

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

Dave Owen

SERIES

Rescuer

PART

2

TITLE

Greater Than Joseph

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 37:3-11; 41:46-57; 45:4-8; 50:15-21



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Good morning to you, Providence. It is great to see you. My name's Dave, one of the pastors here. I have the joy to teaching this morning, so if you have your Bibles, I want to invite you to Genesis 37. If you don't have one, there's one underneath in the chair, you can grab that. And say welcome to those that are online as well. It is a crazy season of pollen last week, winter this morning. Sneezing last week, we'll all be sick this week, so encouraging. What time of the season is it? It's also March Madness and there's much sadness in the house except for our four DUP fans in our church. Congratulations. We'll be praying for you and it's trying to encourage you, so. Well, it is an honor to be able to preach God's word to you this morning, and we are going to continue our series called Rescuer.

And the idea is that God would allow us to explore and read through the true stories of the Old Testament. Started last week with Noah. Today looking at Joseph, and then Moses and David and Esther, and then crescendo in a sense on Easter Sunday. So we're excited about what God is doing. And if there were ever a Bible study or a time in the scriptures that I could sit in on, one of those, probably the top one of those would be found in Luke 24 where Jesus, after His resurrection, was walking on the road to Emmaus and walking with these two individuals. And as He's walking with them, their eyes aren't open to see and recognize who He is. And so what happens, He says, in Luke 24, He says, "Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets," So we believe Moses wrote The Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible and then, "All of the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the scriptures, the things concerning Himself."

So this is being written by Luke as he's thinking in all the scriptures. Their scriptures would've been the Old Testament. And he says that He, Jesus, "Beginning with Moses and the Prophets just explained all the scriptures and how they point it to Himself." It'd be a remarkable Bible study if I could just be a fly on the wall to listen in to that one, because each of these Old Testament stories true, yes, they point us to the hero of the Bible, namely Jesus. They serve us in a sense the way billboard signs, right? You go down 95 and there's billboard signs and it's telling you what's coming. Recently we're on vacation and we're heading down 95 and we saw the Buc-ee's. I had no idea the experience that we were getting ready to encounter, but we see this and each billboard sign, just built anticipation.

I mean it's like brisket at Buc-ee's and beef jerky, free samples. And so when we get there, we're overwhelmed. There's a 160 gas pumps. The cleanest bathrooms I've ever seen in my life. They actually won number one cleanest bathrooms in the hospitality industry of restaurants, and it's a gas station. That turned into our vacation. We just stayed at Buc-ee's. We didn't make it to the beach. I couldn't get the kids out. We're taking selfies in front of Buc-ee's. I mean they buy a little keychain thing and they're talking more about Buc-ee's than where we even went. And every billboard sign down 95 built anticipation for the encounter and the experience. And so it is in a way that each Old Testament story builds anticipation. It builds this, we learn but it builds anticipation of an encounter with the Son of God Himself, namely Jesus.

See the gospel of Jesus says, "Listen, I will do for you what you can never do for yourself. And based on my righteousness, not only will I forgive you, I'll fulfill you and forever be with you. And I will fortify the prom-

ise to carry you home to heaven.” And the temptation, as we study Old Testament men and women, is to be just like them. To work up a sense. And that the reality is, is that we want to learn from them, but we want to look to Jesus. We want to listen and learn about their story in hopes to hear and see the greater story of the greatest hero, Jesus. Listen, little-h heroes are always limited in power, always limited. I reminded of one of my favorite boxers back in the day I loved to watch was Muhammad Ali and he was the heavyweight champion of the world, and he took on the name Superman.

And in the height of his career being a heavyweight champion of the world, he was on a plane. As he’s taxiing down the runway, the flight attendant comes and says, “Please fasten your seatbelt, sir.” And Muhammad Ali looked up and said, “Superman don’t need no seatbelt.” And the flight attendant quickly responded, “Well, Superman don’t need no plane.” See, listen, we’re all limited in our power. Joseph was limited, but we can learn from him and he helps us look to the greater Joseph, Jesus Himself. So let me pray and ask God to help us at this time. Father in heaven, we come to You again overwhelmed by Your grace and mercy again today, and the steadfast love that never ever ceases. And we pray that as we lean into this portion of the narrative that You would lean into us. As we read it, it would read us. As we get in Your word, Your word would get in us, and God that You would not just inform us, but transform us to believe, to trust, to walk with You all the days of our life. And we pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

