

# Joy Over Bitterness

*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: 14 March 2019

[ 0 : 00 ]     Open your Bibles to Genesis chapter 41. You know, it really is neat to look back 13 years ago and see, you know, how God orchestrated everything and how God brought, you know, Robert, you know, down to the States.

And, you know, he's one of your pastors now. And it's just amazing to see that God would, you know, work things out like that. And I'll be honest with you, I basically told every single young person that I ran into on deputation, why don't you come to Peru with me?

Why don't you come to Peru with me? And the only person that ever accepted, the only person that ever said yes in the whole time that I was on deputation was Robert. And I don't know why, but I will say this, that, you know, just look at how God's used Robert.

You know, look how God's using him now. And just think, it just takes willingness. It just takes obedience. It takes somebody to say, yeah, I'll take the challenge. I'll do it. And just take that next step of obedience, even if it is going to Peru and seeing how God's used him, has been one of my, one of the joys of my life.

Because honestly, I learned from him now. And he's my hero. And I hope one day when I'm big, I can be like him. All right. So, no pun intended. All right.

[ 1 : 11 ]     Genesis chapter 41. Be praying for us tomorrow. We're leaving. Be praying for myself. Be praying for Katie that she won't lose her sanity in the next 24 hours. Mostly because of our children.

Be praying for our children that they won't lose their life in the next 24 hours. Because it seems like right when we're about to head out the door, they decide to destroy everything. Our toilet in our restroom has stopped working.

And I asked James today, I said, what have you put in the potty? He says, I'm nothing. And I said, what have you put in the potty? He says, I put my car in the toilet. I can't find it anymore.

I'm like, yeah. Because I stink and flushed it. All right. And so, now we have a toilet that doesn't work. And I've got to fix that in the next about 12 or 13 hours. So, y'all going to be praying for him that he won't be the instrument that I use to fix my toilet.

All right. Genesis chapter 41. This is one of my favorite stories. It is really just an encouraging story because it's the story of Joseph. I think Joseph is one of the most encouraging, neat, beautiful stories.

[ 2 : 11 ]     And it's because Joseph is like just the ideal story of somebody that, you know, quote, unquote, rolls with the punches. He's a guy that, you know, no matter where he ends up, he lands on his feet.

No matter where he ends up, he's always being, you know, quote, unquote, successful. He has gone through a series, it seems, like he's gone through a series of unfortunate events. It seems like everybody's against him.

The whole world's against him. And still he overcomes. And still he comes out on top. Still God uses him. And really it is amazing to see not just that but to see his attitude at the end of it all.

Because I can guarantee you that if we were to go through the things that Joseph went through that, you know, we would not have the attitude most likely. The great majority of us wouldn't have the attitude that Joseph has in this passage.

It's really interesting to see. It's really encouraging to see because Joseph is an example for us. We can learn from Joseph. We can grow through Joseph's example. If you look at verse 46, we'll just read that first part of the verse.

[ 3 : 10 ] It says, And Joseph was how old? 30 years old when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt. He's 30 years old now. How old?

He is 30 years old. He has been going through the stuff for at least 10, 15 years. 13 to 15 years. Some people think that he was sold around when he was 17.

Let's just say he was a teenager. He was 15, 16, 17 when he was sold as a slave. Just imagine all the things that he's gone through. His dad loves him. He's the favorite son of them all. And his brothers hate him because of that.

I can relate. I can understand why his brothers hate him. This was my coat of many colors that my dad gave me before he left for Israel this morning. He's sold.

He's hated by his brothers. He's sold by his brothers. They've told their dad that he's dead. He was killed by a wild animal. His dad is suffering. He shows up as a slave.

[ 4 : 07 ] He shows up in a new land. Doesn't know the language. Doesn't know the culture. Doesn't know anything about the place. Doesn't know what it's like. He doesn't deserve to be there. He did nothing to get there. He's just simply put there.

When he shows up, he's probably beaten and abused. He's a slave. He's sold as a slave to a man named Potiphar. And once again, Joseph's got a good attitude.

