

“In This World You Will Have Trouble... But Take Heart”



IN THIS WORLD YOU WILL HAVE TROUBLE... BUT TAKE HEART

I. INTRODUCTION — When Suffering Shows Up

Welcome back and thanks for joining this summer as we get back to some really practical sermons on a variety of life application entries!

To date we have heard from many of us with a variety of topics.

- Pastor Tony on – How to Put God First
- Pastor Jim W – How to Pursue God
- Pastor Randal – How to Give Generously
- Pastor Justin – How do I Serve Others

And this week we look at How does God Help me Overcome Suffering?

Suffering shows up in more ways than we expect — and more often than we’d like.

It doesn’t look the same for everyone, and it doesn’t always carry the same weight, but it always touches us.

Suffering comes in all kinds of shapes and sizes.

- **Small burdens**
- **Deep wounds**
- **Shared human experience**

Some suffering is temporary — a setback, a disappointment, a season of weariness.

Some suffering is life-altering — a diagnosis, a loss, a betrayal, a grief that rearranges the furniture of your soul.

But whether the burden is light or heavy, momentary or long-lasting, **suffering is something every human being carries at some point.**

It’s part of the story of living in a broken world — and part of the story God chooses to redeem.

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Part of your story and part of mine!



When I served in the Navy, I walked through stress, danger, and pressure that most people never see.

- **High-stakes missions** — cat-and-mouse games with Russian submarines and surface ships, where one wrong move could change everything.
- **Equipment failures** — in seasons when the mission was critical and the margin for error was razor thin.
- **Qualification boards** — the kind that tested not just your knowledge, but your nerve.
- **Tight quarters** — 120 people living inside 283 feet of steel, where privacy didn't exist and patience was a survival skill.

All of that was hard. All of that was pressure. All of that shaped me.

But **none of it compared to separation.**

Leaving port — or returning to port — was the hardest part of Navy life.

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Being separated from Joanne for long or short periods of time was a weight neither of us expected, and both of us carried.

- It was difficult to navigate.
- It stretched us emotionally.
- It reshaped our marriage in ways only military families understand.

And in time, that cost — that emotional burden — led me to be honorably discharged after 6.5 years of active duty in 1987.

Because sometimes the deepest suffering isn't the danger you face... It's the distance you endure.



But those moments remind us of something important:

- There's a difference between *inconvenience*, *disappointment*, and *true suffering*.

And when suffering shows up, it raises questions we never thought we'd ask:

- “*Why now?*”
- “*Why this?*”
- “*Where is God in all of this?*”

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And here's the truth:

Suffering is not a sign that God has abandoned us.

You must grasp this...

Where have you been that God only chose for you to journey?

SUFFERING IS OFTEN THE PLACE WHERE GOD DOES HIS DEEPEST WORK.

Jesus told Peter this when he was reinstated after the resurrection:

“I tell you the truth, when you were young, you were able to do as you liked; you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and others will dress you and take you where you don't want to go.” John 21:18

Can you imagine moments before He jumped from a moving boat... to get to shore to see Jesus. Had a meal that Jesus prepared Himself. Now after Jesus forgives Him for betrayal and it all... He then says that?

...And take you where you don't want to go...

You must know...

God does some of His most transformative, most tender, most powerful work....

but in the very places we would never choose for ourselves.

Jesus was reinforcing that very premise... and connects us to we are addressing here

And I enjoy the fact that the disciples approach is with frustration after being told he was leaving... and that they would not abandon the faith because why... the Spirit of Truth was coming! But there was a warning with all of this

a warning of suffering!

²⁹ Then his disciples said, “At last you are speaking plainly and not figuratively. ³⁰ Now we understand that you know everything, and there's no need to question you. From this we believe that you came from God.”

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³¹ Jesus asked, “**Do you finally believe?**” ³² But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. ³³ **I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”**

John 16:33

Take heart this morning that Jesus has overcome all that we face... being scattered... going out own ways.... all of the Trials and the sorrows....all of our suffering!

And yet never alone!

And this morning we will look at Joseph

- a man who suffered deeply
- a man who suffered unfairly, and even suffered repeatedly

He had tribulation to be sure!

In the midst of all of that Joseph never walked alone!

And our message today is being offered that: **that no matter how bad it ever gets – the Lord is with you!**

JESUS IS STANDING WITH YOU!

So let’s get started with the message

IN THIS WORLD YOU WILL HAVE TROUBLE... BUT TAKE HEART

Joseph’s story begins with the jealousy of brothers...

and if you have a Bible you can follow along starting with Genesis 37

Jealousy and envy is a powerful force that has caused suffering since the beginning of time.