So if you have your Bibles, Genesis 37. So here’s what I’m going to do. Little different this morning because I’ve got about 13, 14 chapters to cover. And so it’s a lot. It’s the largest narrative in Genesis. And so from 37 to 50, we are going to navigate. I’ll give you the reference of the scripture. I’m going to have a ton of scripture on the screen for you to follow along as well. So I’m going to look at specifically three truths about God as we see in the life of Joseph that points us to Christ. And so the first one is this. The first one is God is present with His people on the hardest of days. So God is present with His people on the hardest of days. So let me give you the context quickly. There is a man named Jacob who has 12 sons, and of these 12 sons who are shepherds, they work outside. The family has become extremely dysfunctional, primarily because the dad is playing favoritism toward this one son named Joseph.

Matter of fact, he makes him a robe. It’s a robe of many colors and he gives it to him. And the brothers, as they see this favoritism, they grow extremely bitter and hatred grows toward Joseph. So we pick up in verse 4, chapter 37, it says, “When his brother saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him. Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. He said to them, ‘Listen to this dream I had.’” He explains this dream about his brothers one day coming and serving him. And so as a result of that, “They hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.” Verse 11 tells us, “His brothers were jealous of him.” Now let me pick up and narrate just a little bit for you, that the hatred led them to desire and design a plan to get rid of him.

Possibly to kill him, but as they move out into the field, they find this huge hole in the desert. It’s a big pit and they throw him over in there and their hearts are so callous that the texts will tell us that as he’s in the

pit, they actually sat down and ate. So they're having a meal, their brother's in the pit. And as they're there, they're trying to decide what we should do. And some people, some travelers come by, they end up selling him to these travelers who will then later take him down to Egypt and sell him again, some 500 miles away from home. And so they come up with this plan, they sell him. Then they said, "Well, what are we going to tell dad?" And so they take his clothes, they strip him of his clothes, take his robe, they kill an animal, they dip his clothes in the blood of the animal and then take it back to dad and say, "Man, you won't believe what happened. Man, this animal killed our brother, your son."

And so Jacob just is distraught. The whole family's a mess. They're lying. The manipulation is insane, the dysfunction. And meanwhile, Joseph is in Egypt. We picked up, down in Egypt where he actually is sold to an officer. But it's fascinating what happens that in the midst of someone hating someone so much how the Lord was with him. Notice in the text in 39, verses 1 and following, "Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of the Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there." Notice verse 2, this is a key part of the text, "The Lord was with Joseph and he became a successful man. His master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord caused all that he did to succeed in his hands. The Lord blessed the Egyptians house for Joseph's sake. The blessing of the Lord was on all that he had, in house and field. So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him he had no concern about anything."

You'll notice how God's presence with Joseph impacted his life. See, God's presence propels you. Eight times in 39, chapter 39, the Lord is stated as being either with him or because of him, so they're being blessed. And the question for us this morning are people being blessed because the Lord's with you, wherever you find yourself. God's presence, He does something, right? It propels you to live faithful and fruitful lives even in the hardest of days. His presence, it propels you. See, listen, when those hard days, when those days of suffering, when those days of stress come, we've got a choice, we can lean into the Lord or we can lean away from the Lord. And if you lean away from the Lord, what happens is you start complaining. And you start complaining, and then what happens then in a state of complaining, a seed of bitterness takes root in your heart.

Well, if it takes root in your heart, over a time what's going to happen is it's going to produce a tree and then that tree is going to show up in your life with a lot of rotten fruit, and rotten fruit smells. So the question is in your hard days, how does your life smell? Because if you trust and lean into Him in the midst of the hard days, another seed, a seed of integrity and faithfulness and trust of not knowing what God's doing, but it's planted and then it produces a tree in you that then produces fruit that's fresh, and fresh fruit brings nourishment to every situation you're in and an aroma that smells sweet. And Joseph believed God was with him to the extent that it impacted how he lived. This is what's so confusing in our culture today, is that so many confess Christ with their mouth but deny Him with their life, and it's confusing. It doesn't smell that well.