He's got a good heart. He's got a good spirit. And all of a sudden, through his work, he's become the manager of the whole house. He takes care of the whole house. He's got people under him by this time. And all of a sudden, Potiphar's wife accuses him of rape.

And he gets sent to jail for at least two to three years. Unjustly sent to jail. And just imagine what a 17 or 20-year-old guy suffers in an Egyptian prison.

Just imagine all the things that he suffered. Unjustly. It wasn't right. He didn't do anything to deserve it. But he ends up there. Man, I couldn't imagine the kind of pain.

[ 5 : 10 ] He thinks that things are going better. He, once again, is in charge of the jail now. They're leaving him the keys to the place because he's that trustworthy. And all of a sudden, he interprets a dream for a cupbearer and a bread maker.

And he says, don't forget me. Remember? He says, don't forget me. And what do they do? He forgets. And he's literally sitting there in his jail cell every night wondering, I'm going to get a phone call.

I'm going to get a phone call pretty soon. I'm going to get a phone call pretty soon. They're not going to forget me. They're not going to forget me. And for two years, he's just thinking, they're not going to forget me. And he's forgotten. He is forgotten by everybody.

He's forgotten by his brothers. He's forgotten by his friends. He's forgotten by his boss. He's forgotten by his prison cell mates. He's forgotten by everybody. He is the definition of what they call a cold case.

No one cares. No one wants anything to do with him. He is absolutely forgotten. And then one day, the right time and at the right place, Pharaoh has a dream and he needs somebody.

[ 6 : 13 ] And all of a sudden the cupbearer goes, oh yeah, I know a guy. And he comes before Pharaoh and how old is he? In verse 46, he is 30 years old. And all of a sudden he seems to become like an overnight success.

He seems to become an overnight success. He goes from being the guy that is taking care of the prison to the guy that's taking care of the country. He is the new prime minister. Everything has changed for him.

Look what it says. Verse 46 says, he was 30 years old when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went throughout all the land of Egypt. Imagine this, a guy that has lived in Egypt for about 15 years and he's just now seeing the sights.

He's been in prison this whole time. He's been at Potiphar's house the whole time. He's just now getting to see the sights. He's just now seeing the pyramids. Well, the pyramids weren't there yet. He's just now seeing the sights.

He's just now seeing everything. He's just now going around at 30 years old. He has lost all of his youth. He has lost his teenage years. He's not been able to see things. And now he gets to go out throughout the whole land.

[ 7 : 16 ] And you think, man, now he's going to have it good. Now he's going to have it good. But honestly, there's a few decisions that Joseph's going to have to make. Because when you go through that kind of hardship in life, as we all do, just to be honest with you, as we all do, we end up hurt.

We end up abused. We end up distraught. We end up people that hurt us. We don't even deserve it and stuff happens. You know, we all go through that. Joseph has to make some decisions of how he's going to respond to the cards life has dealt him.

Joseph's going to have to respond to what happens in his life from now on. And the way Joseph responds is a wonderful response. It's a response that we should have. And Joseph decides. But look at the abundance that he has.

First, we're going to see all the things that God's given him. It says that now he goes before Pharaoh. He leaves the presence of Pharaoh and he goes all over the place. Man, he's been poor all his life.

He's been friend poor. He's been money poor. He's been family poor. And now he gets given everything. Everything has changed. 1 Peter 5 and verse 6 says that we should humble ourselves, therefore, into the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

[ 8 : 22 ] Joseph's gotten to due time. Now God's exalting Joseph. Joseph's been humble. Joseph's been a servant. Joseph's had a good attitude. And now God exalts him. God exalts him in a tremendous way.

He is enjoying tremendous blessings. It says that he goes throughout all the land of Egypt. He goes out. He goes throughout all the land. Look at verse 48. It says he gathered up. How much?

He gathered up all the food. And not only did he gather up all the food of the seven years of plenty, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food. So he's gathering the food. He's laying up the food.

