

Pastor Mark: Well, howdy, Pastor Mark Driscoll here. I am really excited to bring you a 10-part sermon series on the life of Joseph titled Trusting God in Troubled Times. This is a crazy hillbilly redneck saga with a lot of baby mama drama starting in Genesis 37. So if you've got a dysfunctional family, you ain't seen nothing yet. And God shows up and is good to everyone, which gives hope to us all.

Speaker 2: It all started when Joseph... It was his birthday and his dad wanted to give him a nice coat for his birthday.

Speaker 3: They were so jealous to throw him in a pit and sold him off to slavery. Pharaoh had a dream and decided that he wanted Joseph to interpret his dream and was put in a high position inside of the Egyptian empire.

Speaker 2: Joseph was in charge of all the food during the famine, and later, his brothers came to get food. They all figured out that Joseph was their long-lost brother, and they all had a feast together.

Pastor Mark: All right, if you got a Bible, go to Genesis 40. We're covering two chapters today, so I hope you packed water and a snack. This is going to be a long hike, kids, I'm not going to lie to you. I get paid by the minute, this is going to take a while. We're going to cover two chapters. We're looking at the life story of Joseph. His is a testimony about God's faithfulness. And so to catch you up to the story, which begins in chapter 37, he starts at his parents' house in the promised land. And it's a poorly architected family. There's one dad, four moms. That's a lot, right? It's a lot. If date night requires a third row of seating in your car, your family's officially poorly architected today. Amen.

Pastor Mark: So he's got one man, four women, 13 kids, all living in the same house. 12 boys, one girl. How many of you girls are glad you're not that girl? 12 brothers, one daughter, messed up family. Dad does something that no dad should ever do, he plays and picks favorites. He decides he likes Joseph more than the rest. He makes this very public and obvious, puts a coat of many colors on him. So the kid struts around like a proud peacock while all of the other kids are very jealous of him, and this creates a faction in the family. Well, then he is sent out by his dad to keep an eye on his brothers as they're attending to his dad's flocks in the field. So he is working for the company that is run by his dad. When they see him coming with this coat that signifies and symbolizes the favoritism of his father, they get jealous, and they make a plot to throw him in a pit and to kill him.

Pastor Mark: But then they decide, "Actually, we could sell him into slavery and make some money." So he's taken to Egypt. So he goes from the promised land to Egypt, from Hebrew language to Egyptian language, to worshiping the God of the Bible to a place where he is the only person who worships the God of the Bible. He is taken as a slave. He's sold on the open market. Psalm 105 says that he had iron shackles around his neck and his feet. So look at a 17-year-old kid being taken from his beloved father's home to the slave market in Egypt, purchased by Potiphar who was a military leader in the Egyptian empire under Pharaoh,

brought to his house. And there, he does such an extraordinary job that he's managing the entire household and all the affairs for this governmental official.

Pastor Mark: And then, tragically, what happens is the wife keeps coming after him and trying to seduce him. He repeatedly denies her. Now, I just don't want you to raise hands, but how many of you 20-something-year-old guys, if you had two choices, sleep with that woman or go to jail, you would not pray about your answer? Amen. Right? Let's just be honest, right? Most guys are like, "I prayed about it, I don't feel like going to jail." And so what Joseph does, he picks jail over sleeping with a married woman. Incredible integrity. And as a result, he is falsely accused of rape. She then declares that he raped her. He didn't even touch her. She's just a scorned and furious, dangerous woman.

Pastor Mark: And so here's his story. He goes from his parents house to the pit, to Potiphar's house, to the prison. In that place, he's going to spend his twenties. So we pick up the story when he's 17, today you're going to see him when he's about 30 years of age. He misses his twenties, the best years of your life. Here's what he's lost, he's lost his freedom, he's lost his family, he's lost his reputation. Here's what he doesn't do, this is what's shocking in his character, he doesn't complain. How many of you would complain? I complain just so that I stay good at it. I like to practice. He doesn't complain at all. We never see him complain. And he doesn't rebel. He doesn't get this entitlement mentality of, "God, you owe me. I did the right thing, You did nothing. Therefore, You and I are not in good relationship and you owe me some things, so I get to rebel." He never has that attitude.

