

Purposeful Suffering

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 27 April 2025

Preacher: Cedric Moss

[0 : 00] Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had brought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there.

The Lord was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master. His master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord caused all that he did to succeed in his hands.

So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him oversee of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. From the time that he made him oversee in his house and over all that he had, the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake.

The blessing of the Lord was on all that he had, in his house and field. So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him, he had no concern about anything but the food he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and in appearance. And after a time, his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, Lie with me. But he refused and said to his master's wife, Behold, because of me, my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge.

[1 : 15] He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?

And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her, to be with her. But one day, when he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was there in the house, she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me.

But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house. And as soon as she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled out of the house, she called to the men of her household and said to them, See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to laugh at us.

He came in to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. And as soon as he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried out, he left his garment beside me and fled and got out of the house.

Then she laid up his garment by her until his master came home. And she told him the same story, saying, The Hebrew servant whom you have brought among us came in to me to laugh at me.

[2 : 25] But as soon as I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment beside me and fled out of the house. As soon as his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, This is the way your servant treated me.

His anger was kindled. And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in prison.

But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keep of the prison. And the keep of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison.

Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. The keep of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because the Lord was with him.

And whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed. Here in the scripture. Thank you very much, Jameko. In my almost 37 years of pastoral ministry, I've come to appreciate that one of the hardest aspects of the Christian life is to believe that God is involved in our sufferings in a purposeful way.

[3 : 39] And what's even harder than that is to believe that he ordains them. And yet this is the witness of scripture.

And since all of us have suffered and all of us will suffer, we'll suffer in different ways and to different degrees.

For the comfort of our souls, as we walk through suffering, we need to take to heart and believe that God is both involved in our sufferings and that he ordains our sufferings in a purposeful way for our good and ultimately for his glory.

And this morning, as we continue our sermon series in the book of Genesis, we come to Genesis 39 where these truths jump out at us from the page.

We come face to face with the sufferings that Joseph experienced in Egypt. And I want us in our remaining time this morning to consider how God was with Joseph in these sufferings and then hopefully by God's grace that we can apply them to our own sufferings, whether they are present or they will meet us in the days to come.

[5 : 25] So let's bow in prayer. Heavenly Father, we are so grateful that you are the Lord, the sovereign Lord who orders and ordains all that comes to pass.

Lord, indeed you have ordained that we would be here this morning. Lord, you know what we need. You know what we need to hear and I pray that in the preaching of your word this morning that you would meet us all.

but I pray that above my voice yours will be heard. And I pray that whether now or in the future you would give us perspective for how we should view all of our sufferings.

That they are not aimless, they are not random, but they are purposeful and that they are ordained by a good, wise, and sovereign God for our good and for his glory.

So Lord, would you meet us this morning as we open your word. Amen. In the previous sermon that we considered in Genesis 38, we considered the transformation that took place in Judah's life.

[7 : 01] And if you were here for that sermon, you'd remember that I pointed out that what was happening with Judah in Genesis 38 was simultaneously happening or God was simultaneously at work in Joseph's life when he was in Egypt.

So you have these two brothers whom God chooses in sovereign ways to fulfill purposes in the line of Abraham and there's Judah in Adullam and there is Joseph in Egypt.

And the timeline is exactly the same as God is working in these two brothers' lives and later we will see how they come together as we work our way through the remainder of the book of Genesis.

But I believe if we were able to interview Joseph this morning and ask Joseph, did you believe that God was with you and God was working in your life as you went through all the suffering that you went through in Egypt?

I think he would tell us flatly no. I think he would tell us when he was sold into slavery, when he was falsely accused, when he was thrown into prison, he couldn't see how God was involved in those sufferings in a million miles.

[8 : 41] Joseph spent a combined 13 years as a slave and in prison. In Portipha's house he served, in the prison he served, and combined it was 13 years.

I'm able to see this timeline because we know that Joseph became a slave when he was 17 years old. We see that in Genesis 37 verse 2, and then in Genesis 41 verse 46, we see that he was 30 years old when he came into Pharaoh's service.

And so really what happened to Joseph was the dreams he had that we read about in 37, by the time we come to 39, they have become nightmares for him.

