

God of the Weary

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[0 : 00] I know I've been changed. Amen. I hope you know that.

I hope you know the work of God in your life. We don't change ourselves. Jesus changes us. And amen to that. Well, guys, it's Father's Day.

And it's my tradition to preach to the men. So, brothers and fathers, this one's for you.

Ladies, you can listen too. But this is for you guys. The Lord bless it to your hearts. Father, as we open the book now, we know we've been changed.

It's because of your matchless grace in Jesus. And you're still changing us. You're not done. And we're so grateful. We all need to be changed.

[1 : 05] And Father, but Lord, as we come together today, the men are looking to you right now. And we're looking to you for change. We need you to work in us.

To make us to husbands, fathers, brothers, sons, uncles, neighbors. We, you called us to be.

People always want to tell us what they want.

But we want to hear from you. So help us to hear your voice today. And may we walk in that transforming, delivering, rescuing grace of Jesus.

And grow in his likeness together. Bless your word now. And use your unworthy servant who you are constantly working on. May you get glory.

May your word go forth with your power in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Genesis chapter 50.

[2 : 15] Verses 15 to 21. 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.

So they sent a message to Joseph saying, Your father gave this command before he died. Say to Joseph, Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin because they did evil to you. And now please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father. Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, Behold, we are your servants. Literally slaves. 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.

[3 : 21] So do not fear. I will provide for you and your little ones. Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. Amen.

That is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Praise team. Thank you once again. Wow. Beautiful, beautiful music.

Helps us worship. As we saw in the video, Union troops entered Galveston, Texas.

And the day after that, on June 19th, 1865, General Gordon Granger announced that the slaves were freed, General Order 3. Now the news is too good to be true.

It was actually two and a half years or so after President Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation, ending slavery. Texas didn't get the memo.

[4 : 22] But what happened there in Galveston was that rejoicing broke out, but also worship broke out. Many of the free slaves went to Methodist Episcopal South.

It's now called Reedy Chapel, A-M-E Church. They went there on that day to pray and give God praise for his blessing. They had a prayer service.

They had been praying for this day like their ancestors before because they believed that God, brothers, they believed that God was sovereign.

Even over their situation, even over their being in this country and in this horrible, sinful situation, they believed that God was sovereign.

As Anderson Edwards, a freed slave preacher, put it, he said, Listen, when I started preaching, I couldn't read or write. Had to preach what Maza told me and he say, Tell them, Negroes, they obeyed Maza, they go to heaven.

[5 : 28] Listen, slave preacher, but I know there was something better for them. But dare tell them except on the sly. And that done lots.

I tell them, if and they keeps praying, the Lord will set them free. You see, the slaves believed that God was in control, the Christian slaves, that God was in control of all things in the universe. And when God's control over the universe touches our lives and our pain, brothers, we call it providence. And we need desperately to recover this doctrine, this truth about God as men in this nation.

I know you've been watching. So many young men do not know how to deal with sorrow, with setbacks, with conflict, with fear, and with heartbreaks.

You know this because they act out with violence when they are in those situations. They feel that their lives are out of control and want others to feel their pain.

[6 : 50] Not saying other things are not going on in them, but this is big. And even Christian men of all ethnicities are not immune.

While I pray we're not acting out in violence, still, what happens to you, brothers, when you face hardships and heartbreaks?

How do you especially respond to evil you believe has been done to you? Where do you go if you believe you have done what is right before God and still you're kicked in the teeth?

If we turn to the God of our weary years, we will find hope and a strength that will support and carry us through any hardship.

If not, I want you to notice first of all that Joseph, this is about Joseph. It really is about God, but Joseph happens to be the illustration.

[8 : 07] Joseph's story begins with a tale of evil. All my points have the word evil in it, by the way. Most of us are familiar with Joseph, his whole story.

We've seen the movies. We've seen the animations and the live action movies of his life. I hope we've read it in the Bible too. The long and short, I'm trying to make it long and short here.

Joseph had 11 brothers and though he was next to last born, he was his father, Jacob's favorite. His father made it clear too that Joseph was his favorite.

