Let God touch your life. Anybody else? Just stretch your hand up. I see your hand over here on my right, thank you. Right here. Awesome. Thank you so much. God's so good. Alright, over here on my left, thank you for raising your hand. You can put your hands down.

[00:52:04] Today, in addition to those coming to Christ for the very first time, listen, maybe as a Christian, you, you know, you've just been going through it. You have been going through it. It has been hard. It's been hard. And those questions of doubt and confusion have just dominated your heart. I just want to say to you that the father's never left you. And he loves you. And his hand is stretched out to you today. And today you just need a point in time to reach out and grab the hand of the father again. And to make that confession with your own mouth- a declaration that even though you don't understand and even though you don't feel him, even though the circumstances seem unredeemable, today, you're choosing to trust. And so, Christian, if this is you today, just- I want to pray for you, too. I'm gonna ask you to raise your hand right where you're at. Thank you. I see your hand. I see yours and yours. Over here on my left, here in the front, right here in the front, thank you. In the back on my right. Over here on my right. Thank you. Look, sometimes, man, you know, the devil just loves to isolate us and keep us all inside of ourselves. And we, man, we just, we rot in that place. Get outside of that. Stretch your hand up today, let me see who you are so I can pray for you. I see your hand. I see your hand, too. Thank you. I see yours. God bless you. God bless you. I see yours and yours. I see yours in the back. Man, over here on my right, I, you know, I think about the woman who had the issue of blood and she was so ashamed. And you know what, he lovingly called her into the light. Don't hide from God today. Anybody else? Alright. Thank you, guys. I see your hand. You can put your hands down.

[00:54:36] Father, we love you, God. We're so thankful that you're present with us. All we want to do is point to you because you're the only one. You're the only one who can save. You're the only one who can strengthen. You're the only one who can comfort. And God, we believe because you have said, we believe that you are present with us today. And we ask, God, that you would supernaturally supply what each of these hearts need. In Jesus' name. Amen.