

The Lord Was with Joseph

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[0 : 0 0] This lesson covers all of chapter 39, a chapter that returns the focus to Joseph.

! When we last saw Joseph at the end of chapter 37, his older brothers had turned on him. You remember that because of hatred, jealousy, and greed, the brothers stripped Joseph of his coat of many colors, threw him into a pit, and sold him to slave traders for profit.

During that lesson, we discussed how God's providence was at work in Joseph's life. And here's that definition of providence again. Providence is defined as the exercise of God's sovereignty to preserve, support, and direct his creation. It is founded on God's general decree and normally accomplished by means of secondary causes. God's government of creation is inseparably oriented to his redemptive action.

In Joseph's life, we see how clearly God's providence is oriented toward his redemptive action. Think about the main point of Genesis 37 through 50 that we mention in every lesson. The main point of the book of Genesis, including Genesis 37 through 50, is to show the progression of redemptive history or how God will redeem his people from the curse of sin. Throughout Genesis, including the account of Joseph, God shows that he is faithful to preserve the line of the seed who will redeem God's people. Chapter 39 shows God progressing redemptive history through faithfulness, both the faithfulness of Joseph to God and the faithfulness of God to Joseph. That's the main idea for this chapter. Again, chapter 39 shows God progressing redemptive history, both through the faithfulness of Joseph to God and more so through the faithfulness of God to Joseph. As we read the chapter now, you'll see why the lesson title is, The Lord Was With Joseph. Let's go ahead and read all of chapter 39. The chapter starts, Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. The Lord was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master. His master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord caused all that he did to succeed in his hands. So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house, and put him in charge of all that he had. From the time that he made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake. The blessing of the Lord was on all that he had, in house and field. So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him he had no concern about anything but the food he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. And after a time, his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, Lie with me. But he refused and said to his master's wife, Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?

And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or be with her. But one day when he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was there in the house, she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me. But he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got out of the house. And as soon as she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and fled out of the house, she called to the men of her household, and said to them, See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to laugh at us. He came in to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. And as soon as he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried out, he left his garment beside me, and fled, and got out of the house. Then she laid up his garment by her until his master came home, and she told him the same story, saying, The Hebrew servant whom you have brought among us came in to me to laugh at me. But as soon as I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment beside me, and fled out of the house. As soon as his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, This is the way your servant treated me, his anger was kindled.

[4 : 56] And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison. But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him steadfast love, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because the Lord was with him. And whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed.

Before we look at the chapter in more detail, let's do a quick overview. Notice how many times Moses says that the Lord was with Joseph. Verse 2 says exactly that, the Lord was with Joseph. Verse 3 says his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord caused all that he did to succeed. Verse 5 conveys the same thought in different words. It says, the Lord blessed the Egyptians' house, for Joseph's sake. Verse 21 begins, but the Lord was with Joseph. And verse 23 ends by saying, and the Lord was with him, and whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed. As we make our way through the chapter, we'll see Joseph in several different situations. Some of those circumstances are good, some of them are not so good, and some of them are downright bad. The constant, though, is that the Lord was with Joseph. Each time the Lord is referenced, Moses uses God's covenant name there. By being faithful to Joseph, God is being faithful to the covenant made with Joseph's ancestors.

When we read chapter 39, we can fall into the trap of thinking that these things happen very quickly for Joseph. But chapter 39 covers approximately 10 years. Genesis 37, 2 introduced us to Joseph when he was 17 years old. Shortly after that, his brother sold him. Then, in Genesis 41, 46, we see that Joseph was 30 years old when he began serving Pharaoh. That means 13 years passed approximately from the time that Joseph was sold into slavery until when he got out of prison. Most of that time was spent serving Potiphar.

