

The title of this morning's sermon is, "*The 'End Intended by the Lord' in Trials.*"

This is our 5<sup>th</sup> sermon on trials. Let me briefly review what we've discussed in the previous four...

1. In the first sermon we discussed how trials test and prove our faith.
2. In the second sermon we discussed how we can count it all joy when we experience trials b/c they produce patience.
3. In the third sermon we discussed how that patience produces maturity.
4. And last week we discussed persevering through trials. We looked at James 1:12 and most of James 5:11.

This morning we're going to finish looking at **James 5:11**. Please turn there.

**James 5:11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end *intended by the Lord*—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.**

At the end of the verse, notice the words **the Lord is very compassionate and merciful**:

- It doesn't say the Lord is **compassionate and merciful**; it says He's **VERY compassionate and merciful**.
- Other translations like the NIV, NLT and NAS say **He is FULL of compassion and mercy**.

Now for a moment, let's think about some places in Scripture where God looks **very compassionate and merciful**...I'm going to give you a few examples that came to mind for me...

Manasseh was the wickedest king in the OT. It literally seemed like there's no false god he didn't worship, and no command he didn't break, including sacrificing his own sons. God punished him by taking him into captivity. When that happened, please listen to this: **2 Chr 33:12 When [Manasseh] was in affliction, he implored the LORD...humbled himself greatly...<sup>13</sup> prayed to Him; and [God] received his entreaty...and BROUGHT HIM BACK TO JERUSALEM INTO HIS KINGDOM.**

That's pretty merciful: God didn't just forgive Manasseh, He even restored him as king.

The Ninevites were some of the wickedest people in the OT, but when they repented God spared them. Jonah was so angry about them being able to live that he wanted to die. God rebuked Jonah saying: **Jonah 4:11 Should I not pity – or have compassion on – that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left?**" God had compassion even on these terribly evil people.

Jesus told the Parable of the Prodigal Son to reveal the compassionate heart of God the Father: **Luke 15:20 [The Prodigal Son] arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and HAD COMPASSION, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.** We read this and we say, "*Wow, this makes God look very compassionate and merciful.*"

When Jesus was being crucified in **Luke 23:34 He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."**

These are wonderful examples of God being **very compassionate and merciful**. These are the types of places we might expect to read those words. But it's not any of these places where we read about God being **very compassionate and merciful**. We read these words in a verse discussing Job.

My suspicion is...

- If someone said, "*Show me an example in Scripture of God looking **compassionate and merciful***" you wouldn't take them to Job.
- If someone said, "*I'm struggling w/ whether God is **compassionate and merciful***" you don't tell them about Job.

But this verse says that even w/ Job, God was still **very compassionate and merciful**.

And if we can read about the man who suffered the worst trials in history AND it can still say these words, that tells us something about God that we need to keep in mind. And this brings us to our first lesson...

## LESSON 1: EVEN IN THE WORST TRIALS "THE LORD IS [STILL] VERY COMPASSIONATE AND MERCIFUL"

Trials – especially those Job experienced – don't make God look **VERY compassionate and merciful**. If anything, trials make God look like He's NOT compassionate and merciful. We tend to think if God was **compassionate and merciful** He wouldn't let us experience trials.

I would like to encourage you to circle the words **the Lord is very compassionate and merciful** and write "*in trials.*" I think it's important to remember these words, especially when we're going through trials, b/c that's when we're most tempted to forget God isn't these things.

Remembering God's character is always important, but it's especially important when we're experiencing trials. I say this for two reasons:

1. First, it can be a great encouragement when we're going through trials to think about **the Lord [being] very compassionate and merciful**. We can remember that no matter what we're going through, there's still an amount of compassion and mercy God is showing us.
2. The second reason it's important to remember these words is it helps us resist the temptation to sin against God when we're in trials.
  - a. Trials tempt us to get angry w/ God, question God – or perhaps worst of all – turn from God.
  - b. We can be tempted to think God has forgotten us or forsaken us, so we need to remind ourselves – and we need to remind ourselves w/ Scripture, not w/ foolish, worldly clichés – that even in the midst of trials **the Lord is [still] very compassionate and merciful**.

