

Prayer Time

Good morning church, my name is Brandon and I am one of the pastors here. If you were not here when we opened the service, I want to highlight that this is a special morning. About 4 times a year we have a service where we invite our kids out of Kid's Ministry into the main service. We do this for a couple of reasons: 1) we want our kids to feel and understand that they belong in the Greenbriar Church family and 2) because we believe in family discipleship. Meaning we want to equip and partner with families to be disciplemakers in their homes which includes getting to worship alongside their parents and the rest of this local church. We call these Sundays "Kids Quest."

Every week we take time to pray corporately, led by the Word of God, letting God start the conversation. Today we get to invite our kids into this practice. This is a discipleship moment. We'll be in the first 3 verses of a familiar Psalm: Psalm 34

Psalm 34:1-2

¹ I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
² My soul makes its boast in the LORD;
let the humble hear and be glad.

LORD I praise you for _____.

Psalm 34:3

³ Oh, magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together!

LORD you are _____!

Speak out the attributes of God or one of His many names!

Sermon

Intro

Have you ever experienced difficulty? Well that's an easy question, what about this...Have you ever experienced difficulty and asked "why is this happening to me?" Have things ever felt out of control? Have you ever looked at how your life was going and wondered if God could really be trusted?

This morning, as we look these stories from God's Word, my prayer is that we all will truly believe that **GOD CAN BE TRUSTED**

Main Point: God Can Be Trusted

If you are new to Greenbriar, we typically walk through books of the Bible verse-by-verse, but this morning is going to be a little different. Since today is Kids Quest we're taking a week off of our 1 Timothy Series to jump in where our kids ministry is, in the Old Testament story of Joseph which can be found in Genesis 37-50. You should all have found an index card in your seat. We're going to do an activity together to fly over Joseph's story. If you are unfamiliar with it, this won't give you all of the details, but will give you the big picture. It's going to involve a little bit of math, and a whole lot of listening. Is everyone ready?

Activity Illustration

Say: At the top of your index card, whatever you consider to be the top, write any number higher than 10. Leave plenty of space to do some math! Parents, you may need to help some of our non-MATHers out or let them work with you.

Say: God promised Abraham that his family would become a great nation and he would have more descendants than anyone could count. God kept His promise, and Abraham had a son named Isaac, who later had a son named Jacob, who later had 12 sons.

Say: Add 12 to your number.

Say: One of Jacob's sons was named Joseph. Jacob loved Joseph the most, even making him a beautiful robe of many colors.

Say: Joseph's brothers were very jealous of him. One day Joseph's brothers had an idea: "Let's get rid of him for good. Let's throw him in this pit and tell our father a wild animal attacked him."

Say: So the brothers grabbed Joseph, took his beautiful robe and threw him into a deep hole in the ground. Soon afterward, a group of traders came by. The brothers had a new idea. They sold Joseph for 20 shekels of silver, and the traders took Joseph to Egypt, where he would be sold as a slave.

Say: Now subtract 20 from the number in your previous answer.

Say: Then the brothers dipped Joseph's robe in animal blood and sent it back to their father. Jacob believed his beloved son was dead and was devastated.

Say: Meanwhile, back in Egypt, Joseph experienced more terrible times. He was falsely accused of something he didn't do, thrown in prison and remained forgotten there by others for many years.

Say: But God had a plan. He was in control of Joseph's whole life, even when the hard things happened. God put Joseph in Egypt on purpose. God proved He cares about the details of His people's lives, even down to the food they ate!

Say: Now add 8 to the number from your previous answer.

Say: Many years later, God put Joseph in a position to help God's people when a great famine came.

Say: People needed food, and God used Joseph to rescue the entire country and save God's people, the Israelites—even his brothers!

Say: In doing this, God kept the covenant (or promise) He made to Abraham all those years ago! You can hear Joseph's complete trust in God in the words he spoke to his brothers in **Genesis 45:8** "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."

Say: Now divide your number by the first number you wrote down. When you get your answer, hold up your number with your fingers.

They should all arrive at the **number 1**. Take out the index card out of the sealed envelope and reveal that you knew their answer before they even started.

Say: I knew before you started what answer you would reach at the end, just like God knew from the beginning that He would miraculously use Joseph's life to save all those people. We may not understand how God works, what he's doing in the moment, or what's up ahead, but we can absolutely trust that He is always the One in control.

Put one finger back up and let's say this together: "God is the ONE in control!"

Body of Message

Although we read through the story in a fun way, it's obvious that Joseph spent a lot of his life in situations that were not so fun, in fact, they were downright difficult. He had every reason to ask the question "why is this happening to me?" Yet we can see that Joseph's difficulties were not in vain. God had a purpose for what he was allowing Joseph to go through, and it was not only for his good, but for the good of many others.