Genesis chapters 40 and 41 help us estimate how much time Joseph spent as Potiphar's slave. Genesis 41, 1 says that two years passed between when Joseph interpreted the cupbearer's dream and when Pharaoh has his dream. Then, Genesis chapter 40, verse 1 says that Joseph met the cupbearer and baker sometime after Joseph had been in prison. So, we know he was in prison more than two years, and the Bible says he was in prison sometime more than that. So, that likely means Joseph was incarcerated for approximately three years or so. And because Joseph was 30 years old when he got out, out of prison, he had to have been about 27 or 28 when he went into prison. So, that was the 10 years after he was sold into slavery. And those 10 years serving Potiphar are what are covered by chapter 39.

So, with that background, let's dig into the five sections of the chapter. We will look at five sections tonight. And in the first six verses, we see the explanation. So, the explanation is your first blank. Listen to those verses again. They are verses 1 through the first half of verse 6.

[8 : 47] They say, Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there.

The Lord was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master. His master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord caused all that he did to succeed in his hands. So, Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him an overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake. The blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in house and field. So, he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him, he had no concern about anything but the food he ate. These verses give us the explanation of why things happened like they did, and the explanation simply is that the Lord was with Joseph. Verse 1 tells us about who bought Joseph, but let's not pass over that too quickly here. Consider the weight of that statement. Potiphar bought Joseph just like he was a cow, a goat, or any other piece of livestock. In his capacity as an important official, Potiphar evidently resides in the capital city of Memphis and serves the Pharaoh however the ruler desires. Among his duties, he's responsible for carrying out all public executions, and he's in charge of the ancient Egyptian equivalents of the Secret Service and the FBI. The only problem with working for a man like that would be that one mistake could mean Joseph's execution. I spent some time showing that chapter 39 covers 10 years because we need to realize that Joseph was anything but an overnight success. He worked hard for the position he had.

Slaves typically started out working in the fields, and no doubt Joseph started at the bottom and had to work his way up. In a matter of days, Joseph's status in life degenerated from that of a preferred son to an underprivileged servant. Once heir apparent, he now has no rights, no prerogatives, nothing he can call his own except a God who loves him. Verse 2 shows us that Joseph made the best of his circumstances. Joseph does well. He accomplishes a lot. His projects meet with success because he's obedient and submissive. He's satisfied to serve another, and that's the lot that the Lord has given him for the moment. Just because scripture tells us that Joseph prospers does not mean that he became a rich man. He's still a slave. Verse 3 tells us that Potiphar noticed Joseph's success, and how sad is it for Joseph's brothers that a pagan noticed something about Joseph's own brothers or Joseph's own success that his own brothers could not? Verse 3 says his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord caused all that he did to succeed in his hands. So the pagan realized that the Lord was responsible for Joseph's success. His own brothers refused to see that. Seeing that everything Joseph touches seems to succeed, Potiphar does what any human boss would do under the circumstances. He gives Joseph more responsibility. Verses 5 and 6 show that Potiphar benefited very nicely from the decision to give Joseph even more responsibility. Look at the end of verse 5 and the first part of verse 6 again. They say the blessing of the Lord was on all that he, meaning Potiphar, had in house and field. So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him he had no concern about anything but the food he ate. How great would it be to have a servant that you trusted so much that all you had to think about was what to eat? Things are going pretty well for Potiphar and relatively speaking for Joseph, at least they're improving for Joseph, but then Mrs. Potiphar gets involved. We're not told Mrs.

Potiphar's name, so most of the time I'll just refer to her as Mrs. Potiphar tonight. But in the last sentence of verse 6 through verse 10, we see the temptation. So the temptation is the second section of the lesson. Let's read the end of verse 6 all the way through verse 10, and you'll see that temptation very clearly. They say, now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. And after a time, his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, lie with me. But he refused and said to his master's wife, behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?

[14:12] And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her to lie beside her or be with her. The end of verse 6 may ring a bell. Listen to how Genesis 29 verse 17 describes Joseph's mother.

