

00-03-19a

As we continue our worship this morning, turn with me for our scripture reading to 1 Peter. 1 Peter. 1 Peter chapter 5. Of course, it's hard to, knowing what's in this book, it's hard to jump to the conclusion.

There are so many wonderful things that Peter says in the first four chapters. But you will recall that this letter that Peter writes is sent to the pilgrims of the dispersion, back in chapter 1, verse 1. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the pilgrims of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Then in verse 2 it says, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

It's difficult for me to come to 1 Peter without feeling the need to straighten out this translation. I don't often make critical remarks about translation. I think we're beholden to the men who have rendered the Word of God into our language.

But this is one place where there is an egregious translational error, and it was a conscious decision that was made, and it was done under the influence of bad theology. And even before we get to chapter 5 for our scripture reading, let me just remind you, I think I came to this passage not long ago, and actually covered these verses and didn't really mention this, but it's important to know, especially if you come up against Reformed theology, where this elect according to the foreknowledge of God phrase will come up. In Greek, the word elect does not occur in verse 2. This elect according to the foreknowledge of God, that word elect is not in verse 2, it's in verse 1. And it modifies the word pilgrims.

The word elect means chosen or designated. And these people who are pilgrims, dispersed through Pontius, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, they are chosen pilgrims. They are chosen to be pilgrims.

And right at the beginning, Peter reminds the recipients of this letter, not that they were chosen for salvation, but that they were chosen to be dispersed. This is a part of God's plan. They universally looked upon the diaspora or the dispersion as a curse, as a bad thing, driven from the land of promise.

But as we are going to see, God can accomplish a lot with those who are outside the land. Think about what we've already seen with Jacob as he goes up to Haran and he is more or less driven out of the land by the hatred of his brother. But God blesses Jacob in Haran.

He's going to gain his possessions even though he angled his brother out of the birthright and out of the blessing of the firstborn. The possessions that Jacob has do not come from Isaac's household. They come from what he gains outside the land.

Here, these dispersed pilgrims are dispersed. They are chosen by God to be dispersed. And it's really a tragedy that this passage has been used to support the idea that we who are saved were chosen for salvation beforehand by God.

And you get into all of these things about well, did God also choose people to go to the lake of fire? Well, he chose those for salvation. He predestinated them to heaven, but he didn't predestinate the unbelievers to the lake of fire. And the logic of that escapes me.

To me, it is the equivalent of a sin of omission. If there are ten people who got drunk and fell off the yacht and you see them over the rail and you've got ten life preservers and you only throw out three of them, and you say, well, it isn't that I chose the other seven to drown, I just only chose the three to be saved, that does not follow in my mind. But fortunately for us, that whole line of reasoning and that line of understanding of the scriptures is flawed.

And one of the reasons is that passages like this have been mistranslated in this case and misconstrued. Elect here is put down in verse 2 because they want to associate it with sanctification and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. They want to try to make a theological argument out of election and salvation.

But the word elect is a modifier of the word pilgrims. They are chosen pilgrims to be dispersed in Pontius, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. And this was done according to the foreknowledge of God.

And this is a comment about God's knowledge of us and His choosing of a path for our life. And that whatever that path holds, even if it means what we would consider to be a bad thing, in this case, for the Jews to be dispersed from the land of promise would be a bad thing, but this is part of God's choosing. And it's based on His foreknowledge.

And even in that dispersion, they are to be sanctified in the Spirit. They are to obey and take advantage of the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. And that's the theme of this letter.

The theme of Peter's letter is not God's predestination of some to salvation and failing to do that for others. It is our path through life because this is all about suffering. Everyone knows that 1 Peter is the classic letter about suffering as a believer.

And he begins the letter by reminding them that whatever suffering they're going through, whatever circumstances they face, this is God's choice for them. And he knew this ahead of time, that this was coming. It didn't take God by surprise.

So it's really a shame that that's been misconstrued. But if you'll go with me now that I've gotten that off my chest, we'll go now to chapter 5 for our Scripture reading this morning because this sets the context and reminds us of what Peter is talking about. He says in chapter 5, verse 1, the elders who are among you, I exhort, I who am a fellow

elder, and a witness of the suffering of Christ, sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed, shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers not by compulsion, but willingly, not for dishonest gain, but eagerly, not as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

And when the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. Likewise, you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another and be clothed with humility.