He had, and he had dreams. He had dreams of big things for himself that he was going to run, not just the family business, he was going to run the family one day.

Now here's the thing, those dreams were sent by God, but no one really believed that. His 10 older brothers became bitterly resentful of him. So what we see here already in this story is what I call DFD, deep familial dysfunction.

[9 : 16] In other words, Joseph's family was towed up from the flow up. They were a mess. And this is the people of God. This is the beginning of the Old Testament church, the children of Abraham, literally his children.

It's amazing. It became so bad in their family that the brothers sold Joseph into slavery. But God was with him and he became the head slave.

However, his master's wife put the moves on him. He refused her. And the old saying is true. You know it. Woman scorned, dare.

That's not all women. Amen. She lied on him, called foul to her husband. And now the head slave is in the back of the dungeon.

Back of the bus. He's finally released from prison and becomes the right hand of Pharaoh because he was able to interpret a very troubling dream that the big guy had.

[10 : 29] And though that dream, which was from God, was powerful, it enabled Joseph to save Egypt from being destroyed by famine as well as his own family.

His brother shut up begging and they don't know it's him. Just handing out the food. Hmm. Then there's a great family reunion and everybody moves to Egypt in the suburbs and they're living happily ever after.

But not the end. You see, Joseph is a type of, or picture of Christ here. He's the savior of the people of God who suffered at their hands unjustly to save them.

And verse 20 shows us, that's the key verse, it shows us how Joseph survived and even thrived in the midst of great evils that were done to him.

He says, as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good. That's one of the great statements, brothers, in scripture.

[11:40] One of the great statements of what we call the providence of God. Too often, brothers, we let the world dictate how we think and how we talk.

We speak of fortune, fate, luck, and chance. I hope you don't, but I know we do. But those ideas are foreign to scripture because they forget that a personal God exists.

There's no such thing as fate, fortune, luck, or chance. In the Reformation Study Bible, I like what it says, it says, fortune is blind while God is all-seeing.

Fate is impersonal while God is the father. Luck is dumb while God can speak. I added my own.

Chance is fickle while God is faithful.

There are no blind and personal forces at work in your life, brothers. There are no blind and personal forces at work in human history. All is brought to pass by the invisible hand of providence, capital P.

[12:53] So don't speak of luck anymore. The Westminster Confession, which I think is very helpful here, he says, chapter five says, God, who created everything, also upholds everything.

He directs, regulates, and governs every creature, action, and thing from the greatest to the least by his completely wise and holy providence. He does so in accordance with his unfallible foreknowledge and the voluntary, unchangeable purpose of his own will, all to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.

Wow. That's a statement. Take a picture of that if you got a camera and read it for yourself when you get a chance to hear the Westminster Confession.

This definition of providence also points to Jesus, by the way, because in Hebrews chapter 1, verse 3, it says of Jesus, he is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature.

And watch this, he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

[14:17] Jesus, brothers, is upholding all things including you. All would collapse back into nothing without the son of God.

He's not only upholding everything, brothers, he directs, regulates, and governs every creature, action, and thing. That means your life, brothers, is never out of control.

Never. No matter how it feels. See, here's the thing. We look around and sometimes we have a hard time putting, believing what our theology says.

And that's reasonable, that's true. But it has to come back to this. Help me out. Stay with me, guys. It has to come back to this. Whose report will you believe?

I know what you're seeing and how you're feeling. I know you feel unjustly treated. I know you feel beat up. I know bad things have happened to you in your upbringing, maybe.

[15:27] Bad things have happened at work. Bad things happen in the street. I mean, you've experienced some stuff, guys. I hear you. I feel you. Boy, do I feel you. I feel you. But whose report will we believe?

Say it. We go back to scripture and we say, what is the Bible? Is it the word of God or just another good book?

Because the Bible reveals to us God's mind, will, and purpose, and reality. And he says, let me help you out.

Matthew 10, 29 and 30, Jesus speaking. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. When he says that, he's telling us that a sparrow can't die apart from the will of God. And he's telling us that the very hairs on your head, however many or few there may be, are all seen and known and governed by God.

[16:46] Now listen, if God governs birds and hair, you can't tell me he's out of control of all things. God's providence extends to all events, good or bad.