It says, Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance. Almost exactly how Joseph is described here in this chapter. Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance. It says here in our text tonight that her son was handsome in form and appearance. The description, it turns out, leads naturally into the only problem that Joseph faces in Potiphar's house, and that's Potiphar's wife. Verse 7 begins to show us that Mrs.

Potiphar is a big problem. I put this quote by Stephen Carpenter in your handout. He says, Lie with me is only two words in Hebrew, and they are words that are never used to describe the sexual relationship in marriage. If you can think of a boldly crude and lustful way of proposing sex, you approach the shocking character of her words. There's no mistaking what she is proposing. Before we go further, let's consider how real this temptation is for Joseph and how easy it could be for him to succumb to it. He could easily fall for the invitation and rationalize his sin. After all, he's been trying to follow God, but things don't seem to be working out all that well so far. His brothers have betrayed him into slavery, and just when his slavery situation started improving, Mrs. Potiphar presents him with an opportunity that's also a problem. If he refuses her, she can make life miserable for him. And think about also, he's a young man who's far removed from his family. They will never know if he commits this sin. But look what verses 8 and 9 say. They say, But he refused and said to his master's wife, Behold, because of me, my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife.

[16:36] Sounds like he's trying to remind her of that there, doesn't it? Then he goes on to say, How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? Joseph not only is faithful to God here, he's faithful to Potiphar too. So why do you think Joseph was so faithful?

The end of verse 9 really gives us that answer. He knew that any sin ultimately is a sin against God. Obviously, he would have been sinning against Potiphar, but it more so was a sin against God had he done that. Joseph explained when first tempted that adultery would be a gross violation of his ethical convictions, which demanded the utmost respect for his master and a life of holiness before his God.

Far more was involved in mere compliance with the letter of the ancient Near Eastern Code. Many of those did actually forbid adultery, but for Joseph, he needed to obey the moral standards that applied to the one who walked with God.

When we think of providence today, we sometimes think about providence only when things work out well. For example, if another car ran a stop sign and barely missed crashing into me on my way to church tonight, we might say that that was providential.

[18:00] That would be true, but sometimes bad things happen because of God's providence too. Three weeks ago, when we looked at God's providence earlier in the life of Joseph, we considered the definition of providence that I read earlier tonight.

Remember, that says providence is defined as the exercise of God's sovereignty to preserve, support, and direct his creation. It is founded on God's general decree and normally accomplished by means of secondary causes.

God's government of creation is inseparably oriented to his redemptive action. Nowhere does that definition say that God's providence only allows good things to happen.

We see numerous examples in the Bible, including several places in the life of Joseph, where God's providence allows bad or even sinful things to happen so that God's redemptive action will progress according to God's plan.

Here's another quote that we looked at three weeks ago. As regards sinful actions of men, they are represented as occurring by God's permission and as controlled and overruled for good.

[19:13] God does not cause or approve of sin, but only limits, restrains, overrules it for good. The mode of God's providential government is altogether unexplained.

We only know it is a fact that God does govern all his creatures and all their actions and that this government is consistent with his own perfection and to his own glory.

Here again in tonight's passage, we see God's providence as Joseph maintains faith in the God of his forefathers in spite of his circumstances. However, his reward is not what we would expect, especially if we were operating from the conventional view of providence.

We would expect Joseph's faithfulness to be rewarded with deliverance. Perhaps Potiphar would discover his wife's treachery, or God would have Joseph reassigned to a better post.

But that's not the case. God, in his providence, had other plans. Meanwhile, we see that Mrs. Potiphar is unfazed by Joseph's heartfelt but measured response to her overtures.

[20:21] Instead, Mrs. Potiphar increases her efforts to get what she wants. Verse 10 says, And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her, or be with her.

Moses never tells us how Joseph knew that God was with him. However, we can be confident that Joseph knew God was with him because of how Joseph resisted the repeated temptation.

Joseph's resistance sets up the next part of the chapter. So far, we've seen the explanation and the temptation. In verses 11 through 18, we see the fabrication.

