

ROCK US 10-24-18 You May Say I'm A Dreamer: Life Lessons from Joseph- Pt. 1: God's Real Hope & Help in Bad Times

A lot of ads appeal to hope for a better situation, a better time, a better life. I think of insurance ads. They basically try to tell you that no matter what bad thing happens, they'll cover your damages & expenses without *any* extra cost to you. Unfortunately, insurance companies have prime motivation: take in as much money as possible & pay out as little as possible. The reality is that life is hard. No matter who you are, tough circumstances will arise in your life. Bad things will happen to you. People will disappoint you & let you down; some even turn on you. Illnesses strike. You may even be the victim of a true injustice or abuse. No insurance company can help you in every bad situation in life. Even your closest, best friend on earth can't help pull you out of every bad situation, struggle or trial in your life. Believe it or not, it's not the trial or challenge or problem or injustice that really matter: it's how we respond to life's many challenges, struggles, troubles, trials, injustices, & evils.

Joseph's story shows this (that's what the skit tonight alluded to). Joseph was a good kid. He was happy, confident, positive. He was a good kid & God blessed Joseph with the ability to accurately dream about the future & to interpret the dreams of others. These gifts were a blessing from God. But these gifts also got him into trouble. (Let's watch a short video about Joseph.) As you can see, Joseph suffered the effects of envy, hatred, deception, violence/attempted murder, slavery, false accusations, injustice & imprisonment. He suffered these from his own brothers, from people he thought he could trust (Potiphar's wife) & the Egyptian government. But God never left him. In fact, God blessed Joseph through all of this & seated him in Egypt's 2nd highest office! Through God's power & vision, Joseph saved the people of Egypt & his own people, Israel. Eventually, even Joseph's brothers came to realize that God was truly with Joseph & their dark & bitter hearts were turned around. I love what Joseph said to his brothers in **Gen 50:20**, "*You tried to harm me, but God made it turn out for the best, so that He could save all these people, as He is now doing.*"

Joseph's story happened 4,000 years ago. Even though our world is vastly different, we still face circumstances, troubles, trials & struggles every day. And how we respond to them *is still critical*. Mike Narvaez is someone who's faced the suicide of his friend, a life-altering disease, addiction & family struggles. Mike pretty much ran from God most of his life & lived a rebellious lifestyle. In his 30s, Mike was stricken by kidney failure, a life-threatening disease that requires vigilant, daily treatment. In Aug 2016, Mike's friend's shocking suicide brought Mike to faith in Jesus & his life was forever changed. With new, almighty help & hope in his life, Mike was able to kick opioid pill addiction, which had plagued him for years. He began witnessing to his friends & family about Jesus – any many were saved as a result. He also co-founded *Driven Men's Ministry* at Zion's Church. Now, Mike is a new man & a light to those around him, especially to his wife who recently was diagnosed with Stage-4 cancer. Had he thrown in the towel at any point, all these great things wouldn't have happened. But God is greater! Mike's story is another great **Gen 50:20** example: "*You tried to harm me, but God made it turn out for the best, so that He could save all these people, as He is now doing.*"

Jesus said, "*In this world, you will have troubles.* **Jn 16:33b** In life we'll all have our Joseph moments- we'll experience challenges, struggles, troubles, trials, injustices, & evils. Unfortunately, no insurance company can bail you out of all of them. And no human can either. We can either give up & give in to the trials & troubles, or we can surrender to God- He is the only real answer to all of the troubles in life. Jesus' Word are so true: **Jn 16:33** "*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*" Jesus will be there for you in life's toughest situations. He proved His love for us on the cross & in the empty grave when He alone defeated sin & death. God's word is true: **Acts 2:21, Ps 145:18, Ps 50:15, Ps 37:7-9, Prov 18:10.**

It's not the challenge, trial or injustice that really matter: it's how we respond to them. Joseph faced crazy trials with a steady faith & trust in God. In all of his struggles, Joseph never took his eyes off God. Mike realized the Jesus was the *only way* out of trouble, the *only way* to be saved. Both were saved & went on to do great things for God's Kingdom to help save others. I can't make you trust in God or believe in Him. But I tell you, just as God transformed Mike, freed Joseph & put Him in a high place, God will do the same for you when you trust your life to Jesus & walk with Him. Every other path, every other solution, every other plan will ultimately fail. So, why not set your life on the Rock of Jesus right now! He will never fail you! Don't wait until the troubles hit, trust to Jesus today!

BIBLE VERSES

Job 14:1 "How frail is humanity! How short is life, how full of trouble!"

Gen 50:20 *You tried to harm me, but God made it turn out for the best, so that He could save all these people, as He is now doing.*

Jn 16:33 Jesus said, "*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*"

Acts 2:21 (CEV) *The Lord will save everyone who asks for His help.*

Ps 145:18 (TLB) *God is close to all who call on Him sincerely.*

Ps 50:15 (NCV) *Call to Me in times of trouble. I will save you, and you will honor Me [says the LORD].*

Ps 37:7-9 (NLT) *Be still in the presence of the LORD, and wait patiently for Him to act. Don't worry about evil people who prosper or fret about their wicked schemes. Stop being angry! Turn from your rage! Do not lose your temper- it only leads to harm. For the wicked will be destroyed, but those who trust in the LORD will possess the land.*

Prov 18:10 (NLT) *The name of the Lord is a strong fortress; the godly run to Him and are safe.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Joseph had some crazy dreams. So before we get serious tonight, *quickly* tell us a crazy dream you've had. Please be brief.
2. Read Job 14:1. Joseph faced many trials & troubles in his young life. Name some trials & troubles that young people face today.
3. What do you think about this statement: "*It's not the troubles, trials or injustices that matter, what really matters is how we respond to them.*" Is this statement true or not? Please explain your answer.
4. Read Gen 50:20. Why did Joseph's response to his terrible troubles & trials matter so much? What can you learn from him?
5. Read Jn 16:33. As Mike's story showed, the peace & transformative power of Jesus Christ is the ultimate help we can have.
Did Mike's story impact you or get you to better understand & appreciate the unique and almighty power of Jesus?
6. Tell us about a time in your life when you went to God for help with a personal challenge, trial or trouble. How did God help you?
7. Read these 5 verses & discuss how God is our absolute best help in troubled times: **Acts 2:21; Ps 145:18; Ps 50:15; Ps 37:7-9; Prov 18:10**
8. On the cross & through the empty grave, Jesus Christ alone proved that He's your ultimate help now & for eternity. Why wait until troubles come? Do you want to accept the helping hand, perfect peace, total love & eternal salvation of Jesus here tonight?