

Behind the Scenes: God's Story Through Joseph

Part 3

Genesis 44-50

Robert Morris – May 15, 2022

Good morning, Grace! All right, I'm excited to be wrapping up Joseph with you this morning.

I help coach youth baseball. I'm no Tom Emanski or anything, but we're doing our best. And one of the things that most good coaches do, I think, is that we've built the system around this hope that the actual practices, the preparation, is the hardest part of being the team. Maybe you've had this experience. The goal, I think, is to have the games be relatively easier because of how our teams have prepared and worked hard in practice.

So, we try and practice at a pace that challenges the boys and brings them to the point where the hard stuff is already done. When it's game time, go out there, have fun, do what you know how to do.

Well, part of this process is obviously physical conditioning. And one of the things we've done on our team is we have this common refrain amongst our boys. And it started a few years ago, and we've held onto it. In the middle of conditioning or doing some kind of hard exercise, or some particularly hot session of practice, when the boys are really wanting to quit, I'll ask the boys, "Hey, are you guys tired?" Or, "Are you guys hot?"

And I've taught them to respond this way: "No, coach, the other team's hot. The other team's tired."

Now, here's the truth: they're really tired. They're really hot, and they want to quit. But it's this little mind trick to remind them that they've prepared for this. They've done the hard work already. The effort that they put in is going to pay off because we're going to be better prepared than the team we're playing, whenever we play them.

Well, about a year or so ago, we were playing in one of these tournament-style events and we were on our fourth game. It was in June, the fourth game on a Saturday. It's about 4:30 pm, the hottest part of the day. And right before the game, I look over to the dugout and I say, "Hey, boys, are you tired?" They gave me the right response, but their hearts weren't really in it.

Now we got into the middle of the game and we were up by a run or two. We weren't running away with it or anything, but I think the other team was expecting to beat us handily. And in between innings we're huddled up and I look over and I notice that the other team—you can tell, they're tired. Their body language is starting to slump. And I said, "Hey, boys, shhh, look, over there, look." And they looked over there and they saw what I saw. And they realized, "Ohhhh, that's what all that hard work was for. We've got those guys beat mentally already. Coach had a plan this whole time. He knew that if we put in the hard work now it would pay off in the end. And it paid off in a fourth game on a Saturday afternoon in June."

And instantly, in that moment, there was a renewed and gained kind of trust between coaches and players. They saw what happened. And they realized, "Oh, coach had a plan. The coach had a plan. And all that previous pain was for this moment. It was all worth it." And they felt that in a real and tangible way.

Well, today we're going to see the same kind of thing in Joseph's story. The coach has a plan and it's about to pay off and it's about to come full circle.

Let me remind us where we've been the last few weeks in the story of Joseph. We've been on this journey with Joseph with this big idea that in the midst of all this human activity, Joseph's long saga, there's another character who's in the center of it all--this other main character, God himself, who is behind the scenes. It's really God's story through Joseph.

And the big outline has been that there have been these three times in three chapters where we get this behind-the-scenes peek. God makes an appearance in the midst of all of this human activity. And when He does, we don't want to miss the point.

And there's been this big question we've been asking ourselves each week—something to wrestle with: How might the full implications of God's activity in Joseph's life and what we learn about God there mean for my own life? Because there's a very real God revealed to us in it, and His nature and His character are on display.

And so, the first two weeks, we had these behind-the-scenes moments. In chapter 39 we saw clearly that God was with Joseph. God was with him, both in the lows and the highs of this life. He never left him. And in chapter 41 we saw that God is intervening, both on the macro level of the entire world, but also in the micro level of individual hearts and lives. He was intervening.

So, let's dig in today. Let's get to our final behind-the-scenes moment. And when we get there we'll slow down and make sure we don't miss the point.

Now when we left Joseph last week at the end of chapter 41 he was second in command. He was second in command of the entire country of Egypt. And the end of chapter 41 says that the famine was so severe that people from all over the earth came to Egypt to buy food. And that "whole earth" includes Jacob, the current patriarch of God's chosen family, who hears that they have food there and sends this group of brothers to go get food for this extended family.

And as first listeners, we asked ourselves to try and suspend our knowledge of the end of the story. So, if you can imagine being one of the first listeners to the story, you're starting to think, *Okay, I know what's coming. I know what's about to happen. It's revenge time.*

And they show up in Egypt and they don't recognize Joseph. It's twenty years later, he's groomed and dressed like an Egyptian. But Joseph recognizes them and he sees them coming.