II. JEALOUSY THAT LEADS TO SUFFERING

Joseph was Jacob’s favorite son, and Jacob didn’t hide it.

- He gave Joseph a custom-made coat,

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- a symbol of honor and truly none of the other brothers received.

This results in a jealousy that grew into resentment

resentment that grew into action.

And the brothers set Joseph on a path of suffering he never asked for.

Yet even in that suffering — then and now —

- God was present
- God was working

God was preparing blessing through the very pain jealousy produced.

A. OUR SUFFERING CAN COME FROM UNEXPECTED PLACES

Joseph’s life looked bright — a special gift from his father, dreams from God, a future of honor. But sharing those dreams ignited his suffering.

His own family — the people who should have celebrated him — could not accept the idea of Joseph being elevated above them.

Oddly the story starts with another person who was born where his father was considered a “stranger”

Why Because Abraham too went to a place that I will show you.

Far away from family and friends...

Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a ^[a]stranger, in the land of Canaan. ² This *is* the history of Jacob.

Joseph, *being* seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad *was* with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.

³ Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he *was* the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of *many* colors. ⁴ But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

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⁵ Now Joseph had a dream, and he told *it* to his brothers; and they hated him even more. ⁶ So he said to them, “Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: ⁷ There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf.”

⁸ And his brothers said to him, “Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?” So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

⁹ Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, “Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me.”

¹⁰ So he told *it* to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, “What *is* this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?” ¹¹ And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter *in mind*. Genesis 37:1–11



SUFFERING ALWAYS CUTS DEEPER WHEN IT COMES FROM THOSE CLOSEST TO US.

Family is supposed to be the safest place in the world — the place where we are known, loved, and supported.

But for Joseph, family became the first place he experienced deep pain.

- He didn’t ask to be the favorite.

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- He didn’t ask for the dreams God gave him.

Yet those very blessings became the source of his brothers’ resentment.

Joseph’s story reminds us that some of our deepest wounds come from the people closest to us.

Joseph’s story reminds us that **some of our deepest wounds come from the people closest to us.**

And here’s the tension:

- Joseph was **innocent**.
- His brothers were *jealous*.
- Jacob was **blind** to the damage his favoritism caused.

It was the perfect storm of misunderstanding, insecurity,

Along with unaddressed emotions — the kind of storm many families right are still facing today!

- David grieves betrayal from “a companion... my familiar friend.” Psalm 55:12–14
- Even Jesus’ own brothers did not believe in Him. John 7:5

Joseph’s tension teaches us several things and I hope you can related to this and grasp that **Family pain is real pain** — it truly shapes us deeply.

But God right:

- **God sees what happens behind closed doors**, even when others don’t.
- **God’s calling on your life can provoke reactions in others** you never intended.
- **God can redeem even the most broken family dynamics.**

Joseph didn’t know it yet,

but the very tension that tore his family apart would one day be the means God used to save them.

B. OUR SUFFERING CAN BE OUT OF OUR CONTROL

¹⁸ Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. ¹⁹ Then they said to one another, “Look, this ^[b]dreamer is

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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!”

²¹ But Reuben heard *it*, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, “Let us not kill him.” ²² 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.

²³ 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. ²⁴ Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit *was* empty; *there was* no water in it.

²⁵ And they sat down to eat a meal. 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. ²⁶ So Judah said to his brothers, “What profit *is there* if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? ²⁷ 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. ²⁸ Then Midianite traders passed by; so *the brothers* pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty *shekels* of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt. Genesis 37:18–28

Joseph’s brothers planned to kill him.

- Reuben planned to rescue him.
- Then a caravan appeared and changed everything.



Joseph’s life took a turn he never could have predicted.

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Some of the hardest suffering we face is the kind we can't stop, fix, or change.

One of the deepest pains of suffering is not always the hurt itself — it's the loss of control.

Joseph didn't choose the pit. He didn't choose betrayal. He didn't choose Egypt. Life was happening *to* him, not *with* him.

When life slips out of our hands,

- when circumstances move faster than we can respond,
- when decisions are made *about us* but not *by us*, something inside us feels shaken.

But Joseph's story teaches us something essential:

- **Lack of control does not mean lack of God.**

“A man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.” Proverbs 16:9

God's ways are higher than ours. **Isaiah 55:8–9**

Joseph knew that feeling well.

- He didn't choose the pit. He didn't choose the betrayal. He didn't choose the caravan of traders. He didn't choose Egypt. He didn't choose slavery.

Life was happening *to* him, not *with* him. And that is often where suffering feels the most overwhelming — when we can't stop it, fix it, or change it.