Pastor Mark: Furthermore, what's kind of shocking about Joseph's conduct and his character is he doesn't try and escape from the prison. As he's in the prison, we're told a story that he becomes the manager of the prison. He's like the warden. I would tell you this, if I'm in prison and they give me keys, I take that as a sign from the Lord. Amen. Like, "It's jailbreak time. I hear You, Lord, and I interpret this as Your will. I'm gone." He doesn't even escape. He stays in the prison serving God faithfully. And he does not have any believers with him. There is no church to attend. He's not been with God's people for upwards of 13 years. There's a corollary story in the Old Testament, a guy named Daniel, who's a political leader and wrongly accused, and some other things happened to him, but at least he had a few buddies with him. If you watched the VeggieTales, he had Rack, Shack, and Benny. Poor Joseph, he's just going solo. He's all by himself, no wingman in Egypt.

Pastor Mark: And so, what he does have is two things. Number one, he has the presence of God in his life. So we see the providence of God over his life working out the details. We see the presence of God in his life so that he's not abandoned, betrayed, or alone. We saw this in chapter 39 four times, verse two, verse three and verse 23, four times. It says that God was present with Joseph, and on one occasion it says, "And showed him unfailing love." It's not the absence of trouble but the presence of God that makes life better. In addition, he has a missionary mindset. He comes to Egypt, and he thinks like a missionary. Sometimes we

think that missionaries are people that are sent across the world, and they are, but missionaries are also God's people sent across the street.

Pastor Mark: You and I need to have a missionary mindset. A missionary mindset is, "I am the citizen of another kingdom. I represent another king, and I am sent here to represent my king and to bring His kingdom." As a result, this is going to be hard. There will be resistance. It will cost time, money, and energy. This is not going to be easy for me. It's like a soldier heading off to war. I represent one nation and I'm seeking to affect change in another nation. The soldier doesn't say, "I don't know why it's so hard. I don't know why it costs so much. I don't know why I face resistant." A soldier knows, "I am advancing the cause of my kingdom, and as a result, I will experience opposition and hardship."

Pastor Mark: This is one of the biggest problems with Christianity in the valley. There is a consumer mindset not a missionary mindset. The consumer mindset versus the missionary mindset is this: are you here to give or serve? Are you here to take? Are you here to be the one who is the blessing or the one who is blessed? The missionary says, "I'm here to give." The consumer says, "I'm here to get." The missionary says, "I'm here to serve," and the consumer says, "I'm here to be served." The missionary comes and says, "I want to affect change," and the consumer says, "I want comfort." And that's the deep root problem in the valley. People come here to retire. People come here to sit by the pool. People come here to golf. All of which is fine and good, but don't forget, this is not your home, and you're here as a missionary, and people need to meet the God of the Bible. And you're in the fastest growing city in America. You're in the fastest growing county of America. And when you realize that things are not the way they should be, that's why God's people are here, to bring God's presence and to bring God's blessing. And that's the missionary mindset of Joseph.

Pastor Mark: So there's the intro, let's start reading. Missionary mindset number one: tell the truth when it's good news. Tell the truth when it's good news. Chapter 40:1, "Some time after this, the cupbearer said to the king of Egypt..." The king of Egypt is the Pharaoh, and he is the ruler over the most powerful, longstanding empire in the history of the... The Egyptian empire was ruling for 1300 years. That's longer than the Greek and Roman empires combined. He has military force, and with that, it is wedded together with politics, business, and religion. This is a family dynasty. Sometimes Satan and demons work through family lines. They cause them to rise up and to live in power and to take over other nations, and they are ruling as gods.

Pastor Mark: So, Pharaoh literally thinks that he's a god. He's actually a fake Jesus. He believes that he is a man who is also divine, and he connects the spirit realm of the gods with the physical world of the Egyptians. So he's a false mediator. He's a fake Jesus. And so, he holds all of this power. It's this ruling family dynasty from generation to generation, and he is going to meet the real God of the Bible and figure out who God really is. Now, that being the case, he is ruling and reigning, and we read this, he has a cupbearer and a baker. These are two guys that are on his trustworthy advisor inner circle of counselors. It would be their job to set his diet and to protect his wellbeing. So, they would take the drink and the food,

and they would consume it before he did, because if it was poisoned, then they would die for him. How many of you don't want that job? Just think of any political leader who's hypothetically controversial and your job is to eat before them just in case someone wants to harm them. That's a rough job. That's a real rough job because people are constantly trying to kill the Pharaoh.