And we have two to three chapters of this kind of elaborate set of tests and trials for the brothers, because I think Joseph is trying to figure out what kind of men they are. What kind of men have they become? And there are these multiple trips back and forth from Egypt to Canaan. Each time they run out of food they keep having to come back. And Joseph keeps asking for them to bring the younger brother. And there's this whole back-and-forth sequence with money hidden in bags and silver cups hidden in bags of grain. All the while, Joseph is giving them extra food, not charging them for it. But the brothers really don't know what to do with this generosity and grace, and so they assume it's some kind of trap or some kind of punishment. What did we do wrong?

And it seems like Joseph is kind of playing around with them. And I'm sure the first readers—again, if we're suspending our knowledge of the end of the story—might be thinking, *Yep, mess with them, Joseph. They deserve this. It's time for sweet revenge, poetic justice. Make them feel the pain that you felt for all of those years.*

And from the text, it doesn't seem as if Joseph is taking personal enjoyment out of this deception. But he is waiting for something to reveal itself. We already know that God did a great work in Joseph's heart. He's made him forget, he's made him fruitful. But in some ways, he's trying to answer this question: Who are these men? Is there any remorse for what these men did all these years ago?

And so, we get to the end of chapter 44. And if you have your Bibles and you want to follow along with us, that's where we're going to start diving in today. At the end of chapter 44 Joseph sets up this moment of decision for these brothers of his. And his big question, I think, is: *Will these brothers envy and treat Benjamin the way they did me?* That's the question behind the question. And there's this pivotal moment and Joseph has the complete upper hand. And he is requesting that the younger brother, Benjamin, stay in Egypt as a guarantee or pledge that these men will do what they said they're going to do. They're going to deliver on their promises.

And we see something happen at the end of chapter 44 that is shocking. We see Judah, the same brother who twenty-something years ago said, "Hey, guys, I know we could kill him. Let's at least make money off him and let someone else do the dirty work of killing him." This same brother says this, verse 32 of chapter 44: "For your servant became pledge of safety for the boy to my father ... Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a servant to my lord, and let the boy go back with his brothers." Judah says, *I'll take his place.*

And it's this transitional moment for how Joseph sees his brothers, because Judah is now offering himself as a slave in Benjamin's place for the sake of his father. If we remember the beginnings of the story, these same brothers who were angry and indifferent toward their father, jealous of their brother; now they're begging for the father's well-being and they're offering themselves as replacements for their dad's current favorite child.

Judah's speech is the ascent to the climax of the story. The brothers know they're powerless and weak. They're trapped. They're without hope. They cannot manufacture the result that they want. And instead of saving themselves, they think of others. They will treat the younger brother differently than they treated Joseph.

Now just a quick aside here, friends. This little section, I think, is so important to the big picture of the Bible. What happens here is one of the most beautiful and poetic and grand foreshadowings of what is to come in redemptive history. Because this is the very first instance of human substitution in the Scripture. It's the very first time in the Bible we have someone who willingly offers their life for another. And how beautiful and how poetic that it comes from Judah, because there is a descendant of Judah to come thousands of years later who will do this very thing for you and me; a descendant of Judah who will lay down His life so that others may live; a descendant of Judah who will take the blame for those who don't deserve mercy and

grace; a descendant of Judah named Jesus the Christ. What a picture, what a glimpse. I'm still getting goosebumps and I've been sitting on it for three weeks.

This moment flips the script and changes it and we enter this climax of the story. Chapter 45 begins this way: "Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him." Joseph sends everyone out of the room. He's undone. He doesn't want people to see him in this condition, and so he sends everybody out. And instead of using a translator he speaks to his brothers in verse 3, which says, "And Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph!'" I am Joseph.

And if you were in that room, friends, during that big reveal, you would have heard a pin drop. And if you were in that room as a fly on the wall, you would have seen the body language get really tense. It was already tense, and then it got turned up, because this is not a joyful "aha" moment or a happy family reunion.

These brothers are rightfully terrified and paralyzed with fear. All of their bad decisions are now coming home to roost. This is the "Oh You know what" moment for these brothers. This is not good news. They're fully in the hands of the one they mistreated all those years ago, and they know what they probably would have done and it terrifies them.