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And here's the obvious question: HOW was God **very compassionate and merciful** when it came to Job and his terrible trials? There are actually a number of ways – even w/ Job – we can see God's **compassion and mercy**...

First, God put restrictions on what Satan could do to Job. We might not be comfortable w/ those restrictions, and they might not be the restrictions we'd like God to set, but He established restrictions nonetheless:

- **Job 1:12** The LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has *is* in your power; **ONLY DO NOT LAY A HAND ON HIS PERSON.**”
- **Job 2:6** The LORD said to Satan, “Behold, he *is* in your hand, **BUT SPARE HIS LIFE.**”

God's compassion and mercy prevented Satan from doing everything he wanted to do to Job.

Second, Job was a tremendous man, but like we saw last week...

- He criticized God.
- He accused God.
- He was very demanding w/ God: He said God should give him an audience and explain why he was suffering like he was.
- And there were times Job was very self-righteous, declaring his innocence and goodness...and even this was a criticism of God b/c it was his way of saying God wasn't treating him the way he should be treated.

You say, “*Okay, well you're criticizing Job, but how are you pointing out God's compassion and mercy?*” God's **compassion and mercy** was revealed when He showed up...

God didn't punish Job – or worse kill him – for his criticisms, accusations and arrogance. I'd like to think there aren't any parents here who'd let their children talk the way Job talked, but God let Job do that and all He did was ask him some difficult questions. While I'm sure none of us would like being questioned the way Job was questioned, I think we can say – considering the way Job accused God and criticized Him – God was pretty **compassionate and merciful** to him.

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Another way God's **compassion and mercy** is shown in the way He blessed Job after the trials were over. In the Amplified **James 5:11** says **you have seen the Lord's [purpose and how He richly blessed him in the] end.**

This was one of the main lessons from last week's sermon that God blesses after we've endured – or passed – trials, and we saw that Job...

**Job 42:10** The LORD restored Job's losses...[giving him] twice as much as he had before...**12** The LORD blessed the latter *days* of Job more than his beginning...he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. <sup>13</sup> He also had seven sons and three daughters. **16** Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren *for* four generations.

So another way **the Lord is [shown to be] very compassionate and merciful** w/ Job is shown in the way He blessed him when his trials were over.

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The final way **the Lord was [shown to be] very compassionate and merciful** w/ Job is contained in the words **SEEN THE END INTENDED BY THE LORD.** Yes, what Job went through was

terrible, and yes, to him and his friends it didn't make sense, but to God there was an intended end in everything he went through.

James' readers were suffering through trials and he wanted to reassure them that God had a purpose – or an intended end – in their trials, just like he did w/ Job...and just like He does w/ us.

And this brings us to Lesson 2...

## LESSON 2 (PART I): THERE'S AN "END INTENDED BY THE LORD" IN TRIALS...

The words **seen the end intended by the Lord** are wonderful: you might underline them, circle them, highlight them. Do whatever you need to make sure you don't forget them. These words are teaching that whatever trials we experience, God has a purpose in them:

- **NIV you have seen what the Lord finally brought about**
- **ESV you have seen the purpose of the Lord**
- **NAS you have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings**

God doesn't allow trials except that He has an **end intended** in them. There's always a reason for our suffering.

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Earlier I mentioned how Job accused God and was prideful. One of the ends intended by the Lord w/ Job was the removal of this pride and self-righteousness. Please listen to these verses...

- After Job's final speech, **Job 32:1 [says Job's friends] ceased answering [him], because HE WAS RIGHTEOUS IN HIS OWN EYES.** After Job finished speaking, this is how he felt about himself: he thought he was righteous.
- But after God's first round of questioning, in **Job 40:3 Job said, "Behold, I AM VILE."**
- God questioned Job a second time and in **Job 42:6 Job said, "Therefore I ABHOR (or hate) MYSELF,** (and listen to these wonderful words...) **and REPENT in dust and ashes."**

Job went from **righteous in his own eyes**, to **vile** in his own eyes. He **abhorred** himself and most wonderfully he repented.

Now let me ask you this: was that a beautiful **end intended by the Lord** in Job's trials?

