

# The Grand Reveal

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Preacher: Jonathan Chancey

[ 0 : 00 ] Please take your Bibles and open them up this morning to the book of Genesis.! Our series is somehow winding its way to a close. I think we have maybe four sermons left in the book of Genesis.

And as we come to the end, Joseph's section here at the end, these are larger narrative chunks, larger portions of Scripture that we'll be taking. And so I'm going to change it up a little bit this morning.

I'm not going to have you stand and read through the whole text at the very beginning of the sermon. But I promise you I will read every word within the sermon this morning.

Our text is Genesis 43. And we're going to be working our way all the way through chapter 45, verse 15. So be grateful that we're not standing to sound, guys, this morning.

We're taking bets on how long we would be standing this morning. I'll be merciful to you. But again, I promise we will read every word. So as we prepare to hear from the Word of God this morning, would you bow and pray with me once more?

[ 1 : 01 ] Father, the grass withers and the flower fades, but the Word of the Lord endures forever. All our hope is in the promises that you've made to us here in your Word.

And so would you please take it from the pages of Scripture and plant it deep within our hearts by the power of your Spirit. Would you empower the preaching of your Word for the health of your church?

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, just last week I was coming back from Ghana. And I was there, as you know, to train about 40 pastors.

We walked our way through a survey of the Old Testament and launched this training site that, Lord willing, we will get to be a part of for the next three years. And while I was there, I had the incredible privilege of meeting this brother named Pastor Sampson.

It should be a picture. There we go. There's Pastor Sampson. I plan to share more about Pastor Sampson this evening. So please, again, I would encourage you to come as I share about him.

[ 2 : 11 ] Pastor Sampson belongs to an unreached people group. That's a group of people that have little to no access to the gospel, a majority unreached with the gospel.

But he is a believer. This is the Achaday people. And he pastors a church amongst his people there in the OT region of Ghana with several members of his tribe as well as some other tribes as well.

But over the past year, he has been hindered, providentially hindered, unable to gather with his people because his tribe, the Achaday people, are under attack.

Another tribe in the area has sought to basically wipe them out and exterminate them, extinguish them from the face of the planet.

Even while I was there, he got word that shots had been fired and several of his people had been killed. He's been displaced from his home for the past year.

[ 3 : 12 ] He's basically a refugee. And to top it all off, he makes his income, his livelihood, selling honey. He had well over 100 hives that would produce honey that he would then turn and sell to generate his income.

Well, this enemy tribe has come through and wiped out all but five of his beehives and then went and destroyed all of his reserves, basically his entire life savings, all of his investments for the future.

All of it is entirely wiped out. And I wonder, how would you respond if you were in Pastor Sampson's shoes? The natural response to difficulty, whether small or large, tends to be, on one hand, hopelessness.

It would be natural for someone in his shoes, in his situation, to despair. It would be natural, in other response, it would be natural for him to fear, to be fearful about the attacks that are coming against him, to be fearful about what the future might hold.

It would be natural for him to worry. What will I do? And yet, as I spoke with him, it's amazing, even in the midst of this great difficulty, as you listen to Pastor Sampson speak, there was this undeniable note of hope and confidence.

[ 4 : 36 ] There was even joy. He would sing loudly as we worshiped the Lord together. He received the teaching eagerly. He'd sit right there in the front row, Bible open, ready to learn, eager to hear from the Scriptures.

He laughed as we ate together and swapped stories. And the reason why, he told us, is because he believes firmly in a God who is both good and sovereign.

He has put his hope fully in a God who reigns and rules over all things, all times, all circumstances, even the hardest and most difficult moments of his life are in the hands of a good and sovereign God.

You may never face suffering as intense as this. In fact, I pray that you don't. But what I want us to see this morning is that this is the perspective that you and I can have in our suffering.

And regardless of what shape our difficulty takes, the believer in Christ, here's the big idea for us this morning. The believer in Christ can face great difficulty with the certain hope that our God is working all things for his glory and for our good.

[ 5 : 54 ] So let's take a look this morning. And what we'll see is three responses to great difficulty. This will be our outline this morning. If you're taking notes, it might help you to follow along. Three responses to great difficulty.