And yet God was at work in the midst of all those sufferings, and God was preparing Joseph and positioning Joseph to preserve his chosen people, the people of Israel.

Joseph's suffering was purposeful suffering. And brothers and sisters, this is not unique to Joseph. This is true for all of God's people. All of the sufferings that we go through as God's people are purposeful sufferings.

[10 : 00] And we generally don't see them in the moment, and there is no promise that what happened to Joseph will happen to us. Joseph, as we will see as we work our way through, he was able to look back and see exactly how God was at work in his sufferings.

Maybe we will, maybe we may not. But what we know is that God is purposeful in the work that he does in the lives of his people, including in their sufferings.

One of the most precious verses that we can remember is Romans 8.28. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose, that includes suffering.

Suffering is a part of all things. And the biggest way that God is at work in our sufferings is to conform us to the image of Jesus Christ. That is the highest ideal that God has for us, that he would

conform us into the image of his dear son.

And brothers and sisters, when we want less, we're not seeing clearly. When we desire something other than that to be conformed to the image of Jesus, we're seeing darkly.

[11:17] We're not understanding ultimate reality. And the Lord uses sufferings to conform us to the image of Jesus.

This morning, in our remaining time, I want us to consider from this passage in Genesis 39 three distinct ways that Joseph suffered and how God was with him bringing his purposes to pass.

The first way is that God was with Joseph in the indignity of Egyptian slavery. Slaves have been and they still are the lowest class of people in all societies.

Some people have a hard time believing that there was a time in Jewish culture and in the Roman Empire when people would voluntarily sell themselves into slavery.

slavery to pay off debt or just because they were so poor that it was a guaranteed way of getting food, clothing, and shelter.

[12:32] So they would sell themselves into slavery. Some people did that. And when they experienced the indignity of slavery, they were somehow able to process it because they realized I'm achieving a particular goal, either working off debt or securing provision, and so they were able to endure it better.

But that wasn't the same case for those who were forced into slavery. Joseph did not go into slavery voluntarily. Joseph was violently sold into slavery.

And he was sold by his own brothers. in verse 1 of Genesis 39, we have the summary of what happened to Joseph and how he came to be in Egypt.

And we are told two times that he was brought down to Egypt. And so at the tender age of 17, Joseph's brothers sell him into slavery, sell him to the Ishmaelites, who sell them to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard.

And it doesn't take much to imagine the trauma that Joseph would have gone through, being treated in such a cruel way by his own brothers and being ripped from his loving father, and now living in exile as property to one of the most powerful men in the land.

[14:09] men in verses 2 and 3, Moses, the author of Genesis, gives us some important information that was not known to Joseph at the time.

Joseph did not know when he was experiencing the indignity of Egyptian slavery, what we know, because we're reading in retrospect, what happened to Joseph.

It tells us in verse 2, the Lord was with him. And because the Lord was with him, we're told he became a successful man.

In verse 4, we're told that Joseph's master, Potiphar, saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord was the one who was causing all in his hands to succeed.

And as a result, we're told that Joseph found favor in Potiphar's eyes, and Potiphar made him the overseer of his house.

[15:18] And then we're told something unusual happened. Look at verse 5. It says, from the time that he made him overseer in his house, over all that he had, the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph sake, the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in house and in field.

It seems like somehow Potiphar was able to see that somehow God was with Joseph. Rather, Joseph told him, look, I worship Yahweh, and he is with me, and he is helping me, that's why he's prospering me.

Or it was that in his pagan understanding of how God's help comes to people, he said, well, you know, something is supernatural with this man and what's happening with him.

But the tangible blessing seems to have come when he made Joseph overseer of his house. We're told that God blessed everything that he had in the house and in the field.

These were incredible blessings, but none of them belonged to Joseph. Joseph was still a slave in the midst of it all, but God was at work in his slavery.

[16:43] God was at work preparing him and positioning him to be a savior to his family, but he didn't know that as he was going through it. The only thing that he could see was the indignity of being a slave in Egypt.

Joseph was only able to see how God was at work in his life. When we get to Genesis 42, we'll see how he's able to look back when his brothers came to him during the famine.

After about seven years, he's able to begin to put pieces together, but in these early days, he had no clue about God being with him in the midst of his suffering.

