

What about the Storms?

Genesis 37:1-11

“Ok, Badveli, we got it. You keep reminding us that *we are called to get out of the boat*. Ok, we got it. But what about the storms? It is already adventurous to get out of the boat and to walk on the water. But what about the storms?”

Peter got out of the boat after knowing the **identity** of the person who was calling him. He obeyed the **command**. He got out and he started very well in walking towards Jesus. Then the Bible says:

But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.” (Matthew 14:30 ESV)

The winds and the storms of our lives can either strengthen our faith or cause us to sink.

It is so sad to meet friends who used to love the Lord but lost their faith when the storms of life hit them. They drifted and eventually lost interest in God and faith. My heart cries out for them. Each individual is created by God. It is a disaster not to recognize our Creator and eventually turn our backs on Him. Storms either bring us closer to God or the opposite...

Paul knew about storms quite well. He personally faced many of them, both physically and spiritually. When something bad happens (storms), I hear people say that things eventually will turn to good. I want to quote one of the most misquoted verses:

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

Yes, all things will turn into good under certain conditions, but not randomly. The conditions are “those **who LOVE God**” and “those **who called to according to his purposes**” (they are called to love and obey God) they are obey their **CALLING**.”

God has created us with a goal, a purpose in His mind. Each of us has a purpose in this life; otherwise we are just consumers who eat, drink, and die... That is not our purpose.

We will face all kinds of storms. All the Biblical characters faced storms.

Today I want to explore the life of another man from the book of Genesis called **Joseph**. Today I want to explore with you life of this man, the spoiled child of Jacob, and his favorite child who faced all kinds of storms. Joseph was chosen by God. A sovereign God allowed things that made Joseph stronger in his faith. Joseph had a special calling. He could interpret dreams. This great gift brought problems in his life. I will call them Joseph's storms. He was hit by many, but I will explore three of those storms.

1. The Storm of Jealousy and Hate

Jacob's favorite children were Joseph and Benjamin. Although Joseph was a shepherd along with his brothers, he was also spying on his brothers. His mother Rachel died while giving birth to Benjamin. His father gave him a garment, a colorful one, different than those of his brothers'. These colors indicated **royalty**. Joseph went to the field wearing a "tuxedo." No wonder the brothers raged with anger and hated him every day.

But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him. (Genesis 37:4 ESV) **(could not speak a kind word to him.** NIV)

In today's scripture, we read that Joseph saw a dream where he would rule over his brothers. This dream was not helping his situation with his brothers. They could not accept the idea that their little brother would be their ruler one day.

Please notice that in the Bible we see that God spoke to humanity through dreams. Dreams were considered revelations from God. **These dreams also were significant in demonstrating God's sovereignty.** Joseph's dreams indicated that God had a plan for Joseph. I am not sure whether Joseph understood this dream.

Maybe he was thrilled that he would become a ruler. I don't know. The narrator does not say anything about that.

-Joseph had a second dream (Genesis 37:9-11). The message was similar to the first one. He would rule over his brothers. **This one did it.** Not only his brothers were furious and angry, but also his father. The word **jealousy** that is used in verse 11 is a word reflecting an emotion which leads into violent action.¹

And in fact, they eventually did take action. Now everyone rebuked him. I don't know how he felt. I don't know whether Joseph understood his dreams.

Have you been in a situation like this?

You had a calling. You obeyed your calling. People misunderstood you or jealousy and anger towards you made your mission very tough.

First, Joseph's brothers planned to put him in a pit and starve him to death. Then they sold him to Egyptian merchants.

Let me remind you how Joseph's garments were used as false evidence:

When his brothers sold him, they took Jacob's "**favorite garment**" and immersed it in an animal's blood. The garment of "**favoritism**" became the garment of **grief**.

2. The Storm of False Accusation and Betrayal

His own brothers sold Joseph to the Ishmaelite who in turn sold him to an Egyptian officer. He was treated like a commodity. The officer's name was **Potiphar** and he was the chief of the Pharaoh's bodyguards. Joseph was the slave of an important person. This was not an accident; this indicates God's hand in Joseph's life.