Well, the story gets intense. It turns PG13. He's serving. He's just being faithful. Well, Potiphar's wife comes and lays eyes on Joseph and sees he's attractive and then starts to try to seduce him and then begs him to

come and go to bed with her. But Joseph refused. And what he says is remarkable. It says, “He refused and said to his master’s wife, how then can I do this great wickedness and sin...” As I’m reading the text, I’m thinking it’s going to say and sin against his wife, his wife’s husband, against partner. He doesn’t say that. He says, “And sin against God. How can I do this and sin against God?” He had a God centeredness about him. Living in a hard situation, acknowledging His presence. See, God’s presence protects you from making really bad decisions. We all have in us everything to ruin us in about two to three minutes. And yet God’s presence with us and His power in us protects us from temptation. He fled the scene not because of what her husband would think, but because of what God would think.

And then the story gets intense. Injustice rises. He’s wrongly accused. This wife goes to the officials and say, “I can’t believe he tried to seduce me.” He’s extremely mad about what has happened, Potiphar, and so he puts Joseph in prison. And so just think for a second, he’s in a hole in the desert, he’s sold. He’s taken 500 miles away from the desert, sold again. He’s put in this place of service and there’s some success there, and then quickly it falls apart. See, in the hole in the desert is where we question God. And this is now when we probably throw the towel in and say, for real God, like prison now? Accused wrongly? I’m thinking about another man named Jesus who didn’t throw the towel in on His last night. He picked it up and started washing feet, did He not? Hours before the worst of all days.

When we pick up the story in verse 20, they took him to prison, but notice the text, “But the Lord was with him, but the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in prison. And the keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph’s charge because the Lord was with him. And whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed.” Could you imagine living and working in a sphere of influence where God maybe has placed you that the presence of God is with you and His steadfast love is towards you in such a way that even in the hardest of days, they don’t even want to be around you because they trust you so much? Just go and do what you do, this is what He told Joseph. See His presence, God’s presence shaped his perspective.

God’s presence in about 40 college students this week have shaped their perspective and they have headed out on Friday morning to the Middle East to serve the good news in hard places. And it wasn’t because they had a cape like Superman. It’s because the Lord’s with them. His presence, it propels this deep sense of obedience and this passion to get the gospel to reach those far from God and reach our city and to reach our world. One missionary named John Paton, back in the day in the late 1800s, he had gone to an island in the South Pacific. And within a year his wife had died, his son had died of a fever. And it’s just, it’s hard. And they’re trying to minister to a people group who’d never heard about Jesus, and they were cannibals. They would eat people after they kill them. And one night they’re coming to kill him and he climbs in a tree and he is rescued from that tree.

And he later journals about that moment in the tree. And this is what he says. He says, “Alone, yet not alone.

If it be to glorify my God, I will not hate to spend many nights alone in such a tree,” Watch this, “To feel again my Savior’s spiritual presence.” You want to stay in that hard place where He’s at, shaping and molding you. Psalm 46 says, “He’s a very present help in the day of trouble.” Psalm 59 says, “I will sing of your strength for you’re my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble.” See, there’s a way to sing in the middle of stress, and it starts with acknowledging His presence. This is where it starts. Listen, God is present with His people in the hardest of days, but note a second is that God is purposeful to accomplish His work through you in the hardest of days. So God is purposeful. He’s going to be purposeful to accomplish. To accomplish, to be active, to work through you in the hardest of days.

His ways, His works come through. His purposes, His plans, His sovereign design for life comes through those who trust Him, who lean into Him, good days, bad days. So here’s what we find when we pick up the narrative in chapter 40. In chapter 40, we find out Joseph is now in prison for two years and yet remaining faithful. And while he’s there, Pharaoh has these two workers that he’s mad at, he throws in there, it’s a chief cupbearer and a chief baker. They’re in prison with Joseph where they were confined. And the captain of the guard appointed Joseph to be with them and he attended them. And they continued for some time in custody. Where while they’re there in this prison, they have these dreams. They don’t know what they mean. And God gives Joseph this incredible discernment and insight to be able to understand those dreams. And he tells them the fate of their life and what happens with these dreams. And then he says this, he says that, there’s a statement in the text in the narrative that says, there’s a longing to be remembered when it’s seemingly he’s forgotten.

And he says, listen, would you remember me when you get out to Pharaoh and let them know what I’ve done for you and maybe he’ll let me out? And the text says that as he got out, he forgot about Joseph. You feel forgotten sometimes? He doesn’t forget you. And the cupbearer forgot him. He didn’t because listen, in seasons of waiting, you can take comfort that God is still going to work because He’s using this deepening of your faith in the dark days. If it’s always successful, our sinful heart would be inclined to always trust ourself. And He uses these moments. He’s preparing Joseph for a monumental moment. Well, eventually as these two get out, the narrative picks up and it’s fascinating because Pharaoh has a dream and then the cupbearer is like, well, wait a minute, a couple of years ago I was in prison. There was this dude in there that he told me what my dream meant and maybe he might be able to help you.