The first response that we see is the response of despair or hopelessness. We see this in Jacob's response to his difficulty. If you look there to chapter 43, and just to kind of remind us where we are again and set the stage, you remember at this point Joseph has been sold into slavery.

His brothers have betrayed him. He's now off in Egypt. And yet God has been merciful to him. He's raised him up to a position of authority in Egypt.

And meanwhile, just as he dreamed would happen, now there's famine and all the land. And Joseph's brothers, we saw last week, came to Joseph to buy grain.

Only they didn't know it was Joseph. As we read this story, it's like we get this behind-the-scenes account. We get to peek behind the curtain. We're let in on a secret that the brothers don't know.

[ 6 : 59 ] We get to see all of this unfold in their life. And so Joseph gives them some grain to live on, but now some time has passed. They've gone through all the grain, and they're hungry again.

They must return back to Egypt. So look there to verse 1 with me. Chapter 43, verse 1 says, Now the famine was severe in the land. And when they had eaten the grain they had bought from Egypt, their father said to them, Go again, buy us a little food.

But Judah said to him, The man solemnly warned us, saying, You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you. If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food.

But if you will not send him, we will not go down. For the man said to us, You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you. Israel said, Why did you treat me so badly as to tell the man that you had another brother?

They replied, The man questioned us carefully about ourselves and our kindred, saying, Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother? What we told him was an answer to these questions.

[ 8 : 04 ] Could we have in any way known that he would say, Bring your brother down? And so you see the issues here, the tension of the passage. For one thing, again, we see that the famine here is severe.

And we've already seen this. Chapter 41 told us twice that the famine was severe. And in the ancient world, a famine like this would threaten the lives of anybody who couldn't easily get access to food.

That's one issue. But you see another issue here. Jacob keeps losing sons. And this is a problem. At first it was Joseph. He thinks that Joseph is gone.

And then Simeon. Simeon, you remember from last week, he's still there imprisoned in Egypt. He's just waiting on somebody to come help him out. And now Benjamin, Jacob's new favorite son, is being threatened.

Now on a natural level, this is a great difficulty for anybody, right? The threat of famine is an incredible trial. The threat of losing children. These are not small dangers.

[ 9 : 05 ] But on an even bigger level, on a greater spiritual level, we need to remember that there's an even greater risk at play here that we need to be mindful of.

Don't you remember why we're focused in on Jacob and his family? Out of all the families of the world that are dealing with this famine, why are we zoomed in here on this one family? Why are we focused in on Jacob and his children? Why? It's because we are tracing the promises God has made. Genesis is all about our God, his power, his faithfulness, his promises. We're tracing the promises God has made. God has made certain promises to Jacob and his children that are now under attack and are being threatened by one, this famine, and two, the dwindling of his children.

God has promised, Genesis 3, the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent. It will undo the effects of the fall. That promise has gotten clarified in his words to Abraham.

[ 10 : 12 ] He's going to give an offspring who will be a blessing to the nations. That offspring promise has now been carried over from Abraham to Isaac, now to Jacob. That promise is under attack.

We need to read this with a spiritual lens in light of the promises of God. And yet, Jacob doesn't seem to be too concerned with any of that, does he? Despite all that he's seen, Jacob still, he doesn't seem to be acting in faith on the promises of God, does he?

He still, he doesn't even seem to be too concerned with his son Simeon. I mean, why in the world does he wait so long to go back to Egypt? He waits until the grain is gone. And meanwhile, his son is just waiting there for somebody to come help him out and to come save him from Egypt. Jacob doesn't seem to care. All Jacob cares about is the well-being of his new favorite son, Benjamin. But now, his hand is forced, the grain is gone, they have nothing to eat, and his most beloved son is going to be put at risk.

Look how Judah speaks up here in verse 8. It says, Judah said to Israel his father, Send the boy with me. We will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you, and also our little ones.

[ 11 : 35 ] I will be a pledge of his safety. From my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever.

And then he adds this. I love this. If we hadn't delayed, we would have been there twice now. We would have returned twice. I love that. You see what's happening, right?

The grain is gone. He's getting hangry. The food is running out. Dad, we don't have time for this. But here we see Judah is stepping up. He's personally guaranteeing the safety of his younger brother, Benjamin.