It was, and sometimes one of the ends intended by the Lord through trials in our lives is...

- The removal of pride.
- The removal of self-righteousness.
- The removal of areas that prevent us from looking like Christ.

In James 1:2-4 we learned how trials produce maturity, and we said maturity is becoming more like Christ. Often, for us to become more like Christ those parts of us that aren't like Christ have to be removed, and trials will do that.

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But here's what's interesting...

If you look back at the words of **James 5:11** it says **YOU have seen the end intended by the Lord.** Who is the “**you**”? It’s us, the readers. **WE** can see the end intended by the Lord. But let me ask you this: who couldn’t see the end intended by the Lord? At least not at the time?

The Book of Job is 42 chapters long. The first two chapters show the interaction between God and Satan that sets in motion the entire rest of the book. As we read through Job we have an understanding of everything that took place. We might not like what happened to Job – we might be uncomfortable w/ it – but we know that everything that happened w/ Job happened b/c of the interaction between God and Satan at the beginning of the book.

But who never saw that interaction? Job! And this brings us to the next part of Lesson 2...

## LESSON 2: (PART I) THERE’S AN “END INTENDED BY THE LORD” IN TRIALS (PART II) BUT WE OFTEN CAN’T SEE IT...

Job had no idea what was going on behind the scenes. All he had was...

- A terrible wife telling him to curse God and commit suicide...
- And terrible friends telling him he was a hypocrite and wicked sinner.

But the truth is God thought Job was a great man:

- God said Job was His servant.
- He said there was nobody like him on earth.
- He said he was blameless and upright and feared God and shunned evil.

But Job didn’t know God thought all these things.

Job had to ask himself?

- Why am I going through this?
- Is God angry w/ me?
- Had God forsaken me?

Job didn’t hear from God until the very end of the book, and here’s what’s interesting: even at that point, God still didn’t give Job any answers regarding his suffering: instead of giving him answers, God gave him questions.

And what that means for us – as the readers of the book – is we don’t get any answers either. We see the interaction between God and Satan, but we don’t know why God would let Satan do those things:

- We know God could’ve stopped Satan: He stopped him from doing certain things.
- Why didn’t God stop Satan from doing other things, or why didn’t God stop Satan from doing ALL those things?

We don’t know. We’re never told.

But then...

In the New Testament, in **James 5:11** we’re able to read: **You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord – that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.**

So we can't know why God let Job suffer the way He did, but we can know there was an **end intended by the Lord** in it...we just can't always see what it is.

Think about Abraham for a moment, and the story that got us started on this discussion of trials...

**Gen 22:1** says **God TESTED Abraham.**

So who knew it was a test and who didn't know?

- God knew it was a test.
- We know it was a test b/c we read **Gen 22:1.**

But Abraham didn't know it was a test. All Abraham knew were the words of **Gen 22:2** **“Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”**

Then Abraham didn't hear from God again until **verse 12** when the Angel of the Lord said, **“Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”**

At that moment Abraham learned it was a test, but from verses 2 to 12 – for those three days, I suspect the three most painful days of Abraham's life – Abraham had no idea it was a test.

The point is Job and Abraham had no idea why they were facing the trials and tests they were facing. They didn't know what God was doing or why He was doing it.

And I'm sure you can guess the application for us: we don't often know why God allows certain trials in our lives.

And since this is the case it brings up another important point, which brings us to the rest of Lesson 2...

**LESSON 2 (PART I): THERE'S AN “END INTENDED BY THE LORD” IN TRIALS (PART II) BUT WE OFTEN CAN'T SEE IT (PART III) SO WE MUST WALK BY FAITH.**

We talk about walking by faith, and Job and Abraham were men who really walked by faith when it came to trials. When I say they were men who didn't know what God was doing, I mean that in a very literal way. Abraham and Job went through their trials before Moses was even born, and he's the man who wrote the first five books of the Bible. So Job and Abraham had to go through their trials w/o any of the Scripture we have to encourage us:

- They couldn't read James 1:2-4 and James 5:11
- They couldn't read Rom 8:28.
- They couldn't read about all the other heroes of the faith and how God worked in their lives.

