

The Power of Your Testimony

(9/13/26)

Please turn to *Genesis 45:3*

When I was a much younger preacher, there was something that would happen at this church that annoyed me: *people would remember and get more out of the testimonies given than they would my sermons.*

I put a lot of work into these messages! I pray and ask the Holy Spirit to inspire me, exposit the Scriptures, add stories, crack a few jokes, use public speaking techniques, have a clear premise, and an action-based conclusion.

Yet when people would talk afterwards, or the following week, **I would hear them talking about what so-and-so said when they testified.** Then THEY would get up and testify, encouraged by the fact that so-and-so was vulnerable and transparent, inspiring them to do the same, etc.

One time I got so frustrated I said from the pulpit: *“you guys are also free to stand up and here and testify about how the sermon affected you and changed your lives!”* Everyone heard that...and it's few and far between that someone does it, lol.

Your testimony is powerful, your testimony changes lives, your testimony encourages others to give theirs.

God is the One pushing you to get up out of your chair, grab the mic, and give it.

- God is the One moving you to tell a friend, family member, coworker, or total stranger outside of church.
- God is the one inspiring to you to make yourself vulnerable, be transparent, and openly speak of the dark time in your life...and then *how Christ took that evil, and made it into good.*

Here is my goal for all of us today: **to take what someone else (or ourselves) meant for evil, and have God make it into good.**

Whatever trauma, PTSD, abuse, addiction, bad choices we made that's part of our lives: to turn from being a victim to being a victor.

To stop avoiding those things and bring them to the light where God can use them for His glory to help someone else.

Let's start with the story of Joseph. Historical summary: Abraham had Isaac. Isaac had Jacob. Jacob wrestled with God and was renamed Israel. God prophesied that all the tribes of the people Israel would come from Jacob and so they did. By the time story of Joseph begins in Genesis 30, he's the youngest of 12 kids and the most favored by his dad. Instead of having to work the fields like his older brothers, Joe gets to stay home and be educated by his dad. He also gets a fancy "coat of many colors" that his dad had specially made for him.

His brothers hated him. To make matters worse, Joe has 2 prophetic dreams that show his dad and his brothers bowing down to him. This literally drove his brothers into a murderous rage and they conspire against him, throwing him into a pit to kill him...but he didn't die. So they were like "now what?" Then some Midianite traders came along, and the bro's said "wanna buy a slave?" And they were like "yeah!" So his brothers sold Joe into slavery, then went back to their dad and said a wild animal killed him. They even killed a goat and put its blood on the coat of many colors (hmmm!) to show Jacob.

Joseph spends 13 years in an Egyptian house as a slave. When the wife of his master makes a pass at him, he does the right thing and runs away. She then lies and said he tried to rape her. He's immediately sent to jail where he languishes for 3 years.

Through a series of divine events, **Joseph is freed and brought before Pharaoh where he becomes a powerful political figure in Egypt**, 2nd only to Pharaoh himself. Egypt stored up 7 years of grain to mitigate a 7 year famine that hit the entire Middle East, because *the Lord sent Joe another prophetic dream with that instruction*. People were migrating from other nations to buy grain in Egypt. Among them were Joseph's brothers, sent by their dad.

When Joe's brothers see Joe, they don't recognize him...but he knows them. Being the 2nd most powerful man in Egypt, all his brothers bow down to him as was prophesied to him decades before. *It's at this point when Joseph chooses to reveal himself to his brothers....*

Before I begin reading that story, **Joe is at a major fork in his road of destiny**. He has two choices:

- 1) He can reveal himself and **take revenge** for the great wrong his brothers did to him years ago. They tried to kill him, then sold him into slavery. As a result of their actions he's a slave for 13 years, gets falsely accused, then goes to jail for 3 years before he's freed. *He gives into the trauma and PTSD he's had for decades over this, and has his brothers executed or jailed.*
- 2) **He can forgive his brothers and then use his personal testimony to glorify God and help others.**

Now let's read to see what choice he made:

[Gen 45:3-4 ESV] 3 And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence. 4 So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, please." And they came near. And he said, ***"I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt."***

What's he going to do? Let's read on:

[Gen 45:5-8 ESV] 5 And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for **God sent me before you to preserve life**. 6 For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. 7 And ***God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors***. 8 So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

People of Gateway, God has sent you to this moment to preserve life!

If Joe's brothers hadn't done what they did, **Joe wouldn't be 2nd most powerful man in Egypt**.

- He wouldn't have had Pharaoh's ear to tell him he needed to store up 7 years worth of grain to have food for an upcoming famine.
- And to now distribute said grain to thousands of starving families migrating to Egypt just to have something to eat.
- This includes his own family!

Imagine an alternate universe where **Joe has spent years seething, angry, depressed, anxious, and triggered over what happened to him.** I think that had he done this, he would have slept with his master's wife and ended up being executed or spent his entire life in jail! *He would have hidden from the prophetic destiny that God had for his life. Satan would be the victor in his life.*

Instead of doing that, look at the verses I just read to you: **Joe realized something far greater was going on here.**

- He saw how this series of unfortunate events led to him being able to save tens of thousands of people.
- *He co-labored with God to take the terrible things that were done to him and be victorious vs being a victim.*

When he surrendered to God, look what happened: the devil raged.

- Satan must have thought he won a major victory when Joe was thrown into the pit, then sold into slavery.
- He must have believed he came out on top when Joe was nothing more than a slave for 13 years, then was tossed in jail over a false accusation.