So the fabrication is what comes next. Let's go ahead and read 11 through 18 again. But one day when he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was there, she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me.

But he left his garment in her hand and fled out of the house. And as soon as she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled out of her house, she called to the men of her household and said to them, See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to laugh at us.

[21:37] He came into me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. And as soon as he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried out, he left his garment beside me and fled and got out of the house.

Then she laid up his garment by her until his master came home, and she told him the same story, saying, The Hebrew servant whom you have brought among us came into me to laugh at me.

But as soon as I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment beside me and fled out of the house. Vodibachum says, Most people who have heard a sermon on Genesis 39 have probably heard it from the perspective of Joseph's commitment to sexual purity.

Of course, he says there are several points to be made about that. For instance, Joseph's encounter with Potiphar's wife is a clear contrast to Judah's encounter with Tamar, in chapter 38. But after reading verses 11 through 18, Vodibachum goes on to say, There it is, Joseph's reward for faithfulness and purity. Betrayal. This is the part that fits awkwardly into that sermon about holding fast and fleeing temptation.

[22 : 50] Instead of happily ever after, this story goes from frying pan to fire. So far, have you noticed that every time Joseph gets into a bad situation, he loses part of his clothes?

You know, the first time, sinful people used those clothes to deceive someone who favors Joseph. And that, of course, was when his brother stripped him of his coat of many colors and used that coat to make Jacob think that Joseph was dead. Now also, Mrs. Potiphar uses this cloak to deceive her husband, another person who favors Joseph.

And she does that to make Potiphar think that he tried to rape her. This section uses fabrication in the heading because the word fits with the structure of the other headings.

But fabrication really is too nice a word to describe what Mrs. Potiphar does here. She really tells a bald-faced lie. And she tells that bald-faced lie more than once.

[23 : 54] I thought about putting liar, liar, pants on fire as the heading, but decided that wouldn't fit as well with some of the others. But we gather from verse 11 that Joseph had been doing whatever he could to avoid being alone with Mrs. Potiphar.

But one day he couldn't avoid being alone with her. And that's when she makes her move. After Joseph rebuffs her, Mrs. Potiphar does what most humans do when they sin.

She blames somebody else. Mrs. Potiphar blames her husband. In verse 14, she first tells the other servants, See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to laugh at us.

And then when Potiphar gets home, Mrs. Potiphar tells Potiphar in verse 17, That echoes what Adam did way back in the Garden of Eden after Adam's first sin.

Adam said these words in Genesis 3.12. And of course, he said these words to God. The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me the fruit of the tree and I ate.

[25 : 03] So Adam blamed God for introducing the woman into his life. Mrs. Potiphar blamed Potiphar for introducing the Hebrew into her life.

We don't have to wait long to see what happens next. In verses 19 and 20, we see the incarceration. The incarceration is the next section.

Looking at verses 19 and 20 again, the verses say, As soon as his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, This is the way your servant treated me.

His anger was kindled. And Joseph's master took him and put him into prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in prison.

We would be correct to say, Poor Joseph here. His betraying brothers had thrown him into a pit. Mrs. Potiphar's betrayal gets him thrown into prison.

[26 : 05] Neither time did Joseph deserve what happened. But in both cases, we see evidence that the Lord was with Joseph. After the brothers threw Joseph into the pit, Judah prevented the brothers from killing Joseph when Judah suggested that they sell Joseph for money.

That certainly shows evidence of God's intervention. Here in chapter 39, When Potiphar sees false evidence of attempted rape, only he didn't know it was false, Potiphar only puts Joseph in prison.

Joseph being in prison instead of kills also shows that God was with Joseph. Remember what we said about Potiphar when we met him in verse 1. We said among his duties, He is responsible for carrying out all public executions, and he is in charge of the ancient Egyptian equivalents of the Secret Service and the FBI.

We said the only problem with working for a man like this is that one mistake could mean Joseph's execution. We know that Potiphar had no qualms about killing people, but for some reason, he didn't kill Joseph.