And it's at this moment ... this is the moment where ... guess who shows up? Yep, the one behind the scenes. We get our final behind-the-scenes moment right here. And let's pay attention to what's repeated over and over again, because the author doesn't want us to miss the point. And Joseph is going to start speaking, and there are two different sets of repetition, two phrases repeated, both the same big idea.

Verse 4 in chapter 45: "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. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. 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. 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. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt.'"

Now there's a clear message in this passage.

Verse 5: "You sold me here ... God sent me.

Verse 7: “God sent me before you.”

Verse 8: “It wasn’t you who sent me here, it was God.”

Verse 8 again: “God made me a father to Pharaoh.”

Verse 9: “God has made me the lord of all Egypt.”

And so, we have these two phrases that get repeated over and over and over again. “God sent me” and “God made me.” The veil is being removed now and Joseph is seeing that it was God who sent Joseph, not the brothers. He had this grand purpose for it all. It’s this classic statement of God’s providential control, His providence and sovereignty. *Not you ... you did not do this ... God did this.*

God has been sovereignly directing this sequence of events in order to accomplish His purposes: the preservation of God’s covenant family, which, again, is the big idea of the Book of Genesis—how is God going to make good on the promises that He made to this family?

Friends, think of it this way. If Joseph’s life were a crime scene, it would be an open-and-shut case. His fingerprints are all over this. And Joseph wants to give credit where credit is due. He says, *Brothers, don’t you for a second believe that you did this. You were just acting out of your bents and your passions and your sinful hearts, acting out of your anger and jealousy and greed. But God knew what He was doing. He had a plan all along to preserve these promises He made to our forefathers.*

There is a “high plan” at work here. There’s something else going on. And Joseph, maybe for the first time in his life, is now keenly aware. He’s been looped in on all of this. God has revealed to him what this is all about. And so, three times here he says, “God sent me. God sent me. God sent me. He had a greater purpose for all of this.”

All the pieces are now coming together for Joseph. It’s an “aha” moment. *Oh, that’s why You were doing this. You had a plan the whole time. That’s what this was all about. He’s using me to save millions of people’s lives, including God’s covenant family. And He’s putting me at this place at this time. He chose me to be His tool to solve this famine problem and He’s placed me where He’s placed me. God sent me. God made me.*

In the recounting of this story in one of the famous psalms, Psalm 105, it says it the same way: “He had sent a man ahead of them, Joseph” (Psalm 105:16).

And so, all of these episodes in Joseph's story are contributing to this grand demonstration of how God is fulfilling His plans. He's been the one guiding Israel's history. He's the one working behind the scenes.

And then really quickly, I'd love to show you one more portion of Joseph's story. Because if we fast forward seventeen years, skip over about three chapters, we get to the end of Joseph's story in chapter 50. Joseph has spent seventeen years caring for his family/ brothers, giving them land, a place. He provides for them.

And in chapter 50, these brothers have this moment when they come to him now that their father is dead. And they believe in their hearts that this is the time that Joseph is going to exact his revenge. His hand was only stayed because he didn't want to hurt his father.

At the end of chapter 50, verse 15 says this: "When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, 'It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him.'" And then we have this famous section of Scripture. "Joseph wept when they spoke to him. His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, 'Behold, we are your servants.' But Joseph said to them, 'Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? 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. So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little one.' Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them."

Now, a few things of note in this chapter.

Don't miss the beautiful irony of verse 18. The brothers threw themselves down in front of Joseph and bowed down in front of him. The dreams from chapter 37 have come true, decades in the making.

And don't miss that Joseph weeps. He's forgiven them, he's told them this was all part of God's plan—"God sent me." He's provided for them and their families for seventeen years in Egypt at this point, and now they're coming back groveling again, wondering if they'll now be destroyed. They misunderstand his goodness and grace and think it was just a matter of time before he takes his revenge.

And we see the final act of God in Joseph's life; that he can say something like he says at the end of chapter 50. We get this final peak behind-the-scenes peek of what God was doing in Joseph's heart the whole time. And the theme of Joseph's life is what he says, I think, in this

famous verse, verse 21: “Am I in the place of God? You meant it for evil. God meant it for good.”

You meant it for evil ... God meant it for good. Joseph, friends, is not soft-selling how he has seen the events of his life. His brothers meant it for evil and it was evil. God meant it for another purpose. Evil people with evil plans—still under God’s direction.

