

LESSON 8 | THE BEGINNINGS

WEEK 8: DAY 1

THE THREAD

DISCOVERING THE THREAD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE BIG-PICTURE STORY OF THE BIBLE

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” - Matthew 5:10

This week, you’ll be spending another few days looking at Joseph’s life, and then you’ll begin looking at what the Israelites’ lives were like once Joseph died. In both Joseph’s case and the case of the Israelites, you’ll notice that they were treated unfairly even though they did nothing wrong. This happens so often in the Bible (and still today) that Jesus felt it was necessary to address it.

There will be times when you experience pretty crummy treatment because you publicly identify with Jesus... even from others who claim to be Christ-followers! But take heart. You belong to a different Kingdom. Over the last few centuries, the culture that surrounds Christ-followers has been in constant change. But the truth of the Gospel never will.

Today, memorize Matthew 5:10.

This week’s memory verse will help you find a little strength for those times when you find yourself on the receiving end of others treating you unfairly because of your faith. Memorize this verse. When you need it most, it will be there.

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WEEK 8: DAY 2

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“And Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him.” - Genesis 42:8

There are a lot of movies and books that talk about memory loss or characters who have been under mind control. Think of how many Marvel or DC characters have experienced this! While they are being controlled by something outside of themselves, their friends and family often describe them as ‘not the same person.’ They become unrecognizable.

But in most cases, once a character has had their memory restored, they are allowed to reunite with those that they love. And sometimes, this ends well. They may be embraced with love and understanding. Other times though, the damage that was done while they were controlled caused too much of a gap. It could be that they were forced to remove their loved ones from their life. And when this devastation occurs, we often see the character vow to destroy whomever it was that ruined the happiness they once held.

Read Genesis 42:1-17.

Joseph had a choice to make. He had the opportunity to exact revenge on those who wrecked the better part of his life. You may have that choice, as well. Whether it’s a family member who has betrayed you or a bully who has made your school feel miserable, you have a choice on how to handle that. You can choose revenge and bitterness. Or you can choose to offer another way. Not everyone will accept the forgiveness you are willing to offer, but those that do could have their lives changed forever.

Something To Think About...

- How hard is it for you to forgive those who do wrong to you?
- What would you have done to your brothers if you were in Joseph’s position?

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WEEK 8: DAY 3



“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 a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.” - Genesis 45:7-8

Resiliency. Do you know what that word means? It means that nothing can keep you down. It means when something bad comes your way, you can deal with it quickly and keep moving forward. Many years ago, there were these watches made by Timex. The slogan for these nearly indestructible watches was, “It takes a lickin’ and keeps on tickin’.” (Kind of the opposite of, say, your smartphone, as you know if you’ve ever dropped it on the ground.)

Take out your Bible and look up Genesis 45:1-15.

As you read this passage, you will discover a remarkable true story of forgiveness, compassion, and even undeserved gifts. Joseph could have had his brothers imprisoned or even executed. Yet, he honored them. How illogical does this seem? When looking at the situation from a human perspective, this seems ridiculous. However, a closer look at verses 7-8 reveals God’s perspective.

Joseph was kind of like one of those old Timex watches: He was resilient. And his resiliency came from trusting in God and His plan. God’s plan for you is constant and holds eternal implications. Following God’s plan, through faith in Jesus Christ, will lead you to forgive even the harshest of offenders. A relationship with Christ will compel you to show compassion to those who don’t deserve it because we are continually given examples of Christ’s forgiveness to us even though we do not deserve it.

Something To Think About . . .

- Why is it so hard to grasp that your time of suffering might be so you can help someone who doesn’t seem like they deserve your help?
- How would you have felt if you were in Joseph’s shoes, suddenly having it made clear to you how God is always working in and through you?

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WEEK 8: DAY 4

THE THREAD

DISCOVERING THE THREAD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE BIG-PICTURE STORY OF THE BIBLE

“Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses.” - Exodus 1:11

Imagine being a king. Not just any king, but a self-proclaimed “god-king.” (That’s what the Egyptian pharaohs were thought to be: part god, part king.) Every word you said, and every action you took, would all carry the weight of a deity (deity is the word for a god). If you’re honest, don’t you think it would be overwhelming? What if you made the wrong decision? No one would be there to call you out and get you back on the right path.

Read Exodus 1:8-14.

Imagine the backstory that must have led the young king to act this way. Imagine how he and his friends would grumble about the fact that a few generations before he came to power, an idiot pharaoh gave these foreigners the best land in the country. We can imagine him complaining about how the Israelites have grown so numerous and have become strong from all the labor forced upon them. Now, the time has come when this young king comes to power. Unfortunately, he decided to act harshly toward the Israelites for no other reason than they weren’t Egyptians. He had forgotten the story of how Joseph saved Egypt.

The new king made the wrong call. And in doing so, he caused a ton of pain for the Israelites. But, it was all part of God’s plan to ultimately call a people to Himself.

Something To Think About . . .

- Can you think of something you went through that seemed bad, but looking back, it actually made you stronger?
- What are some ways that you can display God’s character when other people mistreat you?

LESSON 8 | THE BEGINNINGS

WEEK 8: DAY 5

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“Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, ‘Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.’” - Exodus 1:22

Read Exodus 1:22 and 2:1-10.

It all seems so plain and sanitary that we miss the absolute insanity of it all. Be careful that you don’t skip over the fact that they were rounding up little baby boys and tossing them into the river! Imagine the horror, the screaming wails of mothers, and the bloodied faces of fathers who tried to fight off the soldiers. This isn’t a made-up story. It really happened to families just like yours!

Israelite parents had two choices; it seems: They could helplessly watch or die trying to fight. But Moses’ mom figured out a third option. Instead of fighting the soldiers only to have her baby ripped from her arms anyway, she calmly surrendered the situation and gave God a chance to be God.

Moses’ mother isn’t the only heroine. The shrewd decision of Moses’ sister shows how awesome she was too. She played the situation with cool intelligence. She went right up to the sister of the king (the king who was killing her people) and said, “Hey, I get it. He’s really cute, but you’re a princess. You don’t want the baby to spew on your dress. I just happen to know a lady who, if you paid her, might be convinced to raise this kid for you.” And then she goes and gets Moses’ mom!!! (How crafty, right?)

The point of this story is that Moses’ mom could have tried to do what she thought best according to her own reasoning. But ultimately, she did what God was leading her to do. And the crazy, seemingly half-baked idea just so happened to work!

Something To Think About. . .

- In what ways are you kicking and fighting when you should be calmly surrendering and allowing God to be God?
- When you see your chance to be the hand of God (like Moses’ sister), are you brave enough to take a chance? Why or why not?