And what happens is, in chapters 41, it’s a ton of texts, but it’s fascinating that he comes and he’s able to tell him what the dream meant. And he says, there’s no one. The spirit of God is who is upon you, that’s discerning. He puts him in second in command in all of Egypt. He goes from a pit to prison to second in command. It’s remarkable. What happens? Well, then he tells him what this dream means and he says it’s going to be seven years of plenty and seven years of famine. And that Joseph, you’re going to store up the portions during the years of plenty and then you’re going to be able to have the wisdom discernment to distribute during the famine. And so Genesis 41 picks up in verse 47 says, “During the seven plentiful years, the earth produced

abundantly. And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, and Joseph stored it up in great abundance that he couldn't even count it."

Well, before we get to the famine, the text is fascinating what it does, the scriptures, because what happens, and you got to lean in on this one, Joseph's perspective is changing to such a degree that he is contemplating not the pit, but the presence of God and God's purpose is coming through him, that right in the middle of going from years of plenty to identifying the years of where there's famine, there's the narrative inserts Joseph names his two children. It's kind of out of nowhere, but it's perfectly placed there because it says, "Before the year," in 50, "a famine came, two sons were born to Joseph. Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh. 'For,' idea of this word, "he said, God has made me forget all my hardship in all my father's house. And the name of my second is Ephraim. 'For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.'" I mean even to the point that in his pain he found something to praise God for and praising God and pain forges faith in a deep way that changes your perspective on how everything is working.

It's like these still beams, when they go through the fire, through the heat and they're melted and they're shaped and they're molded, and then they're put in a warehouse. And then at some point in time they're on a truck. And then some time in point they start, they're put together with other beams. And before you know it these beams, these still beams as they've been through the fire in a sense is they're useful. They end up being extremely useful to build things and to be able to hold things up. See, listen, when Corrie Ten Boom, who God used in amazing ways during the Holocaust to hide out Jews in her house to protect them. She would say of those days, when a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark and you don't throw away the ticket and jump off, you sit still and trust the engineer. Well, in verse 53, it's fascinating what happens. "The seven years of plenty came, they came to an end.

They came to an end. And the seven years of famine began. In all the land of Egypt there was bread. And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, 'Go to Joseph. What he says to do, do.' So when the famine had spread over all the land, Joseph opened all the store houses," and look what it says, "All the earth came to Egypt to Joseph." God's purposes working through to bless others. He's not bitter. He's letting blessings come through Him. This is why Romans 8:28 is one of my favorite passages in all the Bible. It says, "And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good to those who are called according to His purposes." Now, this is a fascinating text because God is saving the world physically through one man's wisdom to gather grain and distribute grain. And do you know who would come from the world to Egypt to receive the grain? All of Joseph's family.

The famine stretched all the way up to Canaan in Israel. And so who of the 12 brothers would come with their family to receive grain, to stay alive physically is Judah. And Judah is the one who the lion of the Messiah would come through. He's working to preserve the very seed to David and to Jesus that would come. The lion of the tribe of Judah. See hope in hard days, right? Because you can still be used by God if you don't

grow bitter and trust Him, He'll accomplish His purposes. But notice last, we'll end it, is that God's provision, His provision of salvation comes to you through His sovereign work in suffering. His provision of salvation comes to you through His sovereign work in suffering. Now, we pick up the narrative in chapter 45 where Pharaoh has said to Joseph, again, man, God's using you to do, do what you need to do and bring your family. All your family. He gave them land to set up and they're there.