And be careful, friends ... I find it very interesting here that the same word “meant” is used for both sides of this thing. My heart kind of wants to say sometimes ... I want to try and let God off the hook and say, *You meant it for evil, but God turned and used it for good*. There’s a difference here. He uses that word “meant”, that God himself had intent in these circumstances; that God was not surprised by the sins of His people and then was rushed to try and figure out how to use it or pick up the pieces. He’s been in charge of everything, planned it, orchestrated it, predicted it in a dream, worked a 22-year plan to make it happen so that He could rescue His people. There’s an intent here that’s really hard for my heart sometimes to wrap around.

Because this story is really about how people are constantly fulfilling God’s plan, whether they’re aware of it or not, and that even human sin can’t thwart God’s plan.

And it’s the pinnacle of faith that Joseph leaves the righting of wrongs to God; that he sees God’s providence even in the malice and evil of others. And he does not repay evil with evil, but instead shows them practical affection. A shorter way to say this might be that Joseph is becoming like Christ in all of his life.

You see, the one behind the scenes, the one working all this out ... He’s been in the middle of all this. He’s been bringing about His good plan. And the whole point of this story, the whole point of the Joseph narrative, is that you and I, by default, by God’s good grace that we have God’s word for it that it’s preserved, might be able to love and recognize the God who works in these ways.

There’s meaning, there’s intent. In every act of evil there’s not just one purpose. They’re creating evil; God’s creating good.

And so, now that we’ve see the whole story ... we’ve gotten our last behind-the-scenes moment, the question that is always before us every time we come to God’s Word is “What do we take away? What do we do? What truth do we need to hold on to?”

As I thought and prepared and prayed for our time together this morning, the thing that came to my mind were three questions; three questions I think you could use. You could ask

yourself these questions. If you're in some kind of close spiritual friendship with others, you could ask each other these questions. But three questions to wrestle with in light of what we've learned together thus far in Joseph's story ...

Application Question #1: Can You Embrace God's Sovereignty?

Question one: Can you embrace God's sovereignty? Can you give God's sovereignty a hug? I want to do my best, friends, to tread as carefully as I know how. And I've said this multiple times, I think every week: I don't know the pain that's in this room. I don't know all the stories. I know that some of you are still very much in the chapter 39s of this world. You're in the prisons of this life, and you're barely—I mean, barely—clinging onto the hope that God is with you.

And I want you to hear that my heart is for you today. I'm not trying to minimize that. Joseph never minimized his pain. He said, "You meant evil." He just knows now that God was meaning something else. And it did not happen with a flip of a switch. For Joseph, it took him decades to get to the point in his life where he could say the kinds of things that he said in verse 21.

But what if you believed? What if you tried to believe? What if maybe you just pretended to believe that God had a plan, that He has the power to pull off that plan? And that's what we mean by that word "sovereign" there. And friends, it may take you twenty-two years like it did Joseph. It may take you three decades, it may take you your entire lifetime, or you may never see it on this side of heaven.

But this is the God of the Bible. It's hard to get away from this: He has a plan, He has the power to pull off that plan, He's a worker of miracles out of the darkest, deepest dysfunction and pain, for His purpose, for His glory and fame on this earth, and for others to come to know Him. And no purpose of His can be thwarted. Whatever He plans, that He will do.

And we get left with the tough questions, ones that I don't take lightly, but with the proper amount of fear and respect. I'm not trying to minimize human responsibility here as well. There's this great tension with human responsibility and God's sovereignty that I'm not sure how to get my head and my heart around most days. Right? Why didn't God prevent Joseph from being sold? Why didn't God prevent the slander of Potiphar's wife? Why didn't He not allow the

cupbearer to forget him for two years? Why didn't He just work the same plan but work it faster so that Joseph doesn't have to wait as long? These are the hard questions, friends.

And I think it's okay for us to have those questions and bring them to God. It's okay to ask God, "What are You doing? I know what people are doing to me, I know what the broken world is doing to me. I even know what I'm doing to me sometimes." We're just humans in this story, trying to trust that there is a God who has a plan. I'm trusting that my little part in the story, the part I play on the stage, might be a part of God's grand mission of preserving life. It might be part of the grand mission of helping bring others to the knowledge of my gracious and good God.