And if you do the math working through, it would be some 20 or 21 years later, Joseph would have been about 37, 38, when the pieces began to fall together for him.

So for some 20 odd years, he walked through this very difficult season in his life, where the dreams that he had as a young boy had all turned into a nightmare, when he couldn't see that God was in it.

[18:02] And brothers and sisters, I say to us this morning, let's take this to heart. Let's take this to heart. In the midst of our sufferings, we don't always see how God is at work in them.

But we're in a better position than Joseph. Joseph went through what he went through, not having the benefit that we have to look back on his life and to see how God was with him and then to apply that to our lives.

He didn't have that benefit, but we have that benefit. We can learn from Joseph's experience. The Apostle Paul in Romans 15, 4, writes these words, for whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures, we might have hope.

Brothers and sisters, when we consider Joseph's sufferings, when we take them to heart, we can believe that God is at work in our sufferings for our good, even when we can't see it, even when it makes no sense to see how God is at work in this.

I recall recently speaking with a friend, and in tears she said to me, I cannot see how God could be at work in this for my good.

[19:27] And brothers and sisters, this is not something we're called to see, it's something we're called to believe. We're called to believe it because God is good, he can only do good, good.

And as he works in our sufferings, he is working for our good. And perhaps some of us this morning need to take this to heart right in the season where you find yourself.

Maybe some of us in the days ahead, maybe we're not in a place of suffering right now, but some of us right now, whether present or watching online, in a place of suffering. And what you believe, what you need to believe more than anything else, is that God is at work in the midst of your suffering for your good, even though you cannot see it.

But you know what we do oftentimes? We take the energy that we should take in believing to trying to see, to trying to understand how, and it's only when we're able to see how and understand how that we could believe, okay, yes, he's at work.

But that's not what we're called to, brothers and sisters. We're called to trust in a faithful God, who is altogether good, altogether wise, and who is at work in our sufferings for our good.

[20:52] And he's bringing his purposes to pass. That's the first way that God was with Joseph. He was with him in the indignity of Egyptian slavery.

slavery. The second way that we see God with Joseph in Egypt was in the intensity of sexual temptation.

In the second sentence in verse 6, we're given a physical description of Joseph. He was handsome in form and appearance.

in other words, his physique and his face were attractive. And his master's wife set her eyes upon him.

And she boldly propositioned him to sleep with her. Now, we're not given a description of what Potiphar's wife looked like, but I think we can make one common sense assumption about her.

[21:57] I think we can safely assume that she was very attractive. We can safely assume that she carried herself in a desirable way. And I think that all makes sense for the kind of man that Potiphar obviously was.

I think he had a wife who was attractive, a wife who was desirable, and so Potiphar's wife's proposition to Joseph was a real temptation.

I say that because I think we would all agree, especially the men, that not all propositions from all women are real temptations.

Some are, some are not. Joseph was facing a real temptation. with his master's wife. When you think of his situation, here he is, he's a slave, he's away from home, he's in full control of his master's house, he says there's only one other person above me and that's the master's wife.

He ran everything and so the circumstances were very ripe for him to follow what his master's wife was saying. he was most likely younger than she was and impressionable but as attractive as she

was and as inviting as the circumstances were, Joseph did not yield to it.

[23 : 35] Joseph was resolute in his response and in the two longest verses in Genesis 39, verses 8 and 9, he responds to her. Look again at what he says to her.

Starting in verse 8, but he refused and said to his master's wife, behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house and he has put everything that he has in my charge.

He is not greater in the house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?

Notice that although Joseph's decision to reject his master's wife's proposition was rooted in loyalty and gratitude for his master, ultimately he refused her because of his faithfulness to God.

Joseph recognized that to commit sexual sin with his master's wife was a great wickedness and that he would commit a sin against God.

[24 : 53] And brothers and sisters, this should be insightful for us. When we sin, we don't sin in a vacuum. When we sin, it's not an isolation suspended somewhere, we sin, we sin against the Holy God.

All sin is committed against God. But what is clear is that even though Joseph was very resolute and told her why he could not take a proposition, nothing that he told his master's wife changed her mind about him and her intentions for him.

So we're told in verse 10 that day after day she spoke to him and threw herself on him, but he wouldn't listen to her.

