

... May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be pleasing and of you, who are ROCK, REDEEMER, and COMFORTER of us all. Amen.

Genesis 37: 23-27;50:15,19-22a ...Each week we are visiting with a familiar biblical story...which invites us to hear and respond with courage, trust & hope. Today the focus is with a well-known story...Joseph's Transformation from prisoner to Prime Minister.

Joseph was the eleventh and youngest son of Jacob (Israel). Joseph was also Jacob's favorite! You may recall that Joseph received a special gift, a coat of many colors, from his father. In the course of family dynamics, this set the older brothers into resentment and bitterness in their hearts toward Joseph. In addition, Joseph was having dreams of how one day his brothers would bow down before him.

As you can imagine, this only made the relationship worse. As we heard, the brothers developed a scheme to get the little so and so out of their hair. So, Joseph is transformed from favored son to captive in a dry well, to being sold to traders, to being sold as a slave to the Egyptian official Potiphar. Later, Joseph ends up in prison, though he was wrongly accused.

That's not the end of the story. The Lord was with Joseph and Joseph's ability to dream & interpret dreams gains him favor and trust and responsibility and freedom with Pharaoh. When famine strikes and Jacob's sons come to Egypt for help, it is Joseph who manages the storehouses. It is Joseph who is the official in front of whom the brothers kneel. Joseph forgives, and saves his family, and the future of Israel.

The two key theological understandings of this story is 1) how the Lord was with Joseph and how Joseph did the right thing, even in the midst of trials and challenges and obstacles and ill intentions; 2) Joseph's proclamation of how 'you planned something bad for me, but God produced something good from it.' God is at work even in the painful things in our lives.

REFLECTION July 26, 2020 Gen 37,50... Joseph-Prisoner to Prime Minister... Living with Hope #6Chapel in Woods
I can stand before you today and acknowledge that in my most painful experiences and disappointments and unjust circumstances, God has made a way. When we choose to do the next right thing, when we pray give me strength, even when we cry out, 'How long o Lord will this nightmare go on', we can trust that God is at work to bring good out of the ill intention.

If you took the opportunity to read the book or see the movie, Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson, then you have a contemporary situation in which ill intent is triumphed by good. Darryl Burton is another person, who was exonerated after being wrongly accused and released from prison. Darryl has earned his MDIV, and is serving as Associate Pastor at Church of the Resurrection in Kansas City, MO. His ministry, Mission of Innocence, seeks to exonerate others who have been wrongly incarcerated.

Where is there a need in your life to revisit, re-examine, and reconcile? Is it with family, or friends, or even Facebook acquaintances?

Joseph's story of transformation and reconciliation can give any one of us hope that the best is yet to come.

Let's pray...

Lord, I believe you bring good from the pain, challenges, adversity and injustices of life. Help me to trust you in the difficult times, and to do the 'next right thing' even when others wrong me.

I pray you take the hardships of my past and bring something beautiful and something redemptive from them. Amen.