So these men were really walking by faith. They didn't know the end intended by the Lord.

But even if we have Scripture...

- We don't always know what God is doing or why He's doing it.
- We don't always know the end intended by the Lord.

So we're also forced to walk by faith.

And really, this is what faith is: it's trusting God when can't see or know: **Heb 11:1 faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**

But even if we can't always know what God is doing through the trials He allows in our lives, here's what we can know:

- We can know the trials are producing patience which is producing maturity...like we discussed in James 1:2-4.
- We can know there's an **end intended by the Lord.**
- We can know our suffering isn't meaningless.
- We can know there's something good God wants to do...and is doing.
- We can know that through it all – despite how it might look – God is still being **very compassionate and merciful.**
- We can know God loves us, He is for us, and He always works in our best interests.

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Now I was really trying to think of someone who could tie all this together for us, an example we could look at:

- I wanted someone who suffered trials...
- I wanted someone where it was clear there was an end intended by the Lord in the trials...
- And I wanted someone who couldn't see the trials while he was in them, and therefore had to walk by faith.

Please turn to **Gen 37**. We won't turn back to James...

We're going to look at Joseph, and as a note when I was going over my sermon w/ Katie, I kept swapping Joseph and Jesus' names, and she said it would really confuse everyone. So if I do that again, please correct me.

What – or I should say – whom is this chapter about? We know it's about Joseph. This is when Joseph is sold into slavery. If your bibles have some title for this chapter it probably says something about Joseph. You might even have a title for this entire section from chapters 37 to chapter 50 saying, "*The story of Joseph.*"

Now please look at **verse 2...**

<sup>2a</sup> **This is the history of Jacob.**

This brings us to Lesson 3...

## LESSON 3: THE “END INTENDED BY THE LORD” IS ULTIMATELY ABOUT JESUS

That’s confusing, isn’t it? These chapters are all about Joseph, but it says **This is the history of Jacob**. It doesn’t seem to make sense...but it actually makes perfect sense if we understand God has an intended end in everything we go through, and it’s always ultimately about Jesus.

This was the case w/ Joseph. **Verse 2** says **this is the history of Jacob** b/c Jesus would come from or through Jacob, not Joseph...so the greater focus is on Jacob...even when it’s talking about Joseph.

It was about getting Joseph into Egypt...so he could bring Jacob – his father – into Egypt...so Jacob’s sons, Joseph’s brothers, could get into Egypt...and their sons could get into Egypt...and so they could have sons in Egypt and become 12 tribes in Egypt...and those 12 tribes would grow and become a nation in Egypt...and then if you go forward 1,500 yrs that nation would produce a Savior.

So what that means is everything Joseph went through, all the trials he experienced, everything he suffered, was ultimately about Jesus.

Take Abraham and Job for example:

- Abraham’s trial – sacrificing his son – was about Abraham...and Isaac, but if you remember when we looked at that story in detail, I hope I made it clear that it was ultimately about Jesus. Abraham and Isaac is the greatest picture in the OT of God the Father sacrificing His Son Jesus Christ. The foreshadowing and prefiguring of what would happen w/ Christ is tremendous.
- Last week we looked at Job and saw how a righteous man suffered terribly and then did what?
  - He mediated for his friends...
  - He interceded for his friends...
  - He saved his friends...
  - But I hope I made it clear it was ultimately about the only perfectly righteous man who suffered and then interceded for, or mediated for, or saved His friends.

The point is whatever these people went through – whether it’s Abraham, Job, Joseph, David, Esther, Isaiah, Jeremiah, you name the person – the end intended by the Lord is ultimately about Jesus.

And the lesson for us is when we suffer, the end intended by the Lord is ultimately about Jesus...

- It’s about us becoming more like Him.
- When we’re going through trials:
  - It’s about us being able to encourage other believers in their relationships w/ Christ...
  - It’s about us being able to reveal Christ to unbelievers...
- It’s about Christ being glorified through us. It’s about people – whether they’re believers or unbelievers – being able to see Christ in us. Think about the man born blind. The disciples asked, **“Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”** And Jesus said in **John 9:3** **“Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.** That man’s trial – being born blind – was about ultimately about God’s glory.