For God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Great quote from Proverbs chapter 3. Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon him for he cares for you. Be sober.

Be vigilant. Because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Resist him steadfast in the faith knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brothers in the world.

But may the God of all grace who called us to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus after you have suffered a while perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

This is the section of this chapter that we want to use as the backdrop for our further study of the life of Joseph in Genesis. And you'll notice that suffering is foreseen by God. It's foreknown by God.

In fact, it is chosen by God to be a part of our lives. Why? It's in 10. The God of all grace.

It isn't that God's grace has failed when we suffer. This is the great lesson that is missed by a lot of the Jewish community today. They look at the Holocaust.

They look at the trials and tribulations that they have undergone as a people over the years and over the centuries and even personally in their own lives. And they think, where is God? God has abandoned us. Where is the deliverance of God? Where is the Messiah? They overlook the fact that He is the God of all grace.

He has called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus after you have suffered a while. Suffering is a part of the plan of God. And rather than bemoaning it and rather than praying to God to take it away, we should look for its purpose.

We should look for its role in our lives because it is the times of suffering in which we exercise the trial of our faith. It warms patience. It produces in us endurance and the character of Jesus Christ who Himself was made perfect through sufferings.

After you have suffered a while, He will perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle us. And this has to be the mast to which we lash ourselves during the storms of life. It is that God

knows what He is doing.

He knew it beforehand and He has a purpose. It isn't always clear to us. There is no greater story in the Bible to remind us of this than the story of Joseph.

But we have this as an anchor in our souls, firmly fixed, that God is all-knowing. God is the God of all grace. He is the God of all comfort.

And He would not bring us into these situations if there were not a manifest and a definite purpose. And the general purpose is to perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle us. We will have an eternity with the Lord free from suffering, free from cares, free from these challenges and tests that we face in this life.

It is such a brief time. Perfect us. Let's turn back now to Genesis.

We want to dive right in. In which we left him. We saw where Joseph had been taken down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him there.

The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man of his master, the Egyptian. And the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made him prosper in his hand. So Joseph thou served him.

Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. He made him overseer of his house, and all that he had the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house. And the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field.

Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate. And that's where we're going to stop. I think this next phrase, if I was dividing the verses, would be better.

But because God is with Joseph, cursing is being turned to blessing. And even as a servant, he is prospering. It's fascinating to see the progress that takes place in Joseph's career here because it begins that he is purchased by Potiphar, who is captain of the guard, an Egyptian.

And he has, we know from verse 5, that Potiphar has household affairs, and he also has fields. He has field hands, he has fields that need, apparently he's done quite well for himself in Egypt, and has holdings, has real estate, has fields, and probably livestock and so on. Well, Joseph, first of all, we find out that he, in verse 2, is in the house of his master, the Egyptian.

And this is a promotion. Do you want to be a field hand or do you want to be a domestic servant? The field hands are out there chopping the cotton and doing the work under the boiling sun. If you know anything of the climate in Egypt during the hot season, you want

to try to find some shade.

You want to get indoors. Well, Joseph begins by being promoted as a household servant. He's in the house, he's a domestic servant, not a field hand.

This not only relieves him of the misery of being out in the fields, but it also brings him under the observation of his master, Potiphar. He's not two or three layers removed. And so in verse 3, his master saw that the Lord was with him.

And God, of course, weaves these things together, and Potiphar recognizes that Joseph, everything he does seems to prosper. He's possessed of wisdom. Things just go well when Joseph is involved.

And so he moves from there. In verse 4 it says, Joseph found favor in his sight and served him. And this word for served, we miss it in English, but there are two different words for serve in Hebrew.

One is *avad*, where we get the noun *eved*, E-B-E-D. I'm trying to think of Ebenezer and some of these words. We have *eved* in some transliterations in the Old Testament.

But this is the word for a slave, and this could be the field hand. This is someone who is in servitude in an abject kind of way. This is not the word that's used here for serving Potiphar.

The word here is *sharat*. We find this word used, for example, in Exodus 24.13, of the relationship of Joshua to Moses. It says, Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God.

The term that is used there, even in the New King James, is translated assistant rather than servant. Probably in the Old King James it might be servant. But this is not *eved*, which would be slave type servant.

