

Stuck But Blessed: What To Do When Life Takes an Unexpected Turn

There is a particular kind of disorientation that comes when life veers off the path you thought you were on. One day you have a plan, a direction, a sense of momentum, and then something shifts. A diagnosis. A relationship that fractures. A career that stalls. A financial crisis that swallows your stability whole. And suddenly you find yourself asking a question that feels almost too vulnerable to say out loud: How did I end up here?

Most of us have been there. Many of us are there right now. And the silence that follows that question can feel deafening, especially when the life you imagined looks nothing like the life you are actually living.

But what if being stuck is not the end of the story? What if, in fact, it is one of the most important chapters?

The Dreamer Who Got Stuck

Few stories in all of Scripture capture the experience of unexpected, unwanted circumstances quite like the story of Joseph. His account spans nineteen chapters in the book of Genesis, and it is one of the most dramatic, emotionally layered narratives in the entire Bible. It begins with extraordinary promise. Joseph is his father's favorite son, given a lavish robe as a symbol of that affection, and visited by vivid dreams that seem to point toward a future of greatness and influence.

And then everything falls apart.

His brothers, consumed by jealousy, throw him into a pit and sell him to slave traders headed for Egypt. He is purchased, put to work in a wealthy household, falsely accused of a crime he did not commit, and thrown into prison. Years pass. The dreams that once felt like a divine guarantee begin to feel like a cruel joke.

By any human measurement, Joseph is stuck. Profoundly, painfully, inexplicably stuck.

But woven through the darkest passages of his story is a phrase that appears again and again like a quiet refrain: the Lord was with Joseph. Not the Lord was watching from a distance. Not the Lord had a plan he would reveal someday. The Lord was with Joseph. Present. Active. Engaged. Even in the pit. Even in the prison.

Stuck, yes. But not abandoned.

How We End Up Where We Are

When life takes a turn we did not anticipate, it is worth pausing to ask an honest question: How did I get here? The answer is rarely simple, but it usually falls into one of three categories.

Sometimes we end up stuck because of our own choices. Joseph's immaturity played a role in his early troubles. He paraded his dreams before his brothers with a kind of reckless pride, stoking the flames of their resentment. Compare that to Mary, the mother of Jesus, who was told she would carry the Son of God into the world. Rather than broadcasting her honor, the scripture describes her as someone who pondered these things quietly in her heart (Luke 2:19). There is wisdom in that restraint. Sometimes the best thing we can do with our potential is hold it with humility rather than announce it with fanfare.

Sometimes, though, we end up stuck because other people pull us down. Joseph's brothers were responsible for the most devastating turn in his life. He did not choose the pit. He did not choose slavery. He did not choose a prison sentence on a false charge. And yet he had to live with all of it. The Bible does not romanticize this reality. It warns us plainly, in Psalm 1, about the influence of those who have no regard for God or his ways. The relationships we allow into our lives carry real weight.

And then there is a third possibility, one that is harder to sit with but ultimately the most hopeful: sometimes we are exactly where a sovereign God has placed us, even when it makes no sense to us. Joseph had no way of knowing that the pit and the prison were not detours from his destiny. They were the road. Every painful chapter was quietly becoming part of a larger story that would eventually save thousands of lives, including the very brothers who had betrayed him. Looking back on everything he had endured, Joseph said it plainly in Genesis 50:20 -- what others intended for harm, God had intended for good.

What To Do When Stuck Happens

Knowing that God can work through stuck seasons is one thing. Living through them is another. So what does it actually look like to navigate these moments with faith?

The first and perhaps most underestimated step is simply to call out to God for help. This sounds almost too simple, but the temptation when we are stuck is to dig in harder, to muscle through on our own, to believe that asking for help is a sign of weakness. Psalm 130:1 opens with a cry from the depths, a raw and unpolished plea for divine help. And in Isaiah, God himself laments that he was ready to respond, but no one asked (Isaiah 65:1). The invitation is open. The help is available. But it requires the humility to ask.

The second thing to hold onto is this: God does some of his most profound work in the darkest places. Think of the old process of developing photographs in a darkroom. The image was already captured on the film. But it took darkness, and the right conditions, and

patient time before the picture could be revealed. Our stuck seasons are not empty. They are developmental. Before God changes our circumstances, he often uses those circumstances to change us.

The ancient words of 2 Corinthians 4:17 offer a perspective that reframes everything: present troubles are temporary, but what they produce is eternal. That is not a dismissal of real pain. It is a declaration that nothing God allows in our lives is wasted.

The Posture That Changes Everything

There is one word that surfaces again and again when Scripture speaks to people in difficult seasons: humility. The call in 1 Peter 5:6 is to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, trusting that in due time, he will lift us up.

Humility is not passivity. It is not pretending things are fine when they are not. It is the active, deliberate choice to stop striving against God's hand and instead position ourselves beneath it. To say, I do not understand this, but I trust you.

Joseph named one of his sons Ephraim, a name that carries the meaning of fruitfulness born out of suffering. It was his way of refusing to forget what God had done in the hardest chapters of his life. He wanted the lesson permanently on display: that God can take a stuck life and make it fruitful.

Whatever season you are in right now, whatever question you are carrying, that same God is with you. Not watching from a distance. With you. And he has never once been stuck.

Scripture References from the Sermon

Directly Cited or Clearly Referenced

****Genesis 37:3-11**** - Introduction of Joseph, Jacob's favoritism, the coat of many colors, and Joseph's two dreams of greatness

****Genesis 39:2**** - "The Lord was with Joseph" as he served in Potiphar's household

****Genesis 39:21**** - "The Lord was with Joseph in the prison" and showed him faithful love, making him a favorite with the warden

****Genesis 50:20**** - Joseph's declaration that what his brothers intended for harm, God intended for good

****Psalm 1:1**** - The warning against associating with those who have no regard for God and his ways

****Psalm 34:17**** - God hears his people when they call for help and rescues them from their troubles

****Psalm 130:1**** - Crying out to the Lord for help from the depths

****Isaiah 65:1**** - God's lament that he was ready to respond but no one asked; "Here I am, here I am"

****Luke 2:19**** - Mary pondering the things spoken over her quietly in her heart

****2 Corinthians 4:17**** - Present troubles being light and momentary yet producing an eternal weight of glory

****1 Peter 5:6**** - Humbling oneself under the mighty hand of God so that he may lift you up in due time

Alluded to Thematically

****2 Corinthians 6:14**** - The warning against being unequally yoked, referenced in the context of relationships pulling people down