- When Joseph was powerless, God was not.
- When Joseph couldn't see the plan, God could.
- When Joseph's life felt like it was unraveling, God was actually weaving something greater.

And isn't the same true for us?

There will be seasons when:

- We can't change the diagnosis
- We can't fix the relationship
- We can't stop the loss
- We can't control the outcome
- We can't make life go back to what it was

But in those moments, God invites us to trust what Joseph learned:

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God is still in control even when we are not.

Moving on with the story... and picking up at verse 29...

C. OUR SUFFERING CAN IMPACT OTHERS AROUND US

²⁹ Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph *was* not in the pit; and he tore his clothes. ³⁰ And he returned to his brothers and said, “The lad *is* no *more*; and I, where shall I go?”

³¹ So they took Joseph’s tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. ³² Then they sent the tunic of *many* colors, and they brought *it* to their father and said, “We have found this. Do you know whether it *is* your son’s tunic or not?”

³³ And he recognized it and said, “*It is* my son’s tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces.” ³⁴ Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. ³⁵ And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, “For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning.” Thus his father wept for him.

³⁶ Now the [e]Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh *and* captain of the guard. Genesis 37:29–36

His suffering involved more people than he realized.

- Suffering rarely stays contained.
 - It ripples.

Notice that Joseph wasn’t the only one who suffered.

- Reuben mourned.
- Jacob was devastated beyond comfort.

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When we suffer, others often suffer with us — even when we don’t see it.

And Joseph’s betrayal ran deeper than he knew.

- He was sold to Midianites and Ishmaelites — distant relatives of his family.

Suffering rarely happens in isolation.

Joseph didn’t see any of this.

- He didn’t know the tears being shed for him.
- He didn’t know the pain his absence caused.
- He didn’t know that his suffering was shared.

And that’s how it is for us, too!

When we walk through hardship,

- we can become so overwhelmed by our own pain

Play video: [Philip Yancey: God's Helpers \(James Robison / LIFE Today\)](#)

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Joseph never saw the ripple effects of his pain — Reuben’s anguish, Jacob’s heartbreak, or the silent grief that settled over the family. And that is what it is like for us too...

“If one member suffers, all suffer together.” — 1 Corinthians 12:26

“A brother is born for adversity.” — Proverbs 17:17

“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” — Galatians 6:2

we forget others are carrying part of the load with us:

Shared suffering is one of the ways God holds us together. It reminds us that **we are not meant to walk through pain alone.**

Joseph’s suffering was never isolated — and neither is ours.

Joseph’s story teaches us that:

- **Our suffering affects others more than we realize**
- **God often uses the compassion of others to sustain us**
- **Even when we feel alone, we are being carried by unseen love**
- **Suffering can deepen relationships rather than destroy them**

And perhaps most beautifully:

God sees every person touched by our suffering — not just us.

He saw Joseph. He saw Reuben. He saw Jacob.

He sees you.

And He sees the ones who hurt because you hurt.

III. GOD HELPS ME WITH SUFFERING

No matter what causes our suffering — jealousy, betrayal, circumstances, or even our own mistakes — we are never alone.

- **God is with us.**

Joseph went from the heights of a dream to the depths of a pit and a prison.

But the same God who gave Joseph the dreams was with him in every low place.

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God’s love didn’t prevent hardship; it transformed hardship.

It made Joseph’s suffering count.

“But the Lord was with Joseph.” Genesis 39:2, 21
God is with us in the valley. Psalm 23:4

God can do the same for us. When we trust Him, suffering becomes a place where:

- Faith grows
- Perseverance strengthens
- Hope deepens

Joseph’s suffering became the canvas on which God painted a story of redemption for an entire nation.

And God can use your suffering too.

One of the most comforting truths in Joseph’s story is also one of the easiest to overlook. In the middle of betrayal, injustice, loneliness, and fear, Scripture repeats a simple phrase:

“But the Lord was with Joseph.”

Not after the suffering. Not once things improved. Not only when Joseph reached the palace.

God was with him in the pit. God was with him in the prison. God was with him in the waiting.

And that is the heart of biblical hope: **God’s presence is not proven by our circumstances — it is proven by His character.**

We often assume God’s nearness is felt most in blessing, clarity, and peace. But Joseph’s life shows us that God is often closest in the places where we feel most alone.

- When Joseph’s brothers walked away, God stayed.
- When Joseph was falsely accused, God defended him.
- When Joseph was forgotten by people, he was remembered by God.
- When Joseph had no control, God had complete control.

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Joseph’s circumstances changed constantly — but God’s presence never changed.

Joseph eventually saw what God was doing — but long before Joseph understood, God was already working. And He is working in your story too.in.