To lie beside her or to be with her. And from verse 10, when you read verse 10, you follow the words, it appears that she was taking a slightly different approach from the first bold proposition and it seems like she was just now saying to him, okay, look, you don't have to lie with me, just lay beside me or just come be with me, just come keep me company.

You know, you could tell me how life was back in Canaan and how you became a slave and, you know, you don't have to do anything, just come, just come, just come be with me, just come sit with me.

[26 : 19] The Bible says he would not listen to her and he would not be beside her, he would not be with her. He was careful not to put himself in that position.

Again, I think we can easily read over this fast and not realize the real temptation that Joseph was faced with every day that he tried to do his work.

He has his master's wife in a position of authority and influence who obviously is a beautiful woman, pestering him day by day by day and throwing herself on him.

And if we just contrast Joseph with his older brother, Judah, in chapter 38, we can see how great a temptation he had. his brother Judah propositioned his own daughter-in-law because he didn't recognize and thought that she was a prostitute.

He didn't know what her face looked like and he didn't care. He didn't know what her body looked like and he didn't care. And because he didn't have any money, he didn't really come looking for a prostitute but he saw a woman and his lust got him and so he decided that he would proposition her.

[27 : 48] And since he had no money, he left with her items of personal identification, his signet and his cord and his staff and he didn't care because he had one desire in mind.

When you think about that, that he is to go after a woman and here you have Joseph who is being pursued by a beautiful woman day after day.

And he was even in a position to somehow cover up what he was doing. You can only imagine how much greater a temptation Joseph faced than his older brother Judah.

And yet, even though she enticed Joseph day by day, we're told Joseph would not listen to her.

Now how is it that Judah's younger brother, a slave in Egypt, whose sexual temptation was far greater than Judah's, was able to resist sleeping with his master's wife, despite the fact that day after day she was throwing herself on him.

Brothers and sisters, there's only one ultimate reason that Joseph did not yield to sexual temptation after being pestered day after day after day.

[29 : 15] there's only one ultimate reason, and it's not in verses 8 and 9. It's not the reason that Joseph gave. The only reason that Joseph did not yield to sexual temptation with his master's wife is because the Lord was with him.

The Lord was with him. If Joseph had been left to himself, Joseph would have yielded to sexual temptation and Joseph either would have killed Potiphar or Potiphar would have killed Joseph. I heard someone say at the end of the day, all men are men. And brothers, and I can say sisters as well, left to ourselves, we're no match for the temptation that come our way.

And if there's any of us who believes that we are able to stand against temptation, overcome temptation, in and of ourselves, you either don't know yourself, or you're being dishonest.

It was the sheer mercy and grace of God with Joseph in those circumstances that enabled him to overcome the temptation of sleeping with his master's wife as she threw herself on him day after day after day.

[30 : 54] Again, left to himself, he'd have been no match for that. Now, don't get me wrong. Joseph was a godly man.

God was with Joseph, but Joseph was also with God. We see that, we see the witness of Genesis is that Joseph was a godly man. Even as he is facing these hardships, he invokes God's name to Potiphar's wife to say, I cannot do this and sin against the Lord.

As we watch him through the rest of Genesis, he invokes God's name. He invokes God's name as he names his two children. He invokes God's name as he interprets dreams and points to God and not himself.

And so, no doubt, Joseph was a godly man, but as godly as he was, left to himself, there's no way that he could overcome temptation and brothers and sisters, we are no different.

Ms. Potiphar was obviously not one to take no for an answer, and so we are told in verse 11 that one day when Joseph went to the house to do his work, none of the men were in the house, none of them were present.

[32 : 13] Almost makes you wonder if this was part of her arrangement. Ms. Potiphar caught him by his garment. He's there doing his work. She caught him by the garment it was a loose fitting cloak, one on the outside of other clothing, and she says, lie with me.

And Joseph sheds his cloak, and he runs and flees out of the house, leaving her with his cloak in her hand. And she turns the table on Joseph.

accuses him of attempting to rape her. And this brings me to the third and final way, that God was with Joseph in his sufferings.

The Lord was with Joseph in the atrocity of false accusation. Ms. Potiphar was definitely a woman who was far from God.

She thought nothing of committing adultery against her husband, and she also thought nothing about falsely accusing an innocent godly man of the heinous crime of attempted rape.