We could spend a lot of time theorizing about why Potiphar spared Joseph's life, and a lot of people do, actually. Some suggest that Potiphar had doubts about his wife's honesty, so that's why he only imprisoned Joseph.

[27 : 32] Perhaps after so many years of seeing Joseph's exemplary character, Potiphar was unable to believe that Joseph would really do such a thing. Regardless of Potiphar's human motivation, we know one thing for certain.

God's providence was at work. Consider the overwhelming evidence of that providence in addition to the fact that Joseph's life was spared. Joseph was not sent to just any prison.

He ended up in the place where the king's prisoners were confined. This is a foreshadowing of the next phase in Joseph's providential journey, which will be Pharaoh's court.

In fact, the king, or Pharaoh, is mentioned nine times in chapters 39 and 40. So these mentions are like breadcrumbs that lead us toward chapter 41.

Put yourself in Joseph's place, though. He doesn't know what chapter 41 and beyond say. In another sudden turn of events, Joseph, through no fault of his own, finds himself in another bad circumstance.

[28 : 39] Just a few hours earlier, he had overseen Potiphar's household. Now he finds himself chained in prison. You might be wondering how we say that he's chained in prison.

To find that out, turn to Psalm 105, and we'll look at verses 16 through 19. Psalm 105, 16 through 19.

Those verses say this about God's dealings with his people. Starting with verse 16, it says, So there's how we know that Joseph spent time in chains.

No matter how strong his faith was, Joseph likely was confused at this point. Instead of bringing him a place of honor, doing the right thing brought him a place in prison.

He'd spent a decade or so working up the ranks in Potiphar's household, and all that would have seemed to have been for nothing at this point. But that's where the final section of our lesson comes in.

[30 : 04] In verses 21 through 23, we see the confirmation. So the confirmation is the last section of the lesson. Joseph gets confirmation that the Lord was indeed still with him.

Listen to verses 21 through 23 again. But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him steadfast love, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison.

Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because the Lord was with him.

And whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed. This time, Moses tells us a bit more about how Joseph knew that the Lord was with him.

Look at the beginning of verse 21 again. It says that the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him steadfast love. Joseph would have to wait years to learn that prison was exactly where God needed him to be to fulfill God's plan.

[31 : 20] In the meantime, God showed Joseph that steadfast love. Like Potiphar, the keeper of the prison gave Joseph increasing responsibility, until Joseph oversaw almost everything.

And like what happened at Potiphar's house, the Lord made successful everything that Joseph did in prison. You know, it never said that Joseph was successful without saying that he was successful, because the Lord made him successful.

That brings us back to the main idea of this chapter. Chapter 39 again shows God progressing redemptive history, both through the faithfulness of Joseph to God, and more so through the faithfulness of God to Joseph.

We can see that the Lord was indeed with Joseph. So in addition to the main idea, we can take away some other things from the chapter. The first thing is that God is present with his people, even in the worst circumstances.

God is present with his people, even in the worst circumstances. Sometimes it's hard for us to accept that the Lord ordains even the difficult times.

[32 : 32] He permits the highs and the lows. When the going gets tough, we think that God isn't taking care of us too well. Maybe he's forgotten us, we think, but that's never true.

God never forgets, and he never neglects. If we could talk to Joseph right now, he likely would say that he would have preferred to skip the pit and the prison.

However, he also likely would say that he wouldn't want to skip what he learned from those experiences. Joseph learned that the Lord was with him, and when we face difficult circumstances, we can learn the same thing.

Second, and this one sounds kind of bad at first, no matter how bad things are, they can still get worse. And we see that in Joseph's life. No matter how bad things are, they can still get worse.

Obedience sometimes results in more hardship. Sometimes telling the truth gets you fired. Sometimes playing by the rules gets you a fourth place ribbon while the cheaters win gold, silver, and bronze.