This will be our last sermon on trials – I think – and if there’s one exclamation point I could put on everything we’ve discussed up to this point, it would be that our trials are ultimately about Jesus.

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So as we look at these verses about Joseph, please do a few things...

- First, look for how Jesus is revealed through Joseph...like He was revealed through Abraham and Isaac, and like He was revealed through Job.
- Second, consider how terrible the trials really would’ve been for Joseph, and how blind he was – at least at first – to what God was doing.
- Third, consider the wonderful end God intended by all this. Joseph couldn’t see what God was doing, but He was doing something great. There was a beautiful end God intended.

Let’s skip to verse 13...

**13 And Israel (or Jacob) said to Joseph, “Are not your brothers feeding *the flock* in Shechem? Come, I will SEND YOU TO THEM.”**

**So he said to him, “Here I am.”**

**14 Then he said to him, “Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me.” So HE SENT HIM out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.**

Joseph’s father sent him to his brothers, like Jesus’ Father sent Him to His brethren, the Jews: **Matt 15:24 [Jesus said] said, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”**

**15 Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, “What are you SEEKING?”**

**16 So he said, “I am SEEKING my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding *their flocks*.”**

Notice the repetition of the word **seeking**. Joseph was seeking after his lost brethren, revealing the heart of Christ in seeking after His lost brethren:

- **Luke 15:4** What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?
- **Luke 19:10** The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

**17 And the man said, “They have departed from here, for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’” So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.**

**18 Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him.**

When Joseph came to his brothers they would not receive him, and when Jesus came to His brethren, they would not receive Him: **John 1:11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.**

**19 Then they said to one another, “Look, this dreamer is coming! 20 Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, ‘Some wild beast has devoured him.’ We shall see what will become of his dreams!”**

It's hard to put into words how evil this really was; we wouldn't believe it if it wasn't written here.

But even in these dark verses – w/ Joseph's own brothers plotting his death – Jesus is beautifully revealed, whose own brethren plotted His death: **John 11:53 Then, from that day on, they plotted to put [Jesus] to death.**

**<sup>21</sup> But Reuben heard *it*, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, “Let us not kill him.” <sup>22</sup> And Reuben said to them, “Shed no blood, *but* cast him into this pit which *is* in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him”—that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.**

Reuben was the oldest, he was the leader, he knew Joseph was innocent, he knew he shouldn't be murdered, and he tried to deliver him out of his brother's hands. He looks like Pilate, the leader of the Jews: he knew Jesus was innocent, he knew Jesus shouldn't be murdered, and he tried to deliver Jesus out of their hands: **Matt 27:22 [The Jews said], “Let Him be crucified!” <sup>23</sup> Then [Pilate] said, “Why, what evil has He done?**

**<sup>23</sup> So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph *of* his tunic, the tunic of *many* colors that *was* on him.**

Joseph was stripped of his **tunic**, like Jesus was stripped of His tunic: **John 19:23** – and I'm not changing any of the words – **Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments...AND ALSO THE TUNIC. Now the TUNIC was without seam, woven from the top in one piece.**

**<sup>24</sup> Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit *was* empty; *there was* no water in it.**

Joseph descended into the pit, like Christ descended into the pit, or the grave: **Eph 4:9 Now this, “He ascended”—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?**

**<sup>25a</sup> And they sat down to eat a meal.**

Again, almost unimaginable evil: they throw him in a pit where they knew he'd die, while they sit down to eat. It's hard to believe they could treat anyone like this, say nothing about their own brother.

But the indifference toward Joseph when they thought he would die, is similar to the indifference shown to Jesus when He was on the cross: **Matt 27: 41 The chief priests [were] mocking with the scribes and elders.**

**<sup>25b</sup> Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to**

carry *them* down to Egypt. <sup>26</sup> So Judah said to his brothers, “What profit *is there* if we kill our brother and conceal his blood?”

His only reason for not wanting to murder Joseph is it wouldn't make them money...