[33 : 26] She lied on Joseph to the men of the household, and then she lied on Joseph to her husband, and she used his cloak as evidence to support her lie.

Two times we're told in verses 14 and 17, that Mrs. Potiphar says, Joseph laughed at her. It's an interesting word, an interesting term that's used to refer to laughing, and depending on the context, it could mean different things.

So, for example, in Genesis 19, verse 14, it's used to refer to joking when Lot told his sons-in-laws to be that they needed to get out of Sodom because God was going to destroy the land.

They thought he was joking. The same word that she uses to say to Potiphar, he was laughing at me. And then in Genesis 21, verse 9, it's used to describe how Ishmael was teasing and mocking Isaac, which Sarah found offensive.

But in Genesis 26, verse 8, the same words are used to describe how Isaac was interacting with Rebekah, how he was touching Rebekah, and how Abimelech from his window saw them, and he realized that that kind of behavior between two persons, that can be a sister, that is his wife.

[34 : 57] And that's how he was able to say to Isaac, you've lied to me, this woman is your wife, not your sister. That's the same words that she used to Potiphar.

Now, the understanding of the meaning is based on the context. So clearly, Potiphar understood that it was sexual that she was talking about, not just telling a joke, not just teasing her, but it was sexual.

And so when she told Potiphar, this is what your Hebrew servant did to me, he came in to laugh at me, he understood it to be sexual. We're told his anger was kindled.

But why was his anger kindled? We really can't be sure why he was angry. Was it because he believed his wife?

I don't think so. Because had he believed his wife, he would have dealt with Joseph differently. The punishment for attempted rape, was capital punishment.

[36 : 03] You lost your life if you attempted to rape a woman. Potiphar doesn't execute him. Potiphar puts him in the prison, and he actually puts him in the best prison in the land, the place where the king's prisoners were placed.

And so at best, Potiphar wasn't sure. Joseph dutiful and so faithful.

I'm sure he had his doubts about that. And so he put him in the prison. And though this was the best prison in the land, in chapter 40, Joseph describes it as a pit.

And he pleads with the chief cupbearer that when he gets out, to plead with Pharaoh to get him out of this pit. There's no desirable place to be.

Now on a human level, when we think about it, based on the explanation I gave as to why Potiphar may have done what he did, it seems like that's why Potiphar put him in the prison.

[37 : 15] Because he had his doubts about what his wife actually said. Brothers and sisters, on a divine level, the reason that Potiphar put Joseph in the prison of the king is because God so ordained it.

God ordained it to put Joseph in the prison because God was preparing Joseph and positioning Joseph to move from being a slave to being the prime minister in Egypt.

God was orchestrating that. He would take on responsibilities. That was where he was going to meet the cub bearer and the baker.

And God was behind all of it, positioning Joseph in that way. But you know what? I don't think Joseph had one positive thought in his mind in that moment.

I think if we could talk to Joseph, he would say to us, that was the lowest point in my life. And when we read the story of Joseph, that was the lowest point in his life. He only goes up from there.

[38 : 30] But in the midst of it, he couldn't see that the Lord was with him. But the Lord was with him. one of the intriguing aspects of this account of Joseph being falsely accused is we have no record of Joseph defending himself.

There's no record of being confronted by Potiphar, giving some explanation. As a matter of fact, even when we go over to chapter 40, when Joseph is pleading with the cub bearer to talk to Pharaoh to get him out of this pit, even then he doesn't say, she lied on me.

He simply says to him, I'm a slave. I've been wrongly sold into slavery and I've done nothing to deserve to be in this place.

It's something to ponder. Why doesn't he defend himself? But here he is, he's at the lowest point of his life. He's devastated.

And Satan being the accuser of the brethren, no doubt was saying to him, look how foolish you are. Look what you get. You should have slept with her. Slept with her, you wouldn't be in all this trouble.

[39 : 58] hope. When we come to Genesis 40 next Sunday, the Lord willing, we'll see how desperate Joseph was to get out of prison.

But again, as hard as that moment was, as hard as that season was, God was with him. And God was preparing him and positioning him to become prime minister, but he couldn't see it.

In his darkest hour, God was with him. One most tender verses in all of Genesis 39 is verse 21.