He might have been a little nervous when **Joe got out of jail, impressed Pharaoh, and was made 2nd in command.**

- He must have been wringing his hands when Joe's brother bowed before him, sending all sorts of demonic minions to whisper into Joe ear: *"these are the guys who betrayed you! They were always jealous of you! They're why you ended up a slave! Why you did time in jail! NOW'S YOUR CHANCE FOR PAYBACK!"*

Joe didn't make that choice. If he had trauma, insecurities, and PTSD from his experiences, *he didn't allow that to rule over him!*

Instead **he brought everything to the Light, the Light of Christ!** In the first chapter of John Gospel, John declares that Jesus was and is the true Light that shown into the darkness at the beginning of creation! And that when the Light of Christ shown into the darkness, the darkness comprehended it not! Another translation states: *"the darkness could not absorb it."*

Has the darkness absorbed you?

- Has it inspired you to isolate yourself from other people because you don't want to be triggered? To "protect your peace"?
- Has it told you that you can't talk about what happened to you, and what was done to you? That you have to keep it hidden?
- Has it convinced you that you are forever scarred, broken, and beyond use? Unworthy of love?

Jesus Christ is the Light!

Now is the time to *let His Light shine into the darkness that's covered you for so long, and let Him turn what was meant for evil into something good!*

He has sent you forward to preserve life!

Did you notice Joseph doesn't confront his brothers and demand an explanation? An apology? Instead, he relieves them of any burden of guilt or shame by forgiving them, because his eyes are on God! *The purpose that God has given him to save lives!*

You are not a broken and useless vessel! You are someone with a testimony like that of Joseph; one where you were betrayed by those who were supposed to love you!

- Where you ended up a slave to things that took years from your life!
- Where you "imprisoned" by the false accusations of others!
- Perhaps you made some bad choices that only made everything worse.

Here's the good news: **Jesus has freed you from prison!** *"Whom the Son sets free, is free indeed!"* He cleansed you with His blood, forgave you of all sin. He made you into His Temple, sealed you with His Holy Spirit for the day of Resurrection, and has a place for you to live in heaven!

He is the Light of the world and you belong to Him now!

You are NOT your trauma, you aren't defined by your triggers, and your PTSD isn't who you are!

You are who Jesus made you: born-again, made into His likeness!

Let Him transform your story.

Let Him take the evil that was done to you, and turn it for good! To preserve lives!

- There's someone else who fell into addiction like you did. Someone with no hope, encased in darkness. Your testimony of how God freed you could break their chains!
- There's someone out there who was sexually abused like you were. Someone still full of anger and self-loathing, wondering why God would allow such a thing to happen? Your testimony of how God brought you from dark to light could be what does the same for them!
- There's someone else out there who was stabbed in the back and abandoned by family, or a spouse, or someone else who was supposed to love them. Your testimony of how the same was done to you, but then you found the love of Christ could inspire them to realize Jesus loves them too! And that they don't have to "word" for it!
- There's a person whose made foolish choices and suffered bad consequences from it. Tell your story and show them the Lord can still redeem them, and they can start planting seeds to the spirit and not the flesh! To reap a Godly harvest in their lives like you have!

Joseph goes on to tell his brothers to go back and get Dad, and bring everyone down to Egypt to live. He promises to provide for them, protect them all the days of their lives. Pharaoh one ups him and says ***"I will give your family the best land in Egypt!"***

Look at Joseph's final statement to his brothers:

[Gen 50:20 ESV] "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today."

"But God meant it for good". For what purpose? Why would God allow such horrible things to happen? Joe tells us again: ***"to bring it about that many people should be kept alive."***

That's what you're here for, my fellow saints. You all know as well as I that we live in an evil, fallen world where some of the people in it are full of darkness. Darkness that wants to kill, steal, corrupt, and destroy.

But you and I are not left there because we have Christ and He has us. We belong to Him, we work for Him, and we serve Him. He wants us to represent Him. Just like He did with Joseph, ***He wants to use our past trauma to glorify Him and save others.*** He wants us to shine with the same Light that can't be absorbed by dark. The same one that could shine into someone caught in addiction, abuse, trauma, and PTSD.

This is done when you and I TESTIFY. When we surrender to Jesus and bring our own traumatic and abusive experiences to His Light, ***not for personal therapy or to vent, not to demand an apology*** from those who wronged us, **but to show someone still trapped that Jesus can and will be their Savior.**

Psalm 66:16

"Come and hear, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me."

I end with this. **Jesus crossed the sea and soon as He stepped onto shore, a demon possessed man ran straight at Him.** The man was supernaturally strong, to the point where even chains and manacles couldn't hold him. Jesus said to the man "who are you?" and a voice answered "we are legion, for we are many." A Legion is 5000 men...the man had 5000 demons inside him!

Jesus commanded the demons into a herd of pigs, and when the man was freed, **He wanted to be Jesus disciple and follow Him.** Listen to Jesus' command:

Luke 8:39 (also Mark 5:19)

"Return home and tell how much God has done for you." So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him.

That's you and I, today.

Return home, work, school, and when the Holy Spirit leads you to THAT person...testify. Tell them what God has done for you. Don't allow the devil or the darkness of this world shut you up anymore.

Here at church come forward, work through your fear, work through crying, grab the mic, and testify.

Psalm 71:15–18

“My mouth will tell of your righteous deeds, of your saving acts all day long... I will proclaim your mighty acts, Sovereign Lord... even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation.”