He is in control, though he himself never tempts anyone to do evil nor does evil. So first of all, guys, do you believe this? We gotta get that settled.

Guys, think about that one. Do you believe this? And keep in mind, theology is something you live, not just believe in your head, but it grabs hold of your whole being.

Good theology, biblical theology is living. So what happens if we don't believe this and therefore not live it? Can I show you real quick in this passage?

Evil without grace and providence leads to fear and slavery. Verses 15 through 18 there, notice the brothers, the scriptures call what the brothers of Joseph did, it uses three words, evil, transgression, and sin.

[17 : 54] The Bible does not dress up what is wrong with the world or what has happened in our lives, fellas. Evil is real. Now here's the thing, I feel like a monk again, here's the thing.

They could not, the brothers now, could not see how God was at work even within their sin and it tormented them. They were still thinking they needed to earn God's grace because of their evil. That's why they offered to be Joseph's servants and slaves. They believed, listen guys, they believed they needed to pay off their debt to Joseph, but really to God.

Now, Jacob died and they lived in the fear of retaliation from Joseph who was like a God to them. Joseph was like, I mean, he was next in line to Pharaoh and Pharaoh was like a God to his people. And so, Joseph was big in their eyes and so it's like they're coming before him and they're falling down before God and saying forgive us, have mercy, make us, just make us your servants.

[19 : 06] They couldn't believe they were forgiven for all the evil and sin they had done. Brothers, is that you?

Is the enemy tormenting you? I'm talking about you who have given yourself to Jesus. I'm talking about you who've fallen before Jesus and said, I'm the man, I'm guilty, please forgive me, help me to follow you.

I'm talking about you now because if you haven't done that, you are guilty. You are in a bad place. But if you've done this, are you still being tormented?

Do you struggle with how great God's grace and providence are for you? It's one thing to believe that he's governing your life. Brothers, do you believe he's governing your sin?

I didn't say causing you to sin. I'm saying that is your sin part of his plan and story for you? I'm not minimizing sin at all because it's evil.

[20 : 09] He tells us in the text, evil, transgression, and sin. We did evil, brothers, and evil has consequences even in this life. Maybe you went to jail. Maybe you got sick.

Maybe you lost family or friends or a job. But if you belong to Jesus, God is still at work in you. Will you believe in his forgiveness?

Will you look to the cross and see Jesus suffering and dying, put to death by his brothers, his brother Jews, that he might atone for your sins and theirs if we trust him.

Jesus is not asking you to do penance or in any way to atone for what you've done, brothers. He says, first of all, trust in what I've done for you, no matter what it was.

Now, he may call you to make restitution as a demonstration of your faith, but that's not atonement. You cannot atone. Jesus has atoned for you.

[21 : 17] Now, listen, here's where it gets good. Evil with providence leads to grace. Verses 17 through 19. When the brothers come to Joseph, the first thing and they fall on his face, notice the Bible says Joseph wept.

His heart was broken as he saw their fear of him and the guilt that still held them firm in his grip.

Joseph knew that God was at work in providence even through the evil his brother did to him.

This is why he can show what I call weeping grace. He didn't hold their sin against them. They had talked it out already.

He'd been spending time, remember, they'd been in Egypt for years now. They had already dealt with that. They had meetings, they had family get togethers, and they walked through that thing, I'm sure.

That's really Christian. Now here's the thing. You see, they had talked it out before God.

[22 : 29] And without this relationship with God, Joseph would have been bitter. And we would have said, that's right. After what they did to him, who could blame Joseph for being bitter, revengeful, and anger after what he suffered?

But no, God says no. He brings grace to Joseph. Dad is gone.

Perfect time for revenge. I wonder how many families fight once their parents are gone. Some fight before, during, and after the funerals.

And all the old hurts get revealed and rehearsed as if they happened yesterday. You've been to that with your family maybe sometime? But though you may, brother, have experienced evil even in your own family, you don't have to allow what was done to you in the past control you now.

Two amen. That came from the women. Thank you, sisters. Brothers, I'll say it again. Whatever you have experienced in your own family growing up in the past, you don't have to allow what was done to you then to control you now.