Now, who is it? Reuben. Reuben is the firstborn. Reuben should have been the one stepping up, right? But we'll see later on in chapter 49. Reuben lost that place in the family, that place of the firstborn preeminence, because he slept with one of his father's concubines.

And so here, Judah steps up. He takes that place and he speaks on behalf of all the brothers. And he personally guarantees Benjamin's safety. So, verse 11, Israel agrees.

[ 12 : 45 ] Their father Israel said to them, If it must be so, then do this. Take some of the choice fruits of the land in your bags and carry a present down to the man, a little balm, a little honey, gum, myrrh, pistachio nuts, almonds.

He gets his whole charcuterie board prepared. Take double the money with you. Carry back with you the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks. Perhaps it was an oversight.

Take also your brother and arise and go to the man. And then he lifts up this prayer. Verse 14. May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man.

And may he send back your other brother and Benjamin. And if he had only just stopped right there, we wouldn't think anything of it, would we? But look at what he says next.

As for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved. You can just hear the note of hopelessness in his voice, can't you?

[ 13 : 49 ] As for me, if I am bereaved of my children, then I am bereaved. He's faced with the danger of losing everything that's precious to him. And so now, Jacob has fallen to the point of despair.

If I'm bereaved of my children, I'm bereaved. That's not faith, church. This is fatalism. Whatever's going to happen is going to happen. Whatever will be, will be.

It's like he just throws up his hands in the air and says, none of this really matters anyways. Who cares? Whatever's going to happen is going to happen. If he dies, he dies. This is a response of hopelessness in church.

This is a worldly response. This is a worldly response to trials. But unfortunately, it's also a common response to trials, isn't it?

When things go wrong and we're faced with some sort of difficulty, whatever it may be, how quickly do you and I fall into despair? And we just throw up our hands.

[14:49] It always happens to me. Might as well send me another bill and add it to the pile. Now, the other car might as well break down too. Well, my left leg's hurt.

Maybe my right leg will go out this week. And sometimes it seems like trials just come in bunches and it's always all at once. And when it rains, it pours. And that barrage of difficulty after difficulty after difficulty, that can wear us down and make us feel hopeless.

You can imagine Pastor Sampson saying the same thing, can't you? Might as well destroy my other five hives. What does it matter anyways? Or take Job, who had more reason to despair than Job.

One day of his life, all of his servants are gone. All of his livestock is gone. All of his children are wiped out. All of it in a single day. Now, you would expect a response of despair from someone who went through what Job went through.

And yet, what does he do? It says, Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. And he said, Naked I came from my mother's womb.

[16:03] Naked shall I return. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. That's the response of someone who's clinging to the promises of God.

When difficulty comes, when not if, do you respond with despair or do you cling to the promises of God?

And we see a second response here starting in verse 15. And the second response is one of fear.

This is another typical response to difficulty. Joseph's brothers show us this response to difficulty. Starting here in verse 15. Look there with me. After this conversation, it says, The men took this present, they took double the money with them, and they took Benjamin. They arose and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph.

And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of the house, Bring the men into the house, slaughter an animal, and make ready, for the men are to dine with me at noon.

[17:09] The man did as Joseph told him and brought the men to Joseph's house. And the men, Joseph's brothers, were afraid because they were brought to Joseph's house. And they said, It's because of the money which was replaced in our sacks the first time that we're being brought in so that he may assault us and fall upon us to make us his servants and seize our donkeys.

And so they went up to the steward of Joseph's house and spoke with him at the door of the house and said, Oh my Lord, we came down the first time to buy food. And when we came to the lodging place, we opened our sacks and there was each man's money in the mouth of the sack, our money in full weight.

So we've brought it again with us and we've brought other money down with us to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks. You hear that they're explaining themselves before they've even been asked about any wrongdoing.

Now we have to understand it would have been a terrifying thing for these Hebrews to be brought into the home of this high Egyptian great ruler. This was not a common thing. And we see throughout the passage that Hebrews are an abomination to the Egyptians.

They're afraid to be in his presence. They're afraid that this great ruler of Egypt is bringing them in for judgment. They're fearful about what might happen to them.