And when they encounter Joseph, they don't recognize Joseph, but Joseph recognizes them. And it's a lot of texts, but let me give you just a few nuggets. He says, finally he comes to them. He says, "I'm your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me for God sent me." Do you see the perspective changing? Up and down, up and down. He has arrived in his heart, in his mind, in his worldview of seeing God move in such a way. "God sent me before you to preserve life. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all of Egypt." The narrative goes on in verse 50 where Joseph would then encounter with them and speak with them, and he would say, Joseph said, listen, "Don't fear for I'm in the place of God." Are you in the place of God? Is it hard? Are you suffering? Listen, He doesn't leave you alone. He is with you. He causes endurance to rise and hope to rise. He would say, one of the most intense passages that God has used in my own life, 29 years ago when I read the Bible all the way through for the first time, to build and forge these anchors in my heart to help me understand, not in totality, but with some clarity, when I don't see His hand, I can trust His heart because He's good. I can trust Him. I can lean into Him. And He says in verse 20, here's your statement. Here it is. He says for you, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good. To bring about that many should be kept alive as are today. So don't fear, I'm going to provide for you and your little ones." Listen, you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good, to bring about that many should be kept alive. God is working in these difficult circumstances of suffering to bring about His purposes.

Listen, we support a church planter over in Europe, in the Czech Republic. And back in the late seventies, early eighties, his communism was rampant there. There's the church planter that we support, his dad, when the church planter was really young, he would put them to bed at night and then he would smuggle bibles into different countries and cross borders throughout the night with other church planters facing the threat of imprisonment, but wanting to spread the word of God. In God's sovereign hand, as communism fell in that part of the world, they were able to start planting churches and for seven years they preached this gospel and no one believed, it's 99.9% atheistic in worldview. And they kept loving and kept faithfully serving. And then God broke through in unique ways. Where they've planted a church and many people have trusted Christ. And just recently in this past fall, they celebrated their 15th anniversary. Seven of those years, there's no fruit. And on this 15th anniversary, when they woke up for church, this is what they woke up to over their church building.

Got just a small reminder, He hasn't left you or me or them. And this is amazing. Yeah, it's amazing. Praise

God, right? And so think about this as we close, God provided food through Joseph, but He provides forgiveness through Christ. See, we learn from Joseph, but we look to Jesus. Jesus is the true and better Joseph, who was the object of His father's special love, who was mocked by His family, who was sold for silver, who was stripped of His robes, who was delivered up to Gentiles, who was falsely accused, who was faithful in the face of temptation, who pleaded your will, not mine, who humbly trusted God's purposes for His pain, who endured a cross scorning its shame, who was exalted after His humiliation, who saved His brothers and Gentiles, and who gave bread that leads to eternal life to hungry people, who forgave those who betrayed Him and used His power and position to save. Jesus is the true and better Joseph, whose life was not spared so you and I could be saved.

Jesus is the true and better Joseph, who endured the worst of days, which would become our greatest day, Good Friday, that would lead to Resurrection Sunday. Jesus is the ultimate hero, capital H, the bread of life, and he is the rescuer. What looked like the worst day in all of history, so much so that it was dark on that Friday afternoon as Christ took upon Himself the sins of the world and hung on a cross and absorbed God's wrath upon Himself. Some theologians believed the darkness of the day during the middle of the day was the ingathering of all the demonic forces celebrating the killing of the seed that was promised to, Genesis 3:15, to celebrate the killing of the Son of God, the Messiah. And what they didn't know in the God's sovereignty, He was using the crucifixion for our salvation. This is what He was working on that bad day. And so listen, if you're a believer this morning, lean into those hard days with hope.

If you're not a believer, let's trust Jesus. Let's trust Him for forgiveness of sin to be made right with God, to admit our need and to believe and commit your life to Him. Let's trust Jesus to work His purposes through our pain. And let's trust Him to work His purposes, but also let's trust Jesus to bring good out of bad. A cross and a crown. And His sovereign plan for He's the rescuer. This is why, Providence, we here love to sing songs that have lyrics that we're going to sing in just a minute that sound like this, Your plans are still to prosper, You have not forgotten us, You're with us in the fire and the flood, You're faithful forever, perfect in love, You are sovereign over us. To God be the glory. Let me pray. Father in heaven, thank you. Thank you, God, for this incredible lengthy passage that speaks volumes of Your love, of Your working in ways we could not imagine if we had to draw them up.

So God would You and Your kindness forge a deep faith in us to trust You, to trust Your heart when we can't see Your hand, to endure suffering in hard days in the grand narrative of life to know that You work these things somehow, some way for the glory of Your name and the good of others, and for the gospel to go forth to many people. So God, help us today to trust You, maybe for the first time for some in the room, or maybe for the hundredth or the thousandth time, not for just salvation in the sense of being justified made right with Him for the first time, but to continue to trust You in whatever season You might have us in, whether it's success or suffering, that Your presence with us is enough. So work these things, God. Work these things deep in our heart. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Providence, let's stand and let's sing.



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