[23 : 56] You see, if you do, it will lead to you acting like you are God and seeking vengeance against those who hurt you. Maybe today is your personal Juneteenth.

Maybe this is delayed freedom from bitterness. Freedom. Joseph speaks to them. What does he say? Do not fear, for I am I in the place of God.

Oh, boy. Brothers, do we have a Godhood complex? Joseph remembered his place, brothers, so you must too in order to be free.

He's saying vengeance belongs to God alone. Romans 12, 19 and 21. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, Paul says, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.

To the contrary, oh boy, are you kidding me? If your enemy is hungry, feeding, if he's thirsty, give him something to drink, for by so doing, you will heap burning coals on his head.

[25 : 11] Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. We need some men like this. We play God, brothers, when we live in self-righteousness and out of hurt and anger, seek vengeance on those whom we believe have harmed us.

But Joseph shows those who did him evil, he shows them grace and kindness. He literally fed them. And as Romans says, Paul says, he heat burning coals on their heads.

My pastor, Dr. Boyce said, doing good to one's enemy is the best means of subduing him or winning him over. For the end of the matter is this, that evil is to be overcome by good, not good by evil, or evil by evil.

man, it's so easy to try to overcome evil with evil. Isn't that what we're seeing in the news time and time again when these young men feel like they've been treated wrong or sometimes this is not that at all, they're just racist or evil, just mad because she broke up with me.

I'm walking into a place and shooting people. Let's overcome even if it was evil. Overcoming evil with evil never works.

[26 : 46] Never works. And by the way, this is what Jesus did for us, brothers. First Peter 2, he committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.

When he was reviled, he did not revile in return. When he suffered, by the way, he's suffering at the hands of his creation, people like us. When he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin, live to righteousness by his wounds. Feel it, fellas, feel it.

By his wounds, you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but now have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls. Listen, Jesus' evil was done to him.

And how did he overcome the evil that was done? Not by lashing out. In his case, in his case, he died for us and we're part of the ones who did the evil to him.

[27 : 56] win. Sometimes, brothers, it's in dying that we win. It's in dying, submitting ourselves to Christ and dying that even our enemies are subdued.

Only God can do that. allow your hearts to be warmed, brothers, with God's providential grace for those who have harmed you.

If Joseph had not lived in the grace of God's providence, he would have taken what Potiphar's pitiful wife was offering him.

That woman had issues. I mean, she messing with the help. She's sweating Joseph, this is chapter 39, she's sweating Joseph, and listen, Joseph, if he was not walking in God's providential grace, recognizing God was at work, though it was hard, in his horrible situation, if he was not aware or believed or was fighting for faith, trusting in that reality, listen guys, when she said, hey, he would have said yes, why?

Because he would have felt entitled. Remember what happened in the house? Potiphar bought Joseph, and Joseph got to work, and God blessed everything Joseph did.

[29 : 35] Potiphar got wealthier, he was making mad buck. Joseph was producing, and so Potiphar said, oh man, you just keep, he said, keep doing it, keep doing it.

Now listen, here's what happens, Mrs. Potiphar rubs up on Joseph, and now if he wasn't walking in the grace of God, if he had not been walking and the sense of God was with him, even in this, if he

had not, he would have said, you know something, I am entitled to a little nah. After all I've done for Potiphar, I made his plantation even better than it was. so I deserve. She said, let's, I said, go. But that's, but see, that's when you're not walking in grace, and the grace of God's providence in your situation, you will feel, you will feel in your heart, you deserve. You deserve to do wrong. You deserve, and it's understand, you get to be understood, you'll make excuses for it. I was owed, I deserved, I earned.

[30 : 47] When we recognize God is in control, even of my pain, Jesus gives us grace to keep doing what is right as we trust him.

Doing what is right as we trust him who is right. because it's so easy to do wrong when you think you've been done wrong.

Last thing, evil will produce, evil with providence rests in God's will. Verse 20, classic statement. Joseph realized that his good God was at work even in the evil deeds of his jealous brothers, and Potiphar's lecherous wife, and the convenient forgiveness of his fellow prisoner, fellow pharaoh's cupbearer.