It is *sharat*, S-H-A-R-A-T. You find the same thing used in Joshua 1.1, speaking again of Joshua here. It says, after the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses' servant, or Moses' assistant, saying.

Once again, you have *sharat*. You can imagine the relationship between Joshua and Moses. Joshua, who dwelt in the tabernacle of the Lord, even when Moses went away to administer the people, says Joshua remained at the tabernacle.

You can see the promotion of Joseph, in this case, to being a personal assistant. An executive officer, we would say, in the military, or the steward, a personal servant. A lot of celebrities today are personal assistants, or a manager who takes care of the day-to-day affairs, sets their schedule, answers their phones, replies on their mail, and so forth.

This is the case with Joseph. He is promoted from, first of all, household servant to personal servant. Then, in verse 4, he made him overseer over his house, over all that he had.

This is even a second promotion for Joseph in the household. He rises rapidly and becomes the chief steward. This is the idea that you find over in Luke chapter 16, when Jesus tells the parable involving the chief steward.

Luke 16.1, he said to his disciples, there was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. He brings him in, and this steward was common among men of wealth, where they would put the day-to-day administration into the hands of a trusted assistant. All of their affairs would be handled by this manager or chief steward.

That is the position that Joseph rises to. From that time that he made him overseer of his household, all that he had, the Lord blessed the Egyptians' house. This reminds us of going all the way back to Genesis chapter 12, verse 3, where God promised Abraham that through him, all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

Even though there is no indication that Potiphar has come to faith in God, his household is blessed because Joseph is there, because he recognizes Joseph's merit. You have a classic case of what I used to abbreviate in my notes as BBA, blessing by association. You see this on a national level.

The nations that historically have been a friend to Israel have been blessed, and the nations that have come out against Israel have been destroyed. This has been true throughout history going all the way back to the time of Abraham. Abimelech, the king of Jerar, was blessed because he was a friend to Abraham and a friend to Isaac.

So here Potiphar, in recognizing the worth of Joseph and in trusting him, this is something we'll come back to, but Potiphar trusts Joseph. He recognizes who he is as someone whom God prospers. He says in verse 3 that his master saw that the Lord was with him.

And so whatever the Lord meant to Potiphar, he recognizes that providence or fortune or however he understood that, we don't really know the salvation status of Potiphar. But I think this was very accurately portrayed or very ably portrayed in the Turner production of The Life of Joseph, if you saw that, and you had Ben Kingsley as Potiphar. And he, I think, did the best job I've ever seen of portraying Potiphar.

So bless the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake, in verse 5, And the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field. Why? Because he trusted Joseph and he placed these things in his care. He left all that he had in Joseph's hand.

He did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate. And this is a figure of

speech for everything except his most personal concerns, which would just be Potiphar. Potiphar obviously did something during the day.

Joseph is ruling his household. So Potiphar is free to go tend to his own personal responsibilities. As the king's captain of the guard and so forth, he is free to do those things and he doesn't have to worry about his own household, his own property.

And this would also include his wife. Obviously he still is going to be talking to his wife about balancing the checkbook or whatever the equivalent was in those days. And certain affairs that were of personal interest to Potiphar.

But all of the routine running of the household, both the household and the field, he entrusts that all to Joseph. And we've seen that there is a great dip. If you had a graph of the career of Joseph, he is born and he grows and his father favors him and he's placed over his brothers and there's a rise in the graph there.

Then his brothers waylay him in the field and sell him into slavery and the graph drops and he's now at a very low point in his life. Now you already see Joseph under the Lord's blessing and by God's grace rising up from that low point. And he's not just an abject bond slave.

He's not a field hand. He goes from a field hand to domestic servant to personal servant to chief steward in Potiphar's household. And Potiphar is a powerful man in Egypt.

And this is a rise and you see Joseph sort of coming up out of the pit, as it were. We're going to leave Joseph at this point for just a moment because you get wrapped up in the details of the story sometimes and you think, well, what is God telling us in Genesis by recounting this story? When you go to the epistles of Paul or of John, of Peter, they are didactic. They're teaching in nature.