The food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same. So he gathers the food. He lays it up. He gathers the corn. In verse 49 it says, And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea.

There's abundance everywhere. It's like God is exaggerating when he writes these verses. He just keeps repeating and repeating and repeating himself. When God allows Moses to write these words, it is just repetition one after another.

[ 9 : 19 ] There's extreme abundance. There's been extreme pain. Okay? There's been extreme suffering. And it seems like it's been a super long time. And it just seems endless. It seems like it's never going to end.

But now things have changed. Joseph is going through tremendous abundance. Not only is he going through abundance, but the earth around him is going through abundance. Look at verse 47. It says, And in the seven plenteous years, the earth brought forth by what?

Handfuls. It brought forth by handfuls. And not only that, look at verse 48. It says, And he gathered up all the food of the seven years. Once again, the seven years of abundance. Look at verse 49. What is it like? He says, He gathered corn as what?

Sand of the sea. I mean, it is all over the place. There is corn all over the place. And there is plenty to gather. Not only does it say sand of the sea, but look at the next thing.

It says, Sand of the sea very much until he left numbering. He just stopped counting for it was without number. I mean, come on, Moses. Stop repeating yourself. Very much without number because he stopped not counting.

[10:20] He just stopped counting. There is so much sand of the sea. So much corn. He is giving this idea that there is extreme abundance. There is extreme blessing. There is extreme peace for Joseph.

A completely different point of view of what he has been living now. Now he is living in a different scenario. Let me just pause right here and say this. No matter the difficulty, the suffering, the tribulation, the hurt that you are going through, it is always temporary.

It doesn't seem like it at the time. It just seems like forever. When you are going through suffering, when you are going through pain, when you are going through hurt, it just seems like the days are longer and the nights are longer.

Man, the stress and the betrayal and whatever. It just seems like it is forever. And it is never going to end. And that is the biggest lie that Satan wants to give you.

That it is never going to end. And let me just tell you, it is just for a little bit. It is just for a little bit. Joseph suffers for 13 to 15 years. It seems like a long time. Not when you are 80.

[11:24] Not when you are 90. 13, 15 years. It seems like a super long time. But don't worry. Better times are coming. You say, well, Brother David, you don't understand.

I have got a disease. I am going to live with the rest of my life. Better days are coming. One day it is going to be forever. And right now it is a light momentary affliction. And it hurts, man. It hurts like the dickens, as my dad says.

And my mom. They are not here to correct me. It hurts. It is a light momentary affliction. It is for a time.

And Joseph's life changes completely. And he is out of it now. And he has to decide how he is going to respond. Because you know what? Once you get out of that tough time. Once you go through that tough time.

Once the years go by. There are some certain attitudes that can develop from that. You can become very hardened. Or you become very humble. You can look back on that and go, I don't know why I went through that.

[12:19] You can get mad at God. Why did he let me go through that? Why all that pain? Why all that suffering? Why did he take me from my family? Why did he let me suffer? Why did that person betray me? Why did the ministry do this to me? Why did this person do this to me? Why did my parents do this to me?

Why did my kids do this to me? Why, why, why, why, why? You can be hardened by it. And you can just get prideful about it. You can start thinking, well, things have changed now. And I pulled myself up by my own bootstraps.

When it was time for Pharaoh to call me before him, I'm the one that had the intellect to tell him about the dreams that nobody else could tell him. When it came time to be able to speak eloquently, I'm the one that did it. When he called me, when the Pharaoh called me, I got a good haircut.

And that's why I got the job. I did something special. I did something good. And I'm the one that got myself out of it. You become very hardened by it. And you forget God, right?

In the tough times, in the dark times, when you're in that dungeon, when you're in that prison cell, the only person you have to speak to is God. And the only place you can look is up. And the only person you can be around is speaking to the Lord.

[ 13 : 15 ] The only one that wants to hear you is the Lord. Everybody else just forgets you. But once that passes, you become hardened because you don't recognize what God is doing.