Each one of these entities hurt him deeply and unjustly. And when he's talking to his brothers, he tells them honestly, as for you, you meant evil against me.

[32 : 04] Notice what he says. As for you, you meant. He's emphasizing you. He's not, see, when we're confronting people about stuff they've done, we don't just pretend they didn't do it.

Part of that confrontation sometimes is to say, you did this. Is he rubbing it in? Maybe, but I think more. He is pointing to how God overrules the evil that people do to us by continuing his plan for us. You meant it for evil, but God was at work. You meant to destroy me, but God said no. You meant to hurt me, but God was, and it did hurt by the way, but God was still working out his plan for my life. You wanted to break me. You wanted to, you know, whatever it was you think they were trying to do that's evil, but you belong to Jesus now.

And God says, hold it now. I know what they meant, but I got a plan. Brother, listen, if we could get to some of these brothers who are going out, trying to be real men, and beat up and shooting up and doing all kinds of horrible things in our culture, if we could get to them and share with them that God is at work if you will trust him.

[33 : 32] We need men who will teach those men. Hold on to this. Don't stop. God didn't stop them from doing evil to Joseph.

Sometimes he does, but instead he accomplishes his plan through it. Jesus is Lord of your story. Can you hear that?

Jesus is Lord of your story. And Romans 8, 28 follows this passage so wonderfully.

You know this passage. Paul says, and we know that for those who love God all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose.

The question we should ask ourselves is what is the good that he's talking about? What is the purpose he's talking about? All things aren't good. And God is not promising you brothers that your story will end like Joseph's.

[34 : 40] That's not what Romans 8 is really saying. He's not saying that listen, if you'll trust me, they did evil, but at the end of it, it's going to all be beautiful. He's not saying that.

The good and the purpose that he has for us is following those verses. Here they are, verse 29 and 30. For those he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son.

That's what he's doing in you. And the good he's doing is conforming you to the image of his son, who also suffered like that. In order that he might be the firstborn among your brothers, those whom he predestined, he also called.

Those whom he called, he also justified. Those whom he justified, he also glorified. What Paul is saying in Romans 8, 28 is not that your every evil situation done to you will flip around at some point in your life and be good.

He's saying that God's purpose for you to make you like Jesus, to continue the plan, bring you from death to life and to glory. He has rescued you that no matter what is done to you, nothing can stop it.

[35 : 53] That's why at the end of the chapter he says, nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus. That's the good brothers. See, I don't know how your earthly story will end, but God is guaranteed that your heavenly story will not be affected in any way.

That whatever the world does to you or people do to you, he says, that is not the last word over you. The last word over you is grace, is transformation, is hope, is life eternal in Jesus.

That is the word for you brothers. That is the good purpose that God will not relent from. Now the question we have to ask ourselves is, what do I want most?

What the world can give me or what God has given me in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world and is working out in my life each and every day, even though in his providence, I gotta take some lumps.

can I encourage you? Take the lumps. Take the lumps.

[37 : 15] I know, believe me, I know. Let the Lord fight the battle. Let the Lord, he will reveal foolishness.

He will uncover the evil. Let him fight. stand back and see the salvation of the Lord. And no matter how your earthly story ends, brothers, brothers, no matter how our earthly sojourn ends, we win. We win. Jesus already won for us. So don't let, don't be overcome by evil.

Don't let the pain of this life overcome you. Trust in the Lord and his good providence that he is at work and your life is not out of control.

Trust in him. Pray for those who treat you evilly. Do good to them if you can. Some of them you just can't do close to because you can't trust them. I understand. Do cry out to God to work in your heart in the midst of this.

[38 : 26] God will never stop working his wonderful providence in your life to transform you to the image of Jesus and to bring you home to glory.

Never. Father, help us. Lord, we want happy days and sunny skies all the time. And that's not evil, but it's not practical.

We live in a fallen world and we have sin in our own hearts and people have sin all around us and Lord, help us to trust you. Help my brothers and my fathers who have suffered things and will suffer things just like me.

Help us to know that you are Lord and you will never leave us nor forsake us. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.