One of the ways this has played out recently in life—a recent example that I want to give to you—is that my wife had a really tough 2021. That whole year was just really hard. The short version of that is my wife's side of the family is full of women who have experienced breast cancer. And it sent her down this road of discovering things about her own medical outlook for the rest of her life. And it led us to this point where we had to make some painful decisions, and painful decisions that we had to make as a family. And what happened was that we made those decisions, and 2021 was a very hard year physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually. It didn't feel fair in some ways. It was a struggle. And in some ways, we're still living with the effects of that struggle in that year.

And we look back on that year, and it's only been a year, but we're starting to have conversations like this. One, we're grateful to have had the choice, grateful to live in the day and age that we live in that we have modern medicine that can help us with some of these things. But in all that pain and multiple surgeries, there were these days when she asked, "Why did I do this? Why did I have to walk down this road? It would have been better to just have not known. This is too much pain."

And friends, this is just a little taste. I have no idea of what God intends to do through all this. I'm watching it unfold too. But there are these things starting to happen where she's already had multiple conversations with other women who have to go through this same thing and she's been able to encourage them and help them. And you start to wonder things like, *God, did You do this? Did You do this? Did You intend to bring good out of something that seems so broken and so bad? God, are You in the middle of this somehow?*

I know another family—actually, a couple of families, to be honest—but one specifically that I know personally are really inspiring me right now, because they are living, friends, frankly, your and my worst nightmare in their actual lives. Their pain has brought them to points of exhaustion that I’m not sure that I know anything of or can comprehend. Their pain has kind of knit them together in some ways. And friends, and they are not even close to the point where they can look at this situation and say, “This is good.” Because what they’re going through is not good. It’s the brokenness of the world to its fullest. But they could already point you to time after time when the Lord has given them exactly what they needed on exactly the day that they needed it. He’s put them in the path of someone they can minister to and they were ready to minister to them. Their testimony of faith is inspiring men and women all over our community. And they’ll say things like this: “Oh, this is the ministry that God has provided for us.” And I don’t know how they’re doing it. And rightfully so, they’re not to a point where they can say, “This is good.” But they are believing, trusting, and embracing that God means some things. They’re embracing His sovereignty.

And so, that’s a question: Can you embrace that sovereignty?

Application Question #2: Am I in the Place of God?

I think the next question is this. It’s from Joseph’s last sentence there: “Am I in the place of God?”

Two quick facets to that question; there are two ways you can look at this question. First, am I in the place that God would have me? I know I’m here, I’m living through these circumstances, I know it’s the place God has for me now, I know where I’m supposed to be, even in the hard, maybe. But the second facet is this. Am I putting myself in God’s place? Am I acting like I’m in charge instead of recognizing that I’m a creature?

Because one of the warnings and big themes of the Bible is not to put yourself in the place of God. There’s a number of different ways it says this.

Isaiah 45 says it this way:

“Woe to him who strives with him who formed him,
a pot among earthen pots!

Does the clay say to him who forms it, ‘What are you making?’

Or ‘Your work has no handles’?

Woe to him who says to a father, ‘What are you begetting?’

Or to a woman, ‘With what are you in labor?’”

Isaiah 55 says it this way:

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

The Book of Job says it his way, Job 38:4, when God speaks to Job and says:

“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me if you have understanding.”

Friends, this is tough to swallow, I know. Because there have been enough dark days in my life when I have begun to wonder or maybe doubt that this is the kind of God that I want to serve. And yet, undergirding my life at the same time, I can’t deny His love and sovereignty and wisdom on display in my life. And without those things, nothing else makes sense.

And so, be careful, friends. We do not get to define God. Don’t strip God of His full sovereignty. I know it’s difficult to stare down that barrel sometimes. But you don’t want that either. The consequences of letting go of God’s full sovereignty may even be more crushing to your soul. Life makes even less sense if there’s no hope of a loving God who is working His plan. That’s a darkness that is very hard to recover from. And so, in your attempt to be in the place of God, don’t reduce or cripple God’s sovereignty in an effort to not damage His reputation. He’s created this universe where evil is possible and always outflanks it. And so, can I believe that I’m in the place of God? Or the other way: I’m not going to put myself in the place of God.

I have learned to kiss the waves that throw me against the Rock of Ages.