[18:23] Maybe they'll punish me. And maybe he'll kill me. Maybe he'll imprison me. And so again, before they're even asked about any wrongdoing, they go and they start trying to clear their record.

I'm innocent. I'm innocent. I'm innocent. But verse 23, he replies, Peace to you. Do not be afraid.

Your God, and the God of your father, has put treasure in your sacks for you.

An interesting comment from an Egyptian. I received your money. And then he brought out Simeon to them. And when the man had brought the men to Joseph's house and given them water, and they had washed their feet, and when he had given their donkeys fodder, they prepared the present

for Joseph's coming at noon, for they had heard that they should eat bread there.

And when Joseph came home, they brought into the house to him the present that they had with them and bowed down to him to the ground. And he inquired about their welfare and said, Is your father well?

The old man of whom you spoke, is he still alive? And they said, Your servant, our father, is well. He is still alive. And they bowed their heads and prostrated themselves. And then he lifted up his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your youngest brother of whom you spoke to me?

[ 19 : 40 ] Benjamin, it would have been just a young child when Joseph came into Egypt, but this is his only brother who shares both his mother and his father. And so he's moved at the side of him, and he says, God be gracious to you, my son.

And Joseph hurried out, for his compassion grew warm for his brother, and he sought a place to weep. And he entered his chamber, and he wept there. And then he washed his face and came out. And controlling himself, he said, Serve the food. And they served him by himself and them by themselves and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians could not eat with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians.

And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth. And the men, they looked at one another in amazement. You see, they came fearing judgment, but instead, what happens?

They're welcomed with blessing. They are feasting in a time of famine. And it seems like they have the approval and the favor of one of the most powerful men of the world, someone with limitless resources, who seems to be intent on blessing them, not on judging them.

[ 20 : 53 ] But things could not be going better. But what they don't know, what we do, because we're peeking behind the curtain here, remember, is that Joseph, their brother, is setting them up.

Joseph, their brother, is putting them to the test. And to be honest, he has earned this right, hasn't he? If your brothers betray you, and throw you into a pit, and leave you for dead, and sell you into slavery, and then you get put into prison for nothing that you've done, you have earned the right to mess with your brothers.

That's exactly what Joseph does here. He puts them to the test. For one thing, you notice he seats them in order of their birth. The oldest, according to his birthright, and the youngest, according to his youth.

They have no idea, how in the world can this Egyptian know our birth order? That's got to be unsettling, right? How does this guy know who's the oldest, and then after that, all nine of us, he puts us right in order.

How does he do that? He's setting them up. And for another, as they eat, verse 34 says, portions were taken to them from Joseph's table, but notice this, Benjamin's portion was five times as much as theirs.

[ 22 : 11 ] Joseph shows extraordinary, favor to Benjamin, but this also is a test. We already know that he's the favorite. Joseph knows that he's the favorite.

They told him the first time, daddy didn't want his little boy to come over to Egypt, but now Joseph wants to see, will these brothers be jealous of him like they were jealous of me?

You remember the issue at the beginning of the story. This whole thing was the fruit of jealousy. Joseph was the favorite son, and so they were jealous of him. Will they be jealous of Benjamin in the same way?

Seems like they pass phase one. They all eat and are merry, but all of this, again, is luring them into this false sense of security, and the tone changes here in chapter 44.

Then he commanded the steward of the house, fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack, and put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, with his money for the grain.

[ 23 : 13 ] And he did as Joseph told them. And as soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away with their donkeys. They had gone only a short distance from the city. Now Joseph said to his steward, Up, follow after the men, and when you overtake them, say to them, Why have you repaid evil for good?

Is it not from this that my Lord drinks, and by this that he practices divination? You've done evil in doing this. And when he overtook them, he spoke to them these words.

And they said to him, Why does my Lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing. Behold, the money that we found in the mouths of our sacks, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan.

How then could we steal silver or gold from your Lord's house? Whichever of your servants is found with it shall die, and we will also be my Lord's servants. Uh-oh. He said, Let it be as you say.

He who is found with it shall be my servant, and the rest of you shall be innocent. And each man quickly lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened up his sack, and he searched, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest, and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

[ 24 : 25 ] And they tore their clothes. And every man loaded up his donkey, and they returned to the city. And when Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, he was still there. They fell before him to the ground, and Joseph said to them, What deed is this that you have done?

