SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE: When Nothing Seems to Make Sense

SERMON REFERENCE: Genesis 39:20-23

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2248

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1) INTRODUCTION
   a) We all experience ups and downs.
      i) There are times when we don’t know whether to hold on or let go.
      ii) Sometimes we feel as though we are getting hit from every side.
   b) Sometimes we create our own problems; but what do we do when we’ve
      done nothing wrong, we’re applying the proper principles, and yet, nothing
      seems to make sense?
   c) Genesis 39 gives us some principles that we can apply when life doesn’t seem
      to make sense.
      i) This chapter gives us a glimpse into the life of Joseph.
      ii) Joseph loved God but found himself in great difficulty.
         (1) He was sold into slavery by his brothers.
         (2) He was carried to Egypt and became a slave in Potiphar’s household.
   d) Genesis 39:20–23
      i) The Lord was with Joseph, even while he was in prison.
         (1) We can learn some prison principles from Joseph.
         (2) We can learn to practice the presence of God even when we are in a
             dungeon through no fault of our own.
   e) Joseph was sold into slavery and bought by Potiphar.
      i) Joseph was put in charge of Potiphar’s household.
      ii) Joseph was such a man of integrity and industry that Potiphar found
          himself trusting Joseph more and more.
      iii) He rose higher and higher in Potiphar’s house until he was finally taking
           care of all of Potiphar’s affairs.
           (1) God was with Joseph; and, even as a slave, he ascended higher and
               higher.
      iv) Potiphar’s wife tried to seduce Joseph.
           (1) Joseph refused with such vigor that he left his coat and fled.
           (2) Potiphar’s wife was so insulted and embarrassed that she accused
               Joseph of assault.
           (3) Joseph was cast into prison even though he was totally innocent.
               (a) He had been serving God, and now nothing seems to make sense.
      f) In today’s message, we will look at five principles that we can apply when
         nothing seems to make sense in our lives.

2) DON’T DEMAND TO UNDERSTAND (PROVERBS 3:5–6)
   a) Joseph had not sinned against God.
      i) He had done nothing wrong; Joseph was doing what was right.
      ii) Joseph was lied about and falsely accused.
         (1) No doubt that Satan whispered in Joseph’s ear, “Where is your God
             now? What good does it do to serve God?”
   b) We will experience times when nothing seems to make sense.
      i) When difficulty comes our way, we should try to understand; but we will
         not always be able to understand.
c) Proverbs 3:5-6
   i) There will be things in life that we will not understand.
d) Isaiah 50:10-11
   i) We can be serving God and obeying Him and still experience times of darkness.
      (1) The Christian life is not always filled with joy and happiness, and there will be times when we do not understand.
      (2) Many of God’s greatest saints sometimes walked in darkness.
         (a) Job lived through darkness and was perplexed.
             (i) He wanted to argue with God and demanded to understand.
             (ii) Job did not understand, but God understood.
         (b) Habakkuk the prophet could not understand why God was seemingly allowing the Chaldeans to get away with their sin and why there was so much violence and brutality.
             (i) We are often distressed by the same things; we wonder why God allows so much corruption and vice in our time.
      (c) John the Baptist was a mighty prophet.
         (i) Luke 7:28
         (ii) Yet, King Herod imprisoned John the Baptist.
         (iii) John the Baptist was so perplexed in prison that he began to wonder if Jesus was the Messiah.
             1. John 1:29
             2. Matthew 11:3
      (d) The apostle Paul wrote more books in the New Testament than anyone else; some claim Paul was the greatest Christian who ever lived.
         (i) 2 Corinthians 4:8
             1. Paul stated that they were perplexed, that they did not understand.
e) If we think that things will always make sense, then we will have trouble spiritually.
   i) Isaiah 50:10
      (1) The darkness can never put out the light.
      (2) If there is no light, it is only because the light has been withdrawn.
         (a) The darkness never chases the light away.
f) When we experience darkness, it does not mean that the devil has prevailed.
   i) We simply need to trust God and not demand to understand.
      (1) When we are walking in darkness, we can say, at least, that God has allowed it.
      (2) There are some things that we are not meant to understand.
g) Joseph did not understand what God was up to.
   i) When we get to the end of Genesis 50, we see that Joseph was part of a great mosaic that God was working.
h) Isaiah 55:8-9
i) Just because it does not make sense to us does not mean that it does not make sense.
   i) Just because it does not make sense now does not mean that it will not make sense later on.
   ii) Try to understand if we can, but we should not demand to understand.