They tell you exactly what it is that you're supposed to be taking on board and making the object of your faith. Well, in a lot of the Old Testament, especially in the Pentateuch, in the writings, you have the three sections of the Old Testament, the law, the prophets, and the writings. Now, the prophets did a lot of preaching, kind of like the epistles.

But in the narrative sections, and this is true of the Gospels and Acts and the New Testament, God communicates to us in a different way. He communicates to us through the story, through the events and what is recorded about these happenings. So we don't want to get so involved in the story that we lose sight of what it is that we're supposed to be seeing in this.

Not only what do we see. You have two levels because this was, first of all, given to the nation of Israel. This was their Bible.

What would Israel have learned from this as a people and as a nation, as their scriptures

in Old Testament days? And we, in the age of the church, have the benefit of hindsight. God's unfolding plan has been revealed more fully to us, and we can see even more probably than they saw. I want to suggest to you a wonderful book by a great scholar, a great interpreter, a teacher of the Bible, and that's Dr. M.R. DeHaan.

If you were listening to the radio back in the early 60s, you could have heard Dr. DeHaan with his gravelly voice. I can do an impression of Dr. DeHaan, but I'll spare you that. But there was no doubt if you were flipping through the radio dial, if you hit Dr. DeHaan, you knew who you were listening to right away.

But what a wonderful student of the Word of God, and what a great expositor and teacher he was. His radio Bible class ministry goes on today under the watchful eye of his son Richard, and that's been a very fruitful ministry over the years. My grandmother was a very faithful and interested student of the Word of God, and she got a lot of materials from radio Bible class, which I am now grateful to have in my library.

As a contributor to that ministry, they would often send gifts. It wasn't like they do now where, send in your love gift of \$35 and we'll send you this book. I think they had a much more grace-oriented attitude in their ministry.

But with no promise or anything else, they would occasionally send out gifts to those who were supporting the ministry. One of the gifts that my grandmother received was a book called Portraits of Christ in Genesis. This was the last book, literally the last words, that M. R. D. Hahn ever penned in his writing ministry.

It came out in 1966, actually after his death. He died in 1965, I believe. But it's a wonderful book, and the preface will make you chuckle when you read it, because he said, Well, I started out writing this book as Portraits of Christ in the Bible, and as soon as I started sketching it out, I realized that this was far too great an undertaking.

The whole Bible is nothing but pictures of Christ. So I decided to limit it to Portraits of Christ in the Old Testament. And even then, as I began to flesh this out a little bit, it became far too large, and the book was going to be huge.

So I scaled it down even further to Portraits of Christ in Genesis. And he said, Even now, I feel I've done an inadequate job of even beginning to show the Portraits of Christ that are in Genesis. But it's a wonderful book to read, and you see the love that he had for Scripture in every page.

But these observations that I'm about to share with you are based on his observations toward the end of his last book. He talked about the fact that there are five shepherds in the Old Testament that are pictures of Jesus Christ. And he focuses in particular on three of them, because three of them are in Genesis.

Two of them are after Genesis. But he pointed out Abel, of Cain and Abel fame. Abel was

the sacrificing shepherd.

And his blood was shed at the hands of his brother. And you can clearly see the foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus Christ being put on the cross by his brethren in Israel. The second shepherd is Jacob.

And Dr. DeHaan labeled Jacob the toiling shepherd, because he goes outside the land. He leaves his father's house to dwell in a far country. And toils and labors to gain what he gains up there in Haran in the household of Laban.

The third shepherd is Joseph, who is currently under our gaze here in Genesis 39. And Joseph is the exalted shepherd. He was rejected by his brothers, but he will become the savior of all men in that generation when he lays up that grain for the famine.

The fourth shepherd that Dr. DeHaan points out is Moses. And he calls him the delivering shepherd. And I will add, this is not something Dr. DeHaan points out, but I think it's interesting that Moses is the younger of two brothers, isn't he? And his older brother becomes the priest, Aaron, becomes the priest in Israel and becomes the custodian of the law.

But Moses is the deliverer. And even though we call it the law of Moses, and Moses brings it down from God and communicates it to the nation, it is his older brother who administers the law, who is the embodiment and the executor of the rituals. And there is a wonderful study you can do in the role and the differentiation between Moses and Aaron.