Do you not know that a man like me can indeed practice divination? And Judah said, What shall we say to my Lord? What shall we speak? How can we clear ourselves?

God has found out the guilt of your servants. Behold, we are my Lord's servants, both we and he also in whose hand the cup was found. He's trying to rope himself in here with Benjamin.

When he said, Far be it from me that I should do so. Only the man in whose hand the cup was found shall be my servant. But as for you, you go up in peace to your father. This is now the second part of the test.

Will these brothers betray Benjamin as they betrayed Joseph? And Joseph makes it clear. Only Benjamin is going to bear this guilt. He's going to bear it alone.

[ 25 : 33 ] What will they do? Will they make up another lie and go tell their father what happened and leave Benjamin behind? There's even a touch of irony here, isn't there?

They betrayed Joseph for what? Do you remember? A little bit of silver. And now what is it that's in Benjamin's bag? It's a silver cup. The silver cup has put them in this predicament.

God has found out their sin. And more than that, you remember in Joseph's case, who was it who spoke up to sell them into slavery? It was Judah. But now, verse 18, Judah went up to him and says, Oh my Lord, please let your servant speak a word in my Lord's ears.

Let not your anger burn against your servant, for you are like Pharaoh himself. My Lord asked his servant, saying, Have you a father or a brother? And we said to my Lord, We have a father, an old man, and a younger brother, the child of his old age.

His brother is dead. No, he's not. And he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him. Then you said to your servants, Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.

[ 26 : 41 ] And we said to my Lord, The boy cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And then you said to your servants, Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall not see my face again.

When we went back to your servant, my father, we told him the words of my Lord. And when our father said, Go again and buy us a little food, we said, We cannot go down. If our youngest brother goes with us, then we will go down.

For we cannot see the man's face, unless our youngest brother goes with us. Then your servant, my father, said to us, You know that my wife bore me two sons. One left me, and I said, Surely he's been torn to pieces, and I've never seen him since.

If you take this one also from me, and harm happens to him, you will bring down my gray hairs in evil to Sheol. Now therefore, as soon as I come up to your servant, my father, and the boy is not with us, then as his life is bound up in the boy's life, as soon as he sees that the boy is not with us, he will die.

And your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant, our father, with sorrow to Sheol.

For your servant became a pledge of safety for the boy to my father, saying, If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father all my life.

[ 27 : 56 ] Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the boy, as a servant to my Lord, and let the boy go back with his brothers. For how can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me?

I fear to see the evil that would find my father. Judah, on behalf of all the brothers, passes the test. Judah offers himself in the place of Benjamin.

Judah offers himself as a substitute in the place of the guilty. He says, It's my life in the place of his. And do you see here a small picture of Christ?

Judah, here, gives us a small foretaste of what Christ Jesus will come and do for us. Jesus Christ, who is from the tribe of Judah, who will be a descendant of this man right here.

Jesus Christ will come and offer himself as a substitute for those who are truly guilty. Jesus Christ will come and fully take their place.

[ 29 : 03 ] He will perfectly live in perfect obedience in our place. He will die a death on the cross in the place of his people. It's the righteousness of Christ in exchange for our guilt and our sin.

Jesus substitutes himself for his people. Not just one brother for another, although that's an incredibly generous act. But the king of kings for sinners.

Here, Judah foreshadows this great event by offering himself up for his guilty brother, Benjamin.

Judah passes the test. But even so, by and large, you consider the whole response here.

The response of these brothers to their difficulty is one of fear. They don't know that this is just a test. They don't get to peek behind the scenes like we do and see Joseph's intentions and all of this. They're just enduring this incredibly difficult trial and they fear. They fear the unknown. What's going to happen to us? They fear what's going to happen to their brother. They fear what's going to happen to their father when he hears about it.

[ 30 : 14 ] Church, how often when we're hit with some sort of trial, do we respond with fear? Do you fear the unknown possibilities? What might happen?

What might not happen? What could happen? What will happen if this happens? Does your mind tend to go to the worst case scenario and dwell there and let that consume your thoughts?