But God has not left you. He has not abandoned you. He has not forgotten you.

From Rejection to Redemption

Joseph was sold into slavery, falsely accused, and imprisoned—yet God used these trials to bring about His plan.

- His rise to power saved his family from famine, showing that God turns our pain into purpose pastors.

Joseph’s life teaches that redemption is possible for all—no matter how far we’ve strayed.

God’s plan is to forgive, restore, and use even the most broken to bring salvation to others.

19 But Joseph replied, “Don’t be afraid of me. Am I God, that I can punish you?
20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people. 21 No, don’t be afraid. I will continue to take care of you and your children.” So he reassured them by speaking kindly to them. Genesis 50:19-21

As Genesis 50:20 says, “You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good.

Your suffering may be great, but His presence is greater.

God’s presence in suffering means:

- You are carried when you cannot walk
- You are held when you feel like falling apart
- You are guided when you cannot see the next step
- You are loved when you feel unlovable
- You are strengthened when you feel empty

Where have I sensed God’s nearness in hard seasons? Think back — where did God quietly sustain you?

What does God’s presence mean for my current struggle? How does knowing He is with you change how you carry today’s burden?

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How can I remind someone else of God’s presence? Who needs to hear that they are not alone?

IV. THE MYSTERY OF SUFFERING

People have tried for centuries to explain suffering, but many explanations go beyond Scripture.

Yes, some suffering is connected to sin.
But righteous people suffer too.

Some say God gives long term suffering only to those strong enough to handle it — but Scripture never teaches that.

The Bible’s answer is simpler and more sobering:

- We live in a fallen, sin cursed world.
 - God didn’t create it this way — humanity broke it.

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23

“In this world you will have trouble.” John 16:33

Suffering is part of the world we live in. But it is not the end of the story.

- God enters our suffering.
- God redeems our suffering.
- God uses our suffering for His glory and our good.

Suffering is not a sign that God has abandoned us!

Suffering is often the place where God does His deepest work!

V. CLOSING

HOW DO WE MAKE SUFFERING COUNT?

Joseph’s story teaches us that suffering is not wasted when God is in it.

- Your suffering can become a testimony.
- Your pain can become someone else’s hope.
- Your story can point someone to Christ.

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What was meant for evil, God used for good. Genesis 50:20

We comfort others with the comfort we received. 2 Corinthians 1:3–4

So today, as we close can we all ask when we are suffering:

- Lord, what are You forming in me through this?
- Who can I encourage because of what I’ve walked through?
- How can my suffering make You visible to others?

Because the same God who met Joseph in the pit, the prison, and the palace...

...is the same God who walks with you this morning and all your tomorrows!

³³ I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

And He is still able to make all things work together for your good.

Suffering is not something any of us go looking for.

- It finds us
- It interrupts us.
- It humbles us

And sometimes it breaks us in ways we never expected.

But Joseph’s story — and your story — remind us of something deeper:

Suffering is never the end of the story when God is in the middle of it.

Yet Scripture repeats one phrase again and again:

“But the Lord was with Joseph.”

That is the anchor of hope for every believer. Not that we avoid suffering. Not that we escape hardship. But that **God is with us in it.**

- He is with you in the pit.
- He is with you in the prison.
- He is with you in the confusion.
- He is with you in the waiting.
- He is with you in the questions you don’t have answers for.

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One day you will look back and say:

“Surely the Lord was in that place with me.”

And may the God who was with Joseph...the God who was with Peter on that beach... the God who loves you... be the God you trust today.

If that is you and you are suffering... you are not here by accident.

Bring your burden to this altar now. Do not wait for me to pray even.

So here is the invitation today: The God of Joseph is here!

- **Bring your suffering to the God** who never wastes it.
- **Bring your pain to the God** who redeems it.
- **Bring your questions to the God** who welcomes them.
- **Bring your life to the God** who walks with you through every valley and every mountain top!

This prayer team will be here with you to like hold your hands up.

To intercede and to help us all open our eyes to a God who called you on the road that you are on to place, well maybe you never wanted to go?

Come won't you?

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Meta Data:

“In This World You Will Have Trouble... But Take Heart”

Joseph’s story shows us that suffering often comes from unexpected places, sometimes from the very people closest to us, and often through circumstances far beyond our control — yet through every betrayal, every pit, and every prison, Scripture repeats the same truth: “*But the Lord was with Joseph.*” What others meant for evil, God used for good, shaping Joseph’s pain into purpose and turning his suffering into salvation for many. In the same way, our suffering is never wasted when God is in it; His presence carries us, His sovereignty guides us, and His redemption transforms our deepest wounds into testimonies of His faithfulness.