Look at it with me for a moment. It says, but the Lord was with Joseph. And notice how Moses writes it. He says in verse 20, and Joseph's master took him and put him in the prison the place where the king's prisoners were confined.

And he was there in prison. But, this is to contradict verse 20, but the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love.

[41 : 17] Steadfast love, brothers and sisters, those are two precious words that come from one Hebrew word that speaks about God's covenantal, loyal, unchanging love for his people.

And the point is that in Joseph's darkest moment, in his deepest despair, God showed him steadfast love, covenantal love, love that never changes, love that's committed, love that is faithful, love that is merciful, it's the love that God sets on his people.

It's not a fickle kind of love. It's not the kind of love that we have experienced. I'm sure all of us have experienced one time or another, where we had a relationship with a person and something happened that changed their view of us, their affection towards us, something adjusted their love or affection towards us.

That's not the kind of love that he's talking about here. this covenantal love, the steadfast love of the Lord, it is exactly as it is described. It's steadfast. There's nothing that we could do or say to change it.

There is a sovereign God who knows all things, who can do all things, from whom nothing is hid, and he sets his love upon us, that nothing changes.

[42 : 52] And in Joseph's darkest moment, Moses says, but God was with him and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

God was with him, God was preparing him, God was positioning him to be a savior to his family. again, brothers and sisters, may this be instructive for us. Sometimes when things in our lives are taking a turn for the worse, when we seem to be in our darkest moment, it is in those moments that God is even dearer to us and closer to us, showing us steadfast, covenantal, unchanging love. And maybe some of us need to be aware of that even in this moment, that God is showing unchanging love, no matter what, to you. So the sufferings of Joseph, they're not merely personal, though they were.

The sufferings of Joseph were purposeful. They were purposeful suffering because God was at work in the midst of them bringing to pass a bigger purpose than Joseph could have seen in the moment.

God, through Joseph, was going to use him as an instrument to preserve his people, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that he might fulfill his promises to them.

[44 : 32] We're able to see that the sufferings of Joseph were purposeful as we consider them in hindsight. but it was only later on that Joseph was able to see how God was using his circumstances for the eventual deliverance of his people.

And when you think about it, what God did is Joseph's story foreshadowed Israel's story. Joseph went down into Egypt as a slave.

He suffered in Egypt, and then God delivered him out of it. And the same is true with Israel. They were in Egypt as slaves some 400 years, and then the Lord delivered them and took them into the land of promise.

but much more than that, brothers and sisters. The sufferings of Joseph in some ways foreshadow and picture the sufferings of Christ.

Joseph was involuntarily separated from his father against his father's will and taken down to Egypt and sold as a slave. But the Lord Jesus voluntarily left his father in heaven in accordance with his father's will, and he became a slave in this earth, even to the point of death.

[46 : 12] When Joseph was falsely accused, Moses, under the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit, gives us no record of him opening his mouth.

He was taken to prison, where God prepared him to save his family. Christ was falsely accused. He opened not his mouth.

But he wasn't just taken to prison. He was taken to a cross where he gave his life as a ransom for many. And it is in the sufferings of Christ that we see the ultimate example of purposeful suffering. Christ died that we might live. sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him. And brothers and sisters, if there's ever a lesson we need to learn, it is that we need to see that in Genesis 39, how God uses the sufferings of his people to be purposeful sufferings, because he is good and sovereign and perfectly wise, and he is at work in those sufferings, and he is at work in them for their good and for his glory to fulfill his purposes, some of which we may never know in this life, and there's no promise that we'll even know in the life to come.

But our satisfaction should be, my sufferings are not purposeless, my sufferings are purposeful by a good, wise God, and he is conforming me to the image of Jesus Christ.

[48 : 04] Every suffering that we experience, we touch in some small way the sufferings of Christ. And so in our sufferings, brothers and sisters, let us entrust ourselves to our everlasting God, who is at work in them, and who is at work in us, and who ordains all of them for his good purpose.

Let's pray. O Heavenly Father, I pray that you would draw near to us, corporately and individually. Lord, help us to see how you ordain and are at work in all of your people's sufferings. And Lord, help us to labor to believe more than we labor to see that you are working in all things for our good and for your glory.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.