You don't recognize what God's doing. But Joseph stays faithful. He stays faithful to the Lord. Throughout all of this, he stays faithful.

He doesn't become hardened toward God. He doesn't forget God. You know, back in the day, he had to be serving everybody. Back in the day, he needed God's help because he was broke. He didn't have friends.

He didn't have anybody. So he needed God. But now that he's successful, he has plenty of people that need him. He can become very hardened, very prideful. And one of the things that happens is that through trials and through afflictions, a lot of times our heart just becomes hard.

It just becomes so hard. Let me tell you that in the ministry, you get hurt so many times that all of a sudden you just become hard and you become insensitive. In the ministry, a lot of times you suffer.

[ 14 : 13 ] I'm just speaking on my behalf. You just suffer sometimes and you just become hard, become insensitive. People's problems don't bother you like they used to. You don't find as much joy in reading God's word as you used to because you just become hard.

God put me through this. Man, serving God worked out great so far, hadn't it? You become hardened. Or you can stay humble.

You can stay humble like Joseph. Joseph, everything about Joseph has changed. Look at verse 45. Look at his name. And Pharaoh called Joseph's name that. Zaphnath-Paneah.

I'd rather be called Joseph. He's got a weird Egyptian name. And now he's got an Egyptian wife. It says, and he gave him his wife, Azanath, the daughter of Potipharah, priest of On.

So now Moses has shaved his head. He's shaved his beard. He's wearing Egyptian clothes. He's got a pagan wife with a pagan father-in-law for a priest, a priest's pagan father-in-law.

[ 15 : 19 ] Now he's working in this Egyptian area. And you would think, man, he's just going to turn on God. He's going to turn on God. But the same hardworking Joseph that was working in Potiphar's house is the same hardworking Joseph now.

The same hardworking Joseph that was in jail, he's the same hardworking Joseph now. And he stays faithful to God. He stays humble. And he stays faithful to him. Why? Because he understands that God is doing something in his life.

The reason a lot of people turn on God after going through trials, or one of the reasons that a lot of people turn on God, they abandon the faith, they leave God behind, is because they go, I went through this trial and I don't understand it.

Why would God, if he's so good, let me do this? Let me go through this. Why would he let my dad die? Why would he let me grow up this way? Why would he let me suffer this way? Why would he?

Why? But Joseph constantly understands and he keeps being faithful. He's got this great opportunity to be filled with pride.

[ 16 : 22 ] But he continues being faithful. Look at his children's names in verse 50. It says, And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came.

God's been so good that he even gets kids before famine comes. Gives them a couple of years to grow them. He says, Before the famine came, which Asenath, the daughter of Potiphar, a priest of Onbaran, And Joseph called the name of the firstborn.

What is it? What's his name? Is that an Egyptian name? Nope. It's a Jewish name. It says, Pharaoh might call me something else.

I'm calling my kid Manasseh. I'm calling my kid a Jewish name. I'm going to give him a Jewish name because I'm still following my God, my people. We're still going to be faithful to him. I'm going to name him Manasseh. And the second one, he's not going to have an Egyptian name either.

He's going to be named Ephraim. Because that's a Jewish name. He says, I'm going to stay faithful to God. And he says, I'm going to continue serving him. Why? Because I understand that God has a purpose through all of this.

[ 17 : 23 ] If you look further ahead in Genesis 45, 5, Joseph says, Now therefore be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that you sold me hither, speaking to his brothers. For God did send me before you to preserve life.

His brothers sell him into slavery. And Joseph says, no, you didn't sell me. God sent me. No, you didn't do this to me. God worked it in my favor.

No, you didn't hurt me. God was molding me. No, you didn't put me in jail. No, no, no. God was working things out for my good and his glory. No, you didn't win.

I'm more than a conqueror. And so he chooses to be humble instead of hardened. But the biggest one is the following one. He chooses joy over bitterness.

Let me just tell you that that's the hardest one right there. The lack of forgiveness, bitterness in a person's heart because of what they've been through. Let's just be honest.