But it was not easy. Joseph was sold as a slave, he served in a house very foreign to him, he won his master's heart, and he became his master's personal servant. He managed the whole house of one of the most important people in Egypt.

The story turns around. This time Potiphar's wife is taking the initiative to flirt with Joseph. Joseph was handsome. Joseph refused to have an affair. Notice!

Joseph did not **entertain the temptation**. He immediately resisted it by explaining to the woman that he wanted to be loyal to his master.

Unfortunately, Potiphar's wife got hold of **Joseph's garment** in her hand as he fled. She used it as "evidence."

Let me remind you how Joseph's garments were used as false evidence:

The garment of "**favoritism**" became the garment of **grief**.

Here at Potiphar's home, Joseph's **garment was used as false evidence**.

Potiphar's wife caught Joseph's garment in her hand and that was the evidence to put Joseph unjustly in prison. (Gen 39:12)

3. The Storm of being forgotten

The third storm that hit Joseph in his adventurous life came during his life in prison. Joseph was put in jail instead of being killed. We see Joseph in the "pit", betrayed and falsely accused. Think about Joseph. "What did I do wrong? Why am I back in the 'pit'? What is going on, God?"

The prison became a new "training school" for Joseph, a new place where he became the chief of the prisoners.

In Potiphar's house, he learned leadership. Most likely he met the important leaders of Egypt. Now in jail, he learned further how to become a leader. Again, the narrator reminds us that God is in control.

How interesting it is that we find these two important people (Pharaoh's high-ranking officials) coming to same prison where Joseph was. To be either **the cupbearer** or **the baker** of king is a highly responsible job. Like Potiphar (the chief bodyguard), they should be **trustworthy**. They test everything before giving it to the king. It seems one of them did something wrong and they were put in prison.

Both had dreams. The cupbearer's dream had positive results but the baker's dream had a bad ending. And indeed whatever Joseph interpreted, truly happened. The baker lost his life and cupbearer was released. During his release, Joseph had one request from this man.

“Only remember me, when it is well with you, and please do me the kindness to mention me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house. For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the pit.” (Genesis 40:14-15 ESV)

Did he remember Joseph? No. Only after two years he remembered his promise. You can think how Joseph felt those two years.

Where is God? How come I have a calling of interpretation of dreams and I am in jail?”

Dallas Willard says:

I meet many faithful Christians who, in spite of faith, are deeply disappointed in how their lives have turned out. Sometimes it is simply a matter of how they experience aging, which they take to mean they no longer have a future. But often, due to circumstances or wrongful decisions and action by others, what they had hoped to accomplish in life they did not...They painfully puzzle over what they may have done wrong, or whether God has already been with them. (*The Divine Conspiracy*)

Application:

1. When we are in “pit”, when we are down, God is up to doing something in our lives. David wrote important psalms while being in caves, in total darkness...(Psalm 55)

2. Consistency: Joseph stayed focused and loyal to God though circumstances were upside down.

We don't see Joseph giving up from God. In all circumstances he stayed loyal to his faith. It does not mean he did not have questions in his head, where is God in these circumstances?

When it does not make sense, keep praying and plug into God. Which means:

3. The delayed promise is not forgotten by God.

I would like to go back to Romans 8:28. Things may look bad, but God is right there walking with us through those storms. When Joseph's brothers gathered in Egypt later in the story Joseph said:

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. (Genesis 50:20)

Therefore:

4. Joseph learned to wait for the Lord.

Joseph was in slavery for 13 years including the two years of prison. He learned to wait for the Lord.

Also he did not sit down, relax and sleep all these years. **He was a doer.** Every place he went he took charge of the situation. He became the chief executive of Potiphar's house. He became the chief of the prison. He was a doer. In each situation Joseph did his best.

Garment:

The garment of "favoritism" became the garment of grief.

At Potiphar's home, Joseph's **garment was used as false evidence.** (Gen 39:12)

We all know the end of Joseph's story. Later in life, Pharaoh gave him a **royal garment**, a robe to be a leader in Egypt. (Gen 41:42)

Wait for the Lord...wait for the Lord... wait for the Lord...

Let me finish with these words from the bible:

"But those who hope in the LORD
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:31)