And when you think about Moses as the delivering shepherd, picturing Christ, and Aaron being the embodiment of the Old Testament law, and Moses delivered that law, he communicates the truth, and he comes to his people and he says, I have not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. And yet Israel, being bound up in the law, can't see the deliverance that comes in Christ. And you have Aaron, of course, not only being the high priest in Israel, but also the manufacturer of the golden calf and creating another God.

And there is a lot you can do with that, but that's a study for Exodus. Then finally, the fifth shepherd that Dr. DeHaan points out is David, the royal or reigning shepherd. He is also, and these are my additions to Dr. DeHaan, but he is also the youngest of several brothers, if you'll recall.

When Samuel goes to anoint and he says, Are these all of your sons, Jesse? I've looked at these and they're handsome. They're possessed of military might and so forth, but he's the youngest brother. And it is his courage and his faith that distinguishes him from his elder brethren.

But the three that you focus on in Genesis are Abel, Jacob, and Joseph. And what is the outcome in the case of Abel? We've studied this in the early chapters of Genesis. Cain,

his brother who shed his blood and took his life, is banished from the land and wanders as a fugitive and a vagabond.

And yet, even in that wandering and even after that great sin, he is protected by the promise of God and he's protected by the mark of God. And his life is preserved. And this, of course, prefigures the fate of Israel, the brethren who put Christ on the cross.

They have been banished from the land. They have been scattered. And they, even now, as a people and as a nation, are not yet regathered in the biblical sense.

It's wonderful to see the foundation being laid for that with the restoration of the state of Israel and so on. But the bulk of Israel, Jewish people, still live outside the land and will until God regathers them in his own good time. So they, like Cain, have been banished from the land and wander amongst the Gentiles, but yet they're preserved.

And their identity, it's remarkable when you look at the other ancient peoples that are no more. Israel, this most ancient of peoples, still has a racial and a national identity. When you think about Jacob, who we've pretty well just finished studying, he gains his inheritance outside the land, but he brings it back to the land and shares it with his brother.

And the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the firstborn among many brethren in the church, and the church is his inheritance, that great passage at the end of Ephesians chapter 1 and other passages in the New Testament, we see where the Lord Jesus Christ, we are his inheritance. He's going to return to his people, and he's going to share that inheritance with them at the second advent. And in the same way that Jacob returns to the land with his bride, actually brides, plural, Leah and Rachel, but he doesn't get all the way to the land with both brides.

He gets back there with Leah. And in the same way, the Lord Jesus will return to his people with his bride to claim possession of his promised inheritance. But the most interesting, and the one we're focusing on at this point, is Joseph.

Dr. DeHaan calls him the exalted shepherd. Well, he's not exalted just yet, but we see improvement in his lot in life here. He was hated by his brethren.

He was put to death, in a sense. But like the Lord Jesus, that supposed death that was communicated to Jacob does not hold him. And in fact, he is going to live and live large, as we say today down there in Egypt.

And his survival and indeed victory over the fate that his brothers intended for him is going to be the basis of their deliverance down the road. He also is dwelling in a far country. And isn't it interesting that all of these shepherds, after Abel, of course, but Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and David all wind up sojourning apart from their people and outside the land.

You have Jacob up in Haran. You have Joseph in Egypt. You have Moses in Midian.

And you have David in the land of the Philistines, outside the favor of his own people. And we are going to see in the not too distant future that like many of these men, Joseph is going to take a Gentile bride. Joseph's wife is going to be an Egyptian.

And yet he is going to ultimately be accepted by his brothers as their deliverer. And we'll investigate that more when we get to that stage of his career. But I wanted to step back and take a look at this because for Old Testament saints, when they looked at this, their scriptures, their Bible, Israel spends a lot of time outside the land as it were.

They spend a lot of time under affliction and under persecution, suffering for whatever reason. A lot of it they brought on themselves. There were other times when their hard bondage in Egypt wasn't necessarily their fault.

Pharaoh who knew not Joseph comes up and it reminds us of the Jews of the diaspora, the dispersed Jews that we saw in 1 Peter. Regardless of the source of that suffering, where do you look for confidence? Where do you look for hope? Because as we talked about last week, faith is sustained and motivated by hope. You can't really have biblical faith if you don't have hope.

Because without that expectation, without the confidence that what God has said he will do, your faith is empty. Paul talks about this with reference to the resurrection in the New Testament. And he says, there are some who say there is no resurrection.