Do you fear the future? So often we respond with fear when God's people are called to respond with faith. Don't you realize, do not be anxious is a command in scripture.

Do not fear is a command in scripture. Do not worry is a command in scripture.

Not because life is easy and there's nothing to have to work through. There's no difficult things to deal with. Far from it. But it's because we have a good and sovereign God who's reigning and ruling over all things, including our trials, even using these trials to mold us and shape us further and further into his image.

[ 31 : 31 ] Do you respond to your difficulties with fear? Joseph shows us a better way. Look there to chapter 45. And here we see the third and final response to great difficulty.

We see Joseph responds with faith. Judah passes the test. Chapter 45, verse 1 says, Then Joseph could not control himself before all who stood by him.

He cried, Make everyone go out from me. So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud so that the Egyptians heard it and the household of Pharaoh heard it.

And Joseph said to his brothers, I am Joseph. Is my father still alive? But his brothers could not answer him for they were dismayed at his presence.

I bet they were. Here they stand before the one whom they betrayed. Here they stand before the one who now has the power to destroy them for their guilt.

[ 32 : 36 ] Here they stand before their brother who they sold for dead and is now one of the most powerful men on the planet. He literally holds their fate in his hands. And yet, what does Joseph do?

What does Joseph do? Joseph shows them mercy. And more than mercy, Joseph shows them favor. Joseph shows them kindness.

Joseph is gracious to them. He blesses them. He feeds them lavishly. He rewards the guilty. He blesses them. He overlooks their sins. He forgives them.

It's a powerful response to his brother's sins against him. What could possibly lead Joseph to respond like this? How come he doesn't get to respond with despair?

Nobody in this story has had it worse than Joseph, have they? How come Joseph doesn't respond with fear? How come Joseph isn't angry with his brothers?

[ 33 : 40 ] How come he doesn't seek vengeance on them? How can he respond like this? I think he has had some time to reflect on all of this.

It's been about 22 years now since he was betrayed by his brothers and sold into slavery and taken to Egypt and left for dead. It was 22 years. That's a long time to think. And in that time, he has seen God continue to bless and to bless and to bless and to bless.

He has seen that God is at work even in this great difficulty. My God is fulfilling his purposes in and through me.

Joseph has adopted the perspective that each and every one of us can have in our difficulty. What is it? That our God is at work in all things for his glory and for our good.

Look there to verse 4. Joseph said to his brothers, come near to me, please. And they came near. And he said, I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt.

[ 34 : 55 ] You're guilty. You did that. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here. What? Don't be angry at yourselves.

Do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here. Why? For God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years.

And yet there are five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to keep alive for you many survivors.

So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh and Lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, thus says your son Joseph. God has made me Lord of all of Egypt. Come down and do not tarry. You shall dwell in the land of Goshen.

[ 35 : 55 ] You shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children and your flocks and your herds and all that you have. There I will provide for you. For there are yet five years of famine to come so that you and your household and all that you have do not come to poverty.

And now your eyes see and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my mouth that speaks to you. You must tell my father of all my honor in Egypt and of all that you have seen.

Hurry and bring my father down here. Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept. And Benjamin wept upon his neck. And he kissed all his brothers and he wept upon them.

And after that his brothers talked with them. Let me ask you a question. Who sent Joseph to Egypt? His brothers or God? Who is responsible for Joseph's enslavement? His brothers or God?

[ 36 : 59 ] On the surface level, of course, yes, his brothers sent him there. And yes, they are responsible for their sin.

They are responsible for their actions. They are guilty for their actions. But on an even greater level, do you hear what Joseph is saying? He says, God has done this.

Joseph is teaching us an important lesson here that we ought to take and apply to every circumstance of our life. Our God is always at work in all things for his glory and for our good.

Isn't this the promise that we just read from Romans 8? The anchoring confidence of the believer in trials is this. We know that for those who love God, all things work together for good.

For those who are called according to his purpose. All things, believer. All things, including, Brother Samson, the massacre of your people. All things, including the destruction of your life savings.

[ 38 : 08 ] All things, including the scattering of your church and your exile from your home. We may never know on this side of heaven, how in the world could this possibly work for good?

