

July 27/28, 2024
"God Is Creative"
Pastor Jeff Manion



SPEND DAILY TIME WITH GOD AS YOU READ, THINK, PRAY + ACT.

2024 Challenge: Finding Jesus in the Old Testament

July: Read Isaiah to see how people, situations and events point to Jesus

Day 1 [Genesis 50:1-21](#) | God is Creative

When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?" Genesis 50:15

Joseph's family troubles begin long before his birth. Joseph is Jacob's eleventh son but the firstborn of Jacob's most-loved wife, Rachel. The family dysfunction includes a triangle where Jacob wants Rachel, but Leah wants Jacob, and Rachel wants to outdo her sister Leah. Joseph finds himself the center of favoritism and jealousy, leading to deep betrayal. His brothers sell him into slavery, and Joseph endures decades of hardship and heartache in a foreign land. It's hard to imagine any good coming from Joseph's story. Yet God is creatively at work in and through Joseph's pain for a great purpose.

We, too, will find ourselves in painful, unwanted situations. Sometimes, the deepest pain happens at the hands of those closest to us. This week, we will see God's creative work through hard things. This does not mean the situations are good. We may not see God's ultimate good work in our lifetime. Joseph's story reminds us God's good work isn't limited to good situations and spans decades or even generations. Like Joseph, we can trust God with our pain.

TODAY: Read [Psalm 27:13-14](#) as a model prayer of trust to turn to the Lord in your pain: "I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD."

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Isaiah 54-55](#). Highlight anything that points to Jesus.

Day 2 [Genesis 39:1-23](#) | With Joseph

The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. Genesis 39:2

Joseph lands in situations that he didn't ask for, aren't his fault, and he didn't create. He becomes a slave in a high-ranking Egyptian official's household. God is with Joseph and blesses his work in this unwanted space. Joseph doesn't numb out but stays present and works faithfully. Then, when wrongly accused, Joseph lands in prison. God is still with Joseph and elevates him to leadership. These unwanted spaces refine Joseph and seem to deepen his trust in God. He chooses to stay present and allow God to work in and through him for *decades* in the hardest, unwanted, unfair situations.

We may find ourselves in painful places we never wanted. It could be a devastating relationship loss that we worked hard to save. We might be caring for an aging and difficult parent day after day. We could be a child's caregiver for unique needs that wear on our bodies and emotions. We might be in a job where we feel stuck,

under-appreciated and underutilized. It's tempting to check out or numb out. We can trust Jesus's promise to always be with us ([Matthew 28:20](#)). Through the Holy Spirit, we have a Comforter and Helper in whatever we face. During in our trials, God will give us wisdom when we ask and will finish his good and creative work in us to bring strength and perseverance.

TODAY: Is there a difficult situation where you need to not check out but be present and remember God's presence? In your journal or mobile device, take some time to write out the situation where you struggle to see God's creative work and remain present. Ask him for wisdom and for reminders that he is with you and at work.

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Isaiah 58-60](#). Highlight anything that points to Jesus. Consider how Jesus put on righteousness and achieved salvation for us.

Day 3 [Genesis 50:15-21](#) | Wider Lens

You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. Genesis 50:20

Jacob dies, and his sons fear Joseph's revenge. They recognize they have done Joseph so much wrong. Joseph has reason and power to harm them ([Genesis 50:15](#)). However, he acknowledges God has been working to bring great good. God saw past Joseph's current situations and decades, even hundreds of years, into the future. God knew Joseph's family and the eventual nation of Israel, needed Egypt's safety to survive a famine and grow into a nation. Joseph sees how God used his pain to provide the way for his family's salvation.

God is not restricted to using good materials to achieve a good end. God has a wide-angle lens on painful situations. We see only the here and now. But God's vision expands beyond our lifetime into future years and generations. God's creative work can use bad things for good. We don't need to deny the pain or grief. But we can believe God sees what we cannot. When we do not see God's goodness in our day-to-day situations, we can cling to a bedrock faith in God's creative goodness in hard spaces. The same creative God who worked through Joseph's story works in ours.

TODAY: Offer a prayer of belief and trust in God in your challenging situations. Pray this prayer out loud and with open hands, "God, I didn't ask for this. I don't like this. I don't understand this. But I trust you in this."

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Isaiah 56-57](#). Highlight anything that points to Jesus. Consider how Jesus said those who mourn are blessed and would be comforted ([Matthew 5:4](#)).

Day 4 [Mark 15:27-32](#) | The Cross

Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, come down from the cross and save yourself!" Mark 15:29-30

God has the power to take unspeakable pain and creatively bring unimaginable good. Joseph's story of pain, betrayal and false accusations foreshadow what Jesus will suffer on the cross for sins. Jesus endures betrayal and desertion by his close friends. He's spit upon, brutally beaten, harassed and hurled insults at. He suffers public humiliation and a dehumanizing death on a Roman cross. Through this vast wickedness, God brings about spiritual rescue and wholeness for his people.

Jesus endured unimaginable pain to bring our forgiveness, healing and restoration. Only God could take such pain and create something beautiful. When we respond with belief in Jesus's death and resurrection and recognize our desperate need for him, he brings our salvation. We could never rescue ourselves. We cannot bring about good from our sins. But God can and does through our faith in Jesus.

TODAY: Join the Ada Bible Worship Team as they sing "[In Christ Alone](#)." Praise God for the work of Jesus on the cross for enduring scorn and that "The wrath of God was satisfied. For every sin on Him was laid." Thank him that you can have life because of Jesus's death.

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Isaiah 61-63](#). Highlight anything that points to Jesus. Note how Jesus quoted parts of Isaiah 61 as referring to himself (see [Luke 4:16-21](#)).

Day 5 [Revelation 21:1-7](#) | Future Grace

"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Revelation 21:4-5a

Joseph didn't always see God's goodness in his circumstances. Yet Joseph had a bedrock faith in God. He trusted that good could eventually come even while in Potiphar's house or in prison. Much later in the Biblical story, God gives the Apostle John a glimpse of how God will finally and fully undo all pain. God promises to one day wipe away all tears. There will be no more mourning, crying or pain when Jesus returns.

We can trust in God's promise of future grace, even when we don't see it in our lifetime. It might be future generations who get to see God's good work through our pain. We can cling to the bedrock of faith that in the end, God will triumph over every pain, sin and death. That truth doesn't make today's situations good but can change our perspective. Through faith, we can see beyond today to the story's good ending. Until then, we wait in hope and join John's prayer, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" ([Revelation 22:20](#)).

TODAY: Go for a walk around your neighborhood or in a nearby park. Take in the beauty of God's creation around you and imagine a world without death, decay, pain or tears. Thank God for his future grace and ask for help in trusting him today.

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Isaiah 64-66](#). Highlight anything that points to Jesus. Consider how [Revelation 21:1-5](#) echoes [Isaiah 64:17-25](#).