3) DON'T FAIL TO BE FAITHFUL (GENESIS 39:21-23)
a) Joseph did not sit and sulk while in prison, but he continued to serve the Lord.
   i) He was faithful during a time of darkness and persecution.
   ii) In Genesis 40, we find that Joseph served the Lord by serving the butler and the baker.
   iii) Joseph was not a fair-weather Christian; he did not pout or get angry with God.
b) Even when things do not make sense, we need to continue to serve the Lord.
   i) Keep singing.
   ii) Keep praying.
   iii) Keep giving.
   iv) Keep witnessing.
   v) Keep submitting to the Lord.
c) Genesis 39:2
   i) God was with Joseph.
   ii) Genesis 39:21
      (1) The same God who was with him in the good times was also with him in the bad times.

4) DON'T BOW TO BITTERNESS (GENESIS 40:14-15)
a) In this passage, Joseph is speaking with the butler, who will be released from prison and will once again serve Pharaoh.
   i) There is no bitterness or complaint found in Joseph's statements.
   ii) Joseph did not even mention the names of his brothers who sold him into slavery or mention Potiphar's wife.
      (1) He was content to leave them with God.
b) 1 Peter 2:20
c) We need to be very careful not to get bitter when things go wrong.
   i) It's easy to drop out and become bitter when things do not make sense.
   ii) If we look to people to supply our needs and to recognize our worth, then we will be disappointed in life and will become bitter.
d) One of the greatest tests in life is not how we react when we're punished for doing wrong, but how we react when we're persecuted for doing right.
e) Joseph was not bitter because God was with him.
   i) One of the reasons why God was with him was because of Joseph's attitude.
5) DON’T BE UNWILLING TO WAIT (GENESIS 40:23)
   a) God will bring us out in His time.
   b) The butler, when he was released from prison, forgot about Joseph.
   c) Genesis 41:46
      i) This passage states that Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh and was released from prison.
         (1) Joseph was sold into slavery as a seventeen year old boy.
         (2) Many of those years, between the time Joseph was sold into slavery at seventeen and the time he stood before Pharaoh at age thirty, he spent in prison.
   d) We should not get hasty or impatient when we don’t understand.
      i) Psalm 37:5-9
      ii) We are to wait upon the Lord.
   e) 1 Peter 5:6
      i) God has His schedule.
         (1) God is never late, and He is never ahead of schedule.
         (2) God is always on time.
   f) We need to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God; in due time, He will lift us up.
      i) Don’t try to hurry God.

6) DON’T LET DREAMS DISSOLVE (GENESIS 41:37-44)
   a) Joseph had a dream when he was a teen that one day the world’s resources and rulers would be at his feet.
   b) Genesis 41:37-44
      i) Joseph has been released from prison and is now the Prime Minister of Egypt.
      ii) The dream he had so long ago has now been fulfilled.
         (1) It was a God-given dream.
         (2) Joseph never forgot the dream, and God never forgot it.
   c) Someone once said, “Don’t doubt in the dark what God has shown you in the light.”
   d) God did not fail Joseph, and He will not fail us.
      i) Joseph’s hand is no longer the hand of a slave; he now wears a royal ring.
      ii) Joseph no longer wears the prison garb; he wears the beautiful garments that Pharaoh has put upon him.
      iii) Off come the iron chains, and on goes a gold chain around his neck.
      iv) God is faithful.

7) CONCLUSION
   a) There is coming a day when God will make everything right.
   b) Don’t lose faith when something does not make sense.
      i) Just because it does not make sense now does not mean that it will not make sense one day.
c) Serve Jesus; give Him your heart and your life.

d) Don't lose your dream.
   i) Joel 2:28
      (1) If you don't have a dream, get one.
      (2) It is always too soon to quit, but never too late to start.

e) Jesus Christ is the key; do you know Him?

f) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.

\[\text{i)}\ \text{Romans 3:23} \]
\[\text{ii)}\ \text{Romans 10:9-10} \]
\[\text{iii)}\ \text{Romans 10:13} \]
\[\text{iv)}\ \text{Acts 16:31} \]
\[\text{v)}\ \text{John 3:16} \]