<sup>27</sup> Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he *is* our brother *and* our flesh.” And his brothers listened. <sup>28</sup> Then Midianite traders passed by; so *the brothers* pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit,

Joseph was lifted out of the pit, in a sense brought back to life, and it pictures Jesus being raised from the dead: **Psa 16:10** – which Peter and Paul apply to Jesus – says **For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.**

**28b and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty *shekels* of silver.**

Joseph was sold for the price of a slave, like Jesus was sold for the price of a slave.

**28b And they took Joseph to Egypt.**

Jesus was also taken to Egypt: **Matt 2:14 [Joseph] took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt.**

We just read some very dark verses, but w/ the words **took Joseph to Egypt**, what are you seeing? You're seeing the **end intended by the Lord**: Joseph is in Egypt and within a few decades the entire nation of Israel will be in Egypt.

But here's the question: do you think Joseph had any idea why all this was happening? Was he sitting in that pit saying, “*I can see why God is doing this: He wants to get me to Egypt, so He can get all my family to Egypt, where they can become a nation, and where I can save the known world from starvation and in the process become an amazing type of Christ!*”

Later, when Joseph was...

- Thrown in prison for doing what was right after being falsely accused by Potiphar's wife...
- When the cupbearer got out of prison and forgot all about him...
- When he was separated from his family for over 20 yrs, unable to know how they were doing...
- And any other trials he experienced...

Could he could see **the end intended by the Lord**? No, he couldn't, so what did he have to do? He had to walk by faith.

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Now this is only part of chapter 37, and there are as many other parallels between Joseph and Jesus in the following chapters but we don't have time to read them verse-by-verse. So I'm going to share a few select verses w/ you.

Something you might consider doing as a family is reading through the other chapters and look for the parallels between Joseph and Jesus. Especially encourage your children to share any ways they see Joseph as a type of Christ.

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For now, here's what you need to know...

There was a gap between the time Joseph's brothers rejected him and the time they saw him again. You could say there was a long period of time between Joseph's initial relationship – or when he was first sent to his brother – and the second time they see him:

- He was sold into slavery at 17 and they didn't see him again until he was 39; they were apart for 22 yrs.
- For Jesus and His brethren – the Jews – it's been a little over 2,000 yrs.

And while Joseph and his brothers were apart, some things happened...

Joseph went from being the lowly, despised rejected brother to ruler over everyone and everything. Please look at **Gen 41:38** and listen to the way Pharaoh spoke of Joseph and how much it looked forward to Christ...

**Gen 41:38** Pharaoh said, “Can we find *such a one* as this, a man in whom *is* the Spirit of God?” Just like the Spirit of God was in Jesus...

**<sup>39</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “There is no one as discerning and wise as you. <sup>40</sup> You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; ONLY IN REGARD TO THE THRONE WILL I BE GREATER THAN YOU.”**

Joseph was put over everyone and everything except Pharaoh himself, like Jesus was put over everyone and everything except God the Father Himself.

You can circle the words **only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you** and write “**1 Cor 15:27**” [the Father] has put all things under [Jesus'] feet. But when [the Father] says all things are put under Him, it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted or is the exception.

**<sup>42</sup> Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. <sup>43</sup> And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, “Bow the knee!” So he set him over all the land of Egypt.**

Joseph's exaltation by Pharaoh w/ every knee bowing to him, looks like Christ's exaltation w/ every knee bowing to Him.

You could circle the words, “**Bow the knee**” and write **Phil 2:9** God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, **10** that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.

Here's the question:

- When Joseph's brothers rejected him, do you think they had any idea this would happen to him?
- When Jesus' brethren rejected Him, do you think they had any idea what would happen to Him?

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Soon after this the people began to starve. Please look at **verse 55**...

**41:55a When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh FOR BREAD.**

The people were dying, and listen to what Pharaoh said to them so they could be saved...

**41:55b Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, do."**

Turn to Joseph and you will be saved. Do whatever he says.

And what did Joseph do? He gave them bread...

**Gen 47:15 All the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us bread, for why should we die in your presence?"**

Joseph gave them bread for money, horses, flocks, cattle, donkeys, finally even their land and their own bodies. He gave bread to everyone who came to him. The word **bread** occurs 7 times in verses 12 to 19. Bread is really emphasized.