[33 : 38] And sometimes refusing to go along with the wishes of an adulteress can get you thrown in prison. But the key here is God's purpose. We can't separate providence from purpose or substitute our purpose from God's.

The same is true for us as it was with Joseph. God doesn't balance the scales in the here and now. He certainly doesn't always tilt the scales in our individual favor.

He does, however, work all things according to the counsel of his perfect, immutable will. And he uses frowning providences to accomplish his redeeming work. And there's where our hope comes in.

We can say with Job, though he slay me, I will hope in him. And that comes from Job 13, 15. If your handout lacked the footnote, you probably could have guessed that I took that last point from Bodie Bauckham rather than Joe O'Olstein.

And it really should break our hearts that so many people today are deceived by the health and wealth or the prosperity gospel. The Bible makes it clear that God's people suffer in this life.

[34 : 46] To deny that is wrong, and to deny that disillusions and deceives people. Third, Joseph knew who his real master was.

Joseph knew who his real master was. Joseph obviously understood the principles of Colossians 3, 23 and 24 in Ephesians 6, 5 through 8, long before Paul wrote those verses.

Listen to Colossians 3, 23 and 24. Whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward.

You are serving the Lord Christ. Ephesians 6, 5 through 8 say a similar idea. They say, Bond servants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart as you would Christ.

Not by the way of eye service as people pleasers, but as bond servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bond servant or is free.

[36 : 05] So Joseph knew who his real master was and he worked like it. Fourth, Joseph learned the importance of having the proper clothing.

So we've seen and we mentioned how Joseph, through no fault of his own, kept losing his earthly clothing every time something bad happened. But God gave Joseph better clothing, and that's the eternal clothing of salvation.

Joseph could apply Isaiah 61, 10 to himself. Listen to Isaiah 61, 10. That verse says, When a penitent sinner recognizes he can achieve his own righteousness by works, and repents and calls on the mercy of God, the Lord covers him with his own divine righteousness by grace through faith. And of course, that's why we can say that Joseph has the right kind of clothes, because he's clothed with the righteousness from God. Fifth, anyone can have the same ultimate salvation as Joseph.

Joseph, despite his impressively good qualities, never could have earned his salvation. Neither can we. However, the Bible is clear that anybody can have the same salvation as Joseph.

[37 : 45] We looked at some of these same verses last week, but they're worth remembering again and again. Listen to Romans 3, verses 21 through 24. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

For there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

In the first lesson of this series, I criticized the typical lessons on Joseph, because they often boil down to a moralistic ending, such as, be like Joseph, and everything will turn out okay.

We've seen again tonight that not everything turned out okay for Joseph. He resisted temptation, and he got thrown into jail. In future lessons, we'll see that even after Joseph gets elevated to second-in-command over Egypt, the rags-to-riches story is inaccurate.

To advance the progress of redemptive history, Joseph paid a high price during his time on earth. However, in the good times and bad, he knew that the Lord was with him.

[39 : 07] When we look at Joseph's story from an eternal perspective, that's when we see the true rags-to-riches story, because Joseph turns out just fine in eternity. So will we and everybody else who puts their faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord.

For those of us who are in Christ, we are like Joseph. Verse 21 of tonight's text says that God showed steadfast love to Joseph. We can read a verse like that and sometimes think, I sure would like God to show that same kind of love to me.

Have you ever thought something like that? Well, the good news is that God did show us steadfast love, and he continues to show us steadfast love. Remember Romans 5, verses 6 through 11.

Those verses say, That verse applies to us, just like it applied to Joseph.

Then Paul goes on to say in verse 9, Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more so shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

[40 : 41] More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. So knowing that God shows us steadfast love, too, let's close in prayer.

Father, we thank you for the reminder that your ways are different than our ways. Help us to trust you, even in the difficult circumstances in life.

Help us to remember that you are working to accomplish something far greater than we can imagine because of the difficult circumstances that we may be in at the time. Also help us remember that just like you did for Joseph, you always show us steadfast love despite what may be happening.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.