We all go through difficult situations in our lives:

Kids:

- Worries
- Hard things at school
- Misunderstandings with friends or other students

- Punishments when you do wrong
- Chores
- Seeing others do things that they aren't supposed to do
- Not always getting your way

Grown Ups:

- Anxiety
- Uncertainty at work
- Financial struggles
- Conflict with others
- Marital issues
- Concerns about our kids
- Seeing people you love make bad or hurtful decisions (Parents, Children, Friends)
- Loss and brokenness of all kinds

However, if our good God is in control, we can trust that He will work all of it together for his good purposes in our lives and our world.

Romans 8:28 | And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

On one trip to the mountains, Alyssa was Googling things to do and came across a place called Helton Creek Falls. This place seemed great. The pictures online looked cool and it was a free place to visit, so we packed up the car and headed out. Now, when I was a kid on family trips, we used the big atlas to figure out where we were going, and eventually graduated to printing off Mapquest directions. Anyone over the age of 30 probably knows what I'm talking about. Kids, ask your parents for a history lesson. But today, you all know, we just put the destination into Google Maps or Waze or whatever you use and TRUST that it's going to take us where we want to go. Well, this trip was going great, but the closer we got the less great it seemed. It started with some winding country roads, and eventually we turned onto a dirt road, which isn't too crazy, until it started to narrow and feel more like someone's really long driveway. We slowed our pace, thinking maybe we had taken some wrong turn, YET Google Maps reminded us that it was the way we were supposed to be going. Onward we went until we took a slight turn and slammed on brakes. This wasn't just a narrow road, it was an obstacle course. Just in front of us the road dipped down into a running stream that had to be crossed to continue. Now, this wasn't the Mississippi River we are talking about BUT we don't drive a truck or SUV, we're rocking the ol' trust minivan. This thing doesn't have 4 wheel drive and I don't care how great the stow 'n go seating is, that's not going to help us in an off-roading situation. Alyssa and I looked at each other, assessed the situation,

and decided to walk on the wild side! I press the gas and we start praying. We crept through this little gulley with the utmost caution and I gripped that steering wheel like Dale Earhardt on race day, absolutely unsure if we would make it, but fully committing. There were scrubbing sounds and it was bumpy, but we celebrated like we'd won a contest when we came out on the other side. "Woooooo!" We had made it! I felt alive! We were alive! Now, if you were thinking that we were in the clear...you'd be wrong. A few more twists and turns and we came upon another water filled dip in the road that was maybe even more treacherous than the previous one. At this point we weren't going to turn back, so with the same prayers and white-knuckle steering this band of minivan adventurers tackled another stream. Eventually, we found the parking area and made the short hike down to the falls, and what we discovered were magnificent scenes, refreshing water, and hours of memory making, exploration and fun. In fact, we love the falls so much that we have taken our minivan back down that wild road several more times since and even took friends to show them how great it is.

Now...what if we had turned back when the road started to narrow? What if we had become too afraid of the unknown that we stopped, and went no further? What if we had decided the treacherous streams were just too much for us to handle? We would have never discovered the blessing of Helton Creek Falls.

In a far better way than Google Maps or Waze, our Lord knows the end of the story. He has a plan for each of our lives that is going to bring him glory, and he always has our good in mind.

Did you know that the Lord does not let you hurt for no reason? He allows you to go through hard things on purpose. He is using it to make you more like him. He does not waste our suffering.

Near the end of Joseph's story in Genesis 50, his father Jacob dies, and his brothers, who did him wrong so many years ago, were afraid that now that he was a powerful man, he would choose to hurt them because they hurt him, but check out what he says: **Genesis 50:19-21 | ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? ²⁰ 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. ²¹ So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.**

Joseph's hope was not in revenge against his brothers, it was in the God who had been with him through all of the tough times and was working things together according to his good plans.

In fact, all of this points to the greatest plan. Joseph was a real man, with a real story, but he is also pointing to someone greater. There is another man who could easily say the words of verse 20 "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive." Jesus is the greater Joseph. Like Joseph, Jesus is a beloved son, the MOST beloved son, betrayed for a few pieces of silver. Jesus is and was the perfect man, God in the flesh, innocent. He was beaten, mocked, stripped of his covering, nailed to a cross and left to die. It wasn't animal blood shed, it was his own blood. We've all experienced darkness, but this was the darkest day in history. The ONE who all things were created by and for was killed by his own people, but he wasn't just a dead man, he was a sacrifice, a perfect lamb who paid for the sins of the world. He died on that cross to give us true life. His suffering provided a way for millions to spend eternity with him AND to enjoy a relationship with him. Not only that, but he didn't stay dead. The tomb is empty. He is alive. We can TRUST him with our eternity, AND we can TRUST him as Lord in our daily lives. He knows what is best and he is guiding our paths.

God knows the end of every story. He will accomplish his plans. **He can be trusted.**

Community Group Questions:

1. What area of your life are you currently finding it the hardest to trust God?
2. How have you seen God bring you through times when it was hard to trust him?
3. What is the gospel of Jesus and how does it compel us to trust in God with the biggest and smallest things of life?