Well, if there's no resurrection, Christ is not raised. And if Christ is not raised, you are yet in your sins. And we are of all men most miserable because we're living only for this life.

It's only what happens in this life that you're living for and you're going to be sorely disappointed. It is the hope of what God is going to do for us in the next life that sustains us and that energizes our faith and motivates us. So when Israel looked at these stories of the various shepherds in Genesis, where is the basis for faith? Where is that firm foundation that we sang of this morning? It's in his excellent word.

If you look, you can see that although things look bleak, it is according to the foreknowledge of God. It is a path that God has chosen. And it is for our benefit.

And you think about Joseph in his early days of slavery. What is sustaining him? Is he thinking, well, God has abandoned me. Look at this terrible.

I didn't deserve this. All I did was communicate the truth of my dreams to my brothers. And here's the result.

That's what I get for trusting God. We don't have insight into Joseph's innermost thoughts, but you can see God blessing him and giving him a preview of even greater

things to come and giving him something to latch his own faith and hope onto here in Potiphar's house. But he's going to suffer a pretty severe setback here in the next few verses.

We're going to have our ups and we're going to have our downs. We'll have our times of blessing and nurturing from God. And we're also going to have those times of testing and times of deprivation.

And throughout, we have to be placing our confidence in God and recognizing that he knows and that this is a part of his purpose and plan. These examples are given to us. We're not just told this in teaching terms like an epistle would teach us or like the prophets would tell us, but also illustrated and fleshed out in the lives of these great men of the Bible whose victories and whose failings are recorded for our benefit.

All of these things were written for our instruction, it tells us in the New Testament. So as we trace the career of Joseph, as we see these wonderful foreshadowings of the great work of Christ, we see that it wasn't just to teach Joseph. We sometimes think, well, God is teaching me something through this suffering and I'll be a better person at the end of it.

God's purposes are large. And in Joseph's case, you never do see a serious faltering of Joseph's faith. It wasn't as though he needed these sufferings to perfect and complete him only.

That's not the only reason for them. Peter tells us that that's one of the things that suffering has accomplished. And it works patience and it gives us a transformed soul.

But it's important for us to have as our hope, as our confidence, that God is working these things into his larger plan. We sometimes look for vindication in this life. Well, I can see now where God was preparing me back four or five years ago or however long ago, that suffering that I went through for this thing that I'm doing now.

And we tend to limit God's purpose and the scope of God's preparation for what he's going to do with us in this life. And what you see in the story of Joseph and Jacob and these other characters in the Bible is God's plan goes way beyond the scope of our life. It goes beyond the scope of human history into the millennial kingdom and into the eternal future.

And to recognize that the vindication and the justification for what God may do in our lives isn't limited just to our life or the people in our periphery. John the Baptist, he's such a great example. We're looking at him in our Luke study right now.

Because the vindication of John's ministry didn't come in his lifetime. He winds up rather badly. He's a criminal, a prisoner, and is given the death penalty.

And his family couldn't really go that much on him. But you look at the place that John the Baptist occupies as the fulfillment of prophecy and as a prophet of good things to come, of the Lord Jesus Christ as the one who prepares the way. And you wonder, well, how much of that could John see when he sends the messengers to the Lord Jesus? Are you the coming one or do we look for another? Our vision is necessarily limited, just like John's was.

But through what we learn in the Scripture, we can expand our hope and confidence that even if we can't see the purpose in this life or in our periphery, God knows. It is according to his foreknowledge that we are chosen for the path that we follow through this life. And even if it involves failings on our part or on the part of others, even if it involves suffering in various forms, God works all things together for good for those who love him, for those who are confident and place their trust in him and don't abandon their hope.

In Hebrews it says, this is not the time to shrink back, it's the time to persevere in hope and have confidence that our faith will endure to the end. And we are those who will enjoy the full revelation and reflection of God's glory, not only in this age but in the age to come. So as we go forward in the life and career of Joseph, we don't want to lose sight of the wonderful lesson that it teaches us and the great foundation for our faith that we have in this example that is recorded for us in the pages of Scripture.

We are going to pause here and take a break. When we come back, we are going to see this next rather, it would be funny if it weren't so sad, episode in Joseph's life. Let's pause here and take a break.