[ 18 : 20 ] If Joseph was put on Dr. Phil, I mean, it would be a four-part series. This thing, I mean, what did you go through?

They sold you as a slave? I mean, New York Times bestseller on that book. This guy has been through it. They sold you as a slave. They sent you to another country? And with a smile on his face, he goes, yeah, uh-huh.

Yeah, yeah. Great experience. They put you in jail for two years. Yeah, I made a lot of friends. They beat you? Yeah, I got tough.

I got a strong back. He's got a good attitude about it. He chooses to be joyful instead of bitter. Let me just stop right here and tell you that every single person in this room has been hurt.

And that's just the world we live in, man. It hurts to live here. It really does. Romans 8 says that even the earth is moaning for that day where everything is going to be made right.

[ 19 : 27 ] But until he comes, it kind of stinks. Because mom hurts me and dad hurts me. Brother and sister hurt me. Best friend hurts me.

Brother hurts me. Everybody hurts me. I'm hurt. Hear stories of abuse. Hear stories of people that have been constantly hurt, their childhood destroyed.

I could just tell you story after story that I hear in Peru. Girls that thinking to be loved, they need to give their bodies and give themselves.

Afterwards, only to be left aside and be sitting on the roof of their house, leaning over. About to jump until their brother comes up and grabs them from behind.

15-year-old girl wanting to commit suicide because she just feels useless and dirty. People are hurt. We are just wicked people and we get hurt.

[ 20 : 32 ] And there's nothing you can do about it. It's just part of life. You see, bitterness is going to be a real nasty thing in your life. I read this from a really good preacher that I heard for a lot of years.

I think you guys know him. He wrote this. It says, bitterness causes you to blame others as well as your past. It's always somebody else's fault.

It's always some other occasion's fault. It's always something that I went through. Bitterness doesn't allow you to have a present or a future.

It just forces you to live in the past. Haven't you met those people? Nobody wants to nod. I've met them.

I know myself. It just causes you to live in the past. You just can't let it go. You're always bringing it up. Always talking about it. Every time somebody talks to you, that's got to come up.

[ 21 : 31 ] Well, if it weren't for that one time. Well, if it weren't for that. Bitterness will cause you to be sharp and rough toward people. You know, the bad thing about bitterness. The book of Hebrews calls it a root of bitterness.

And roots just spread everywhere. Bitterness is kind of like a virus. That, you know, a lot of times it just affects everything. It just spreads. And Stephen, you might not have done anything against me.

But I'm ticked at that guy. And I'm going to take it out on you. If I'm hurt, I'm going to hurt others. Bitterness will cause you to remember all the things that have been done to you in grave detail.

Grave detail. Well, I remember exactly what he said. I remember what she did. I remember what she said. I remember. Oh, I remember the day.

I remember the weather. I remember what clothes I was wearing. I remember. I remember. I remember when my husband said. I remember when my wife said. I remember.

[ 22 : 32 ] And it causes you to constantly remember every little detail. You live in the past. It causes you to doubt people. Bitter people can never trust anyone.

Because they say, oh, I've been hurt by everybody. I bet I'll be hurt by you too. I know what your people are like. I can see it in your eyes. You're that kind of person. Why is it always so quiet every time I preach?

Bitterness will cause you to be identified by your past. Oh, that's the guy that. Oh, that lady. You remember that?

You remember that? Yeah. They're identified by that. They can always bring it up in a conversation. They can always turn the conversation in that direction.

Anytime that person's name is brought up, you can see the blood boiling. You can see the anger. Hey, I went out to eat with so-and-so. Oh, really?

[ 23 : 33 ] Well, tell him he still owes me money. Dude, it was 15 years ago. It was 10 bucks. I don't care. I remember. Bitterness will cause you to focus on one single thing so long that you become that very thing you hate.

I'll never be like him. I'll never be like her. I'll never do to others what they did to me. I'll never, I'll never, I'll never. And all of a sudden, they turn around and they start doing the same thing.