They said, "*Give us this bread or we'll die.*" But here's what's ironic about this statement? No matter how much of this bread they ate they'd still die anyway. So let me ask you: is this the real bread God wanted His people to have?

- Bread they'd have to buy?
- Bread that would only satisfy them temporarily?
- Bread that would still allow them to die?

There was a true and greater bread God wanted His people to have...

- It was free...
- They'd no longer hunger...
- Most beautifully it would provide eternal life...

**John 6:51 [Jesus said] I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will LIVE FOREVER; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.**" This is the bread God wanted His people to have; a Bread that would give them eternal life.

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You have all these dramatic ways Joseph looked like Jesus – and it really saddens me I can't look at all of them w/ you – but I'd like to close by showing you what I consider to be the greatest way Joseph looked like Jesus. I hope w/ this verse we can tie the whole sermon together...

Please turn to **Gen 50:20**, Joseph's words to his brothers...

**Gen 50:20 But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive."**

We've already discussed that Joseph couldn't see the end intended by the Lord when he was experiencing his trials. But at this moment – when he stood before his brothers – he finally understood what God was doing: he was able to look back and say these beautiful words.

And perhaps we'll be able to look back later and see the good God was bringing about through the trials we experience – perhaps we'll be able to see the end intended by the Lord – if not in this life, then in the next life.

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And Joseph's words to his brothers bring us to the last lesson...

#### **LESSON 4: THE GREATEST ACT OF EVIL GOD MEANT FOR GOOD TO SAVE MANY PEOPLE TOOK PLACE WITH JESUS.**

As I thought all week about what Joseph said to his brothers, I was amazed how easily Jesus could've said these exact same words and they would've been truer and even more beautiful than when Joseph said them.

What did Joseph basically say to his brothers after they repented and received him? He said:

- *All the trials you brought into my life...*
  - *When you rejected me...*
  - *When you plotted my death...*
  - *When you cast me into that pit...*
- *All I suffered...*
- *All the evil you meant against me...*

*God meant it for good:*

- *There was an 'end intended by the Lord in the trials' I experienced...*
- *Everything I went through – all the evil of it – God used it to save many people.*

Whether Joseph understood it at the time, everything that happened to him was never ultimately about him; it was ultimately about Jesus.

Think about these truths...

- The worst act of evil meant against another Person didn't take place w/ Joseph; it took place when the perfectly innocent and righteous Son of God was crucified. How much worse was the evil Jesus experienced, than the evil Joseph experienced?
- The greatest act God meant for good didn't take place w/ Joseph; it took place when Jesus was willing to lay down His life for us. How much greater was the good God accomplished through Christ, than the good He accomplished through Joseph?

- The greatest way God wanted to **save many people** didn't take place through Joseph; it took place through Jesus.
  - How much greater is the eternal life Jesus provides, than the few added years of physical life Joseph provided?
  - The way Joseph **saved many people** pales in comparison to the way Jesus saves many people.

God had an intended end in what Joseph suffered, but think of the even greater end God intended by what Jesus suffered.

God accomplished something amazing through Joseph – **Gen 41:56** says – and I quote – **“The famine was over all the face of the earth!”** Joseph was literally the savior of the known world in his day! He saved many people, but let me ask you this...

- Was God really concerned about people living a few more insignificant years and then dying?
- Is that really how God wanted to save many people?

Not at all.

Jesus is the true and greater Joseph. The truth is this...

The world meant evil against Jesus, but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people. That was the end intended by the Lord.

**LET'S REVIEW THESE LESSONS:**

**LESSON 1: EVEN IN THE WORST TRIALS “THE LORD IS [STILL] VERY COMPASSIONATE AND MERCIFUL”**

**LESSON 2 (PART I): THERE'S AN “END INTENDED BY THE LORD” IN TRIALS (PART II) BUT WE OFTEN CAN'T SEE IT (PART III) SO WE MUST WALK BY FAITH.**

**LESSON 3: THE “END INTENDED BY THE LORD” IS ULTIMATELY ABOUT JESUS**

**LESSON 4: THE GREATEST ACT OF EVIL GOD MEANT FOR GOOD TO SAVE MANY PEOPLE TOOK PLACE WITH JESUS.**