

Joseph, the One Who Trusted in the Sovereignty of God **(Hebrews 11:22; Genesis 39)**

Introduction

Two things we have been considering from the life of Joseph:

What is the criteria or benchmark for success in life? Joseph, the son of Jacob, gives us the answer.

When we study the life of Joseph, there are two things stand out:

1. Joseph kept his integrity intact
2. Joseph trusted in the sovereignty of God

I want to propose these as the mantras for success in life.

Last Lord's Day we considered the first, and today we consider the second: Joseph, the one who trusted in the Sovereignty of God:

The word sovereignty means the supremacy of God; God is Supreme over all things, and especially over the affairs of men.

David acknowledges the supremacy of God in his thanksgiving prayer, *Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, And You are exalted as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, And You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great And to give strength to all.* (1 Chronicles 29:11-12).

Joseph's life is an important reminder of this great truth of God:

- There are no accidents. As the Author of history, the Lord orchestrates all events to bring about His will.
- In triumph as well as tragedy, He directs our steps to put us where and when He wants us for His sovereign purposes.
- We may not experience the radical ups and downs of Joseph's life, but we can rest in the knowledge that even the most insignificant event is a divine appointment in the hands of the Lord.

That truth is dramatically displayed in Joseph's story.

- In one day, his fortunes had been completely reversed. That morning, he woke up in his prison cell. By evening, he went to sleep in the palace.
- Thirteen years earlier, he came to Egypt as a lowly slave, but now, at the age of thirty, he had become the second-most-powerful ruler in the land.
- None of it was coincidence—the Lord was in control at every turn, and His sovereign plan was not yet fully revealed.

From Joseph's life, we learn the following things about the sovereignty of God:

God's Sovereignty Means His Authority over the Affairs of Men (Genesis 45:4-8)

God's *sovereignty* is His right and power to do all that He decides to do. Job acknowledges this as he says, "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted" (Job 42:2). When God decides to do a thing, He does it, and no one can stop Him. That's *sovereignty*.

In this passage, the phrase "God sent me" occurs three times. This means, God, in His authority channels the affairs of men.

- Although it was Joseph's brothers who sold him to the Midianites, it was by the supreme will of God that it happened.

God's Sovereignty Means His Anchor over the Affairs of Men (Genesis 50:19-21)

God's sovereignty is not only to decide things for men, but He also actively guides or anchors the affairs of men.

- This means sovereign God leads His people through His beautiful *providence*.

Joseph was so wickedly mistreated by his brothers. But, now, in this text, we see him as a man of kindness and love.

The answer is found in Joseph's theology—he had a clear understanding of God's providence. In that moment, with his trials behind him and his brothers before him, Joseph articulated the perspective that summarized the story of his life: *God is in control and we can trust Him for the outcome.*

- John Piper said, "God's Providence is God's *seeing to* everything. Absolutely everything that needs to be done to bring about His purposes, God sees to it that it happens. Isaiah 46:10: "[I declare] the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.'" In other words, "I will see to it." See to it — *pro-videre*. "I will provide. I will see to it that everything works together for the goals that I have for the world.""
- Romans 8:28, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."
- As Joseph himself articulated, God intended the trials of his life for the good of his people. Joseph's suffering was not a punishment for sin, but the means through which God would prepare Joseph for a specific role in His divine plan to save sinners.

God's Sovereignty Means His Absolute Plan over the Affairs of Men (Genesis 50:24-26)

Two times in this passage the phrase "God will surely visit you" mentioned.

- This means God's plans will surely come to pass.
- What Joseph prophetically declared happened after over 400 hundred years, and the Lord raised one Moses to deliver Israel out of Egypt.
- Exodus 13:19 declared that Moses, while leaving Egypt, took the bones of Joseph along with them to be buried in the land of Canaan.

All of God's promises will definitely come to pass because God is sovereign! Trust Him, serve Him!

Conclusion

Knowing God's Sovereignty helps a person to REST, RELAX, and REJOICE in God.

Knowing God's Sovereignty helps a person to humbly surrender himself to the plans and will of God.

- Psalms 16:8-9, *I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.*
- Psalms 37:7, *Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.*
- Psalms 116:7, *Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.*
- Isaiah 11:10, *And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.*
- Isaiah 30:15, *For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.*
- Matthew 11:28-29, *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*