How many kids grow up saying, I'll never drink like my dad? And they end up doing the same thing. Bitterness will cause you to focus on yourself so much that it's all about you and not about God.

I've been hurt. I have been maligned. I have been betrayed. I, I, I, I, I, I, I. Bitterness is the jail that you build so that you can suffer in it.

One person said that bitterness is the poison that you drink hoping that the other person dies. Bitterness will destroy your life.

[ 24 : 46 ] You know, there's a man that came to work for Abraham Lincoln in his cabinet. And very soon after he came to work for him, Abraham Lincoln fired him. And they said, man, he was a very qualified guy.

He's a great guy. He had all the qualifications. And why did you fire him? He said, I didn't like his face. He said, well, that's not his fault. He goes, any man over 40 years old, his face is his fault.

You can see it on him, can't you? That fist face, just angry, that bitter, that hurt. The bitter person is the child of God that's been forgiven of so much that it's not willing to forgive.

But Joseph chooses the opposite. Joseph chooses joy. I've got to hurry. Egypt has been a place of affliction for him for so long.

But look what it is now. And it's all in the kids' names. It's all in the kids' names. Look at, look at verse 50, verse 51. It says, and Joseph called the name of the firstborn. What is it? Manasseh.

[ 25 : 51 ] Manasseh. Why? For God did set... No, you've got to put it on the right verse, guys. Come on, help me out. Genesis 41, 51. And Joseph called the name of the firstborn.

Manasseh. Why? For God hath made me forget all my toil. Hi, my name's Joseph. I'd like to introduce you to my son, Amnesia.

Literally what he's saying. He made me forget. He made me forget my toil. He made me forget my suffering. He made me forget my father's house. I don't forget my brother and sister. I don't forget that I love them.

I don't forget my dad that's at home. I forget that my brothers put me in a stinking pit and sold me as a slave. I forget that. He said, I'm going to name my kid Manasseh. Because God has given me a chance to forget.

I'm going to choose to forget. He says, God hath made me forget all the toil. Not only that, he names his first son Manasseh. My son, Amnesia. Number two, verse 52.

[ 26 : 54 ] It says, in the name of the second called he Ephraim. Why? Because God hath caused me to be what? Fruitful. You know what Ephraim means? Double fruitful. Twice as fruitful.

Man. And where did he cause them to be fruitful? In the land of my affliction. See, a lot of people go, well, David, I could be joyful if I didn't have to be around them.

I could be joyful if I didn't have to see them every Thanksgiving. I could be joyful if I were to move. I could be joyful if I didn't have to see their face every day. I could be joyful.

I could be joyful. Uh-uh. Now, Joseph says, I've been fruitful in the land of my affliction. When he's in power, he's not trying to make other people suffer.

Now he's in charge. He's the prime minister of the country. You don't see him calling the jailer and putting him in jail. You don't see him taking Potiphar to court and suing him for slander.

[ 27 : 54 ] You don't see him mistreating other people. Even when his brothers come, he just, lays it on them, gives them all the food they want. Why? Because he forgave. He chose joy over bitterness.



Joseph had recognized that others meant to do evil. I'll tell you what. People mean to do evil. And they do. But our God's bigger. Our God's greater than that. Genesis 50, 20 says, but as for you, you thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good.

In Spanish it said, you meant it for evil, but God encaminarlo. He made a way to good. He detoured it to good.

He made a different way. People mean evil towards you all the time. But God just straightens it out. God makes it for good.

Bitterness will rob you of your joy and peace. We've got to learn to think on the right things. You're never going to forget. Many times you're never going to forget the hurt that you've suffered.

[ 28 : 58 ] But you can choose to forget. Philippians chapter 4 and verse 8 says, Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

You might not be able to forget the events, but you can choose to think on the right things. You don't have to seek to hurt the people that have hurt you. You don't have to seek revenge. You don't have to allow the events in your life to cause a bad attitude in your heart.

You don't have to be the victim. You can run to Jesus. He's going to make things right, and you can forgive, kind of like He forgave you. Amen. Amen.