We don't get to peek behind the curtain. But we know there is a good and sovereign God behind the curtain. Working all things for his glory and our good. All things, Joseph, including your betrayal at the hands of your own brothers.

All things, including the lies that have been told about you. All things, including being left for dead and sold into slavery. All things, including being tempted in powerful ways and lied about again and betrayed again and put into prison again.

All of it, from beginning to end, is the work of a good and sovereign God for good. Yes, you brothers intend to kill me. Yes, that was evil.

And yet God sent me before you. God did this to preserve life. Yes, you wanted to curse me. But God sent me before you to bless you. And to preserve for you a remnant on the earth.

[ 39 : 16 ] It was not you who sent me there. But God. Christian, this is the truth. That will anchor you in your difficulties. This is the truth.

That will anchor you in your suffering. Whatever it is that you will endure. Our good and sovereign God is in it. For his glory. And our good.

Church, we believe. Our God is sovereign. Even over the sin of man. Even over the great evil of this world.

And what a comfort it is to know that there is no disaster that will come upon you that is outside of God's sovereign will. But we see it here clearly, don't we? Our God works in all things.

Even through the sin of man. To accomplish his good purposes. But where do we see this more clearly than at the cross of Christ? Who put Jesus on the cross?

[ 40 : 20 ] Why did Jesus suffer the way he did? Jesus suffered. Like Joseph, he was betrayed. He had no place to lay his head like Joseph.

He was wrongfully accused. He was wrongfully imprisoned. He was struck. He was whipped. He was beaten beyond recognition. And then he was hung on a cross to die.

Who sent Jesus to the cross? On the surface level, our sin put him there. Sinful man put him there. And they are guilty for their sin. But on an even greater level. This was the eternal plan of God. For his glory and our good.

Church, when you understand this, you will be able to respond the way that Joseph responds when someone sins against you. Not with despair.

[ 41 : 20 ] Not with fear. Not with anger. Not with bitterness. Not with vengeance. But with faith in a good and sovereign God. Do you share this perspective? I love the way the Heidelberg Catechism asks, What do you understand by the providence of God?

And the answer, Providence is the almighty and ever-present power of God by which he upholds as with his hand heaven and earth and all creatures.

And so rules them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and lean years, food and drink, health and sickness, prosperity and poverty, all things, in fact, come to us not by chance, but from his fatherly hand.

The follow-up question asks, How does this knowledge of God's creation and providence help us? Answer, we can be patient when things go against us.

Thankful when things go well. And for the future, we can have good confidence in our faithful God and Father that nothing in creation will separate us from his love.

[ 42 : 36 ] For all creatures are so completely in God's hand that without his will, they can neither move nor be moved. Because God is at work, church, you can be patient when things go against you and thankful when things go well and confident that come what may, our good and sovereign God is at work.

Do you share this perspective? Of course, this type of confidence is only possible for those who know Jesus Christ. Do you know Jesus Christ by faith?

If not, what keeps you from coming to him in faith this morning? King Jesus, like Joseph, but in a much greater way, truly died, truly rose again, truly now reigns over all the earth and resurrection power.

Do you see a picture of this here in our passage? Jesus, like Joseph, but in a much greater way, truly has power to judge the living and the dead, and we all truly have sinned against him.

We are guilty, and yet like Judah, Jesus Christ has offered his own life as a substitute for the guilty, for the weak and the defenseless.

[ 43 : 55 ] Sinners like us and like Joseph, in place of judgment, he has offered great mercy and great grace and great kindness and great favor to sinners like us.

Do you know him? And if you do, in church, let this great gospel shape the way we handle all our struggles in this life.

We need not despair because Christ has given us hope. We need not fear because Christ is with us to the end of the age. We need not respond with vengeance or with anger because God has forgiven us in Christ, so we also must forgive one another, trusting that in all things our God is at work for his glory and for our good.

Let's pray. Father, we praise you that you are a good and sovereign God. That there is no difficulty that we will endure in this life that comes to us but by your fatherly hand.

That even though we don't see in all the many ways that you're working good even in difficulty, Lord, we believe because your word has told us that you are at work for our good and for your glory.

[ 45 : 11 ] We pray, God, would we respond with this perspective when trials come. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.