--- Charles Spurgeon

There’s a quote by Charles Spurgeon that I want to share with you. It helps me a lot, and so I’ll share it with you. It says, “I have learned to kiss the waves that throw me against the Rock of Ages.” My life has been designed for me to have a relationship with the God who created me.

And in His grace, He'll do all kinds of things to work His plan and bring me to the point of realizing that even in the hard, it's intended to draw me closer into Him; to draw me in, because He loves me. And He's proved that by sending His Son. And I'll do my best to humbly walk with Him all the days of my life, whether or not I see the big picture or never see the big picture. Because I've already seen enough, friends. I've already seen enough of His love and His care and His orchestration of good in the midst of all kinds of evil in this world.

And so, I'll rest in the "place of God", knowing He has me in His hands, and I'll fight the urge to think that I know best as one of His created beings.

Application Question #3: Can You Forgive?

The third and final question I want to leave with you is this: Can you forgive? I think one of the most beautiful parts of Joseph's story is what God did in Joseph's heart to allow him to say the kind of things he says at the end of chapter 50; to see the hand of God in their sin and their evil—not minimize it, but also not hold it against them any longer. Instead he turns the tables. And the last verse I read to you said he provided for them and he comforted them and he spoke kindly to them.

God did a miraculous work in Joseph's heart.

Could you be willing to entertain the thought that God may be able to do that in your own heart and life as well? I want you to consider applying this. Is there someone you need to forgive? And if that person just came to your mind, that's a Holy Spirit clue right there, friends. And it may be someone who did evil against you and meant evil against you. And I know that the Lord may need to do a miraculous work in your heart for you to even consider forgiving. But would you have the humility to ask Him to do it? Ask Him to work in your heart, and you'll know that He did that great work when you can speak kindly to them and comfort them.

Friends, one of the truths of the Bible is those who have been forgiven much know how to forgive. Those that understand the debt that they've been forgiven by God are much quicker to offer that to others.

So, men and women of Grace, three questions:

Can you embrace God's sovereignty?

Are you putting yourself in the place of God?

And can you forgive?

Now we get to the end of Joseph's story, the end of his journey. And I think we've seen this glorious picture of the real main character behind it all, the one behind the scenes. God has been working in the midst of all this human activity and striving and frantic efforts. There's a sovereign God that has a plan and He's working that plan. The story isn't about Joseph—it's about Yahweh God. His promises won't be thwarted, His plan will come about, and He will always do what He has set out to do.

And while we wait on this earth to see that and live in the middle of our own Joseph-like stories, I want you to remember what we've learned about this God who's behind the scenes. I want you to make sure you've really grasped the three behind-the-scenes moments we've had in God's activity.

He's with us. He's with us, friends, in the highs and the lows of this life. All the same, He never leaves us.

He's intervening, both on the global/macro scale of this world, but also in the individual/micro scale of your heart and your heart and your heart.

And He's got a plan. And He's sovereignly working that on His timetable and He's accomplishing exactly what He wants to accomplish.

And so, our role, friends, I think, is to rest in His with-ness as creatures, maybe as best we can in whatever circumstances we find ourselves. Live faithfully like Joseph did. And in the meantime, pray for His intervention in the world and in us. Pray that He would do a good work in the world and in you—a kind of work that when we look at it, it can only be explained by God's activity and God's intervention. And then, let's wait together for the revelation of His plan. And pray. I think it's okay to pray that God would help you see just a little bit of that plan from time to time, so that you might not get too discouraged as you navigate this world. Pray that He gives you just enough of a peek behind the curtain in your own life to keep you trusting in His love and His sovereignty and His wisdom.

Let me pray for you.

Father God, we are grateful for who You are. We stand in awe of Your work in this world and in our lives. And so, we come humbly to You this morning and ask that You would continue to pour out Your grace on our lives.

You know each of us well and You know every situation in this room, Father. There are some here today who need to know that You're in control. They look at this world and they can't seem to see how all this makes sense. And so, I pray that You would grant them trust in You and do a mighty work in their heart, God.

There are others in here, God, who are just weary. They've been in the prisons of this life for what seems like too long. God, would You give them supernatural grace and mercy during these hard days?

And there are others who have seen Your hand all over their lives, God. They've seen how You worked so much good out of so much bad. God, help them worship. Make their hearts overflow with gratitude.

We marvel at You and Your word that helps us know how to live as Your creation. And we love Your son Jesus Christ. And it's in His name that we pray. Amen.