Pastor Mark:

What happens as a result, you only pick for those positions the people that are most trustworthy because literally your life and safety are in their hands. So it's the baker and it is the cupbearer. The cupbearer was also a position held by a guy named Nehemiah in the Old Testament as well. This is a high-ranking political office. They committed an offense against their Lord of Egypt, and Pharaoh was angry at his two officers. We don't know why. He's upset. Maybe it's gluten free. Maybe it's low carb, and he's like, "That's it, you're going to jail." Or maybe it's snuck in a cheap boxed wine and he is upset. Whatever the case, he's really frustrated with them. Pharaoh was angry with the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where Joseph was confined. How many of you are glad your boss can't throw you in prison whenever they feel like it? Amen. How many of you are a boss and you wish it was like this? "You need to go to jail. Here we go."

Pastor Mark:

"The captain of the guard appointed Joseph to be with them, and he attended them. They continued for some time in custody." Here's what it says, it says that Joseph is in prison. He is as low as low can go. You're going to hear later that he spent years of his life in what they call the pit. That's the bottom of the bottom of the bottom. At the top of the top of the top is the Pharaoh. God wants the only believer, the missionary in Egypt, to get to the Pharaoh, the leader. How in the world can this happen? Well, the Pharaoh has two people on his inner circle that he trusts and knows. He becomes displeased with them, sends them just happens to be the same prison where Joseph is present and ruling, just so happens that Joseph is appointed to oversee them. Now he is one degree of separation away from the Pharaoh.

Pastor Mark:

It says in Acts 17:26 that God determines the times and the places in which we live. What that means is you may not be where you want to be, but you may be exactly where God wants you to be. That's what it might mean. Joseph doesn't want to be in prison, but that's where he needs to be so that God can bring before him these two men to begin a relationship that will slingshot him into the presence of Pharaoh. Now, this being the case, you and I need to assume that where we live is not happenstance, circumstance, or chance, it's God's providence. We see God's Providence at work over the life of Joseph. Joseph is living by faith. He doesn't know what God is doing, but he is trusting God's Providence. You and I need to think in the same regard. We are in the same position as Joseph. We don't know exactly what God is doing, but we trust that God knows what He's doing. And God is working, and we are not yet seeing. That's where we find ourselves in the story of Joseph.

Pastor Mark:

And so then the story continues, "On one night," verse five, "they both dreamed." You're going to see dreams in the Bible. Sometimes dreams are from

God, sometimes they're not. How many of you have had a dream that was not from God? You woke up, you're like, "Well, was it Lord?" He's like, "Nothing. That was the chorizo. You're weird, go back to bed. There's nothing in that, okay? There's nothing in that." Some of you are hyper-spiritual and everything's spiritual. Some of you are not spiritual enough and you miss God talking to you. There's discernment that comes. These two unbelieving guys have dreams. And let me say this, God can communicate to people in whatever way he determines.

Pastor Mark:

In this regard, there were no believers in the presence of Pharaoh and his leadership, but God will speak to all of them through a dream. And so, the story continues... They have a dream. Verse five, "The cupbearer and the baker of Egypt who were confined in the prison, each his own dream, and each dream with its own interpretation. When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw they were troubled." They were a little freaked out by this. "So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in custody in his master's house, 'Why are your faces downcast today?' They said to him, 'We have had dreams and there is no one to interpret them.' And Joseph said... " Here's the key, ring the bell, underline the verse, "'Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell them to me.'" God gave you the dream. God can interpret the dream. I can't do that, but God can, I'm God's man.

Pastor Mark:

God could have given them the dream and the interpretation, but instead, He wanted to use the man of God. Oftentimes, God is working in the lives of unbelievers, and then they'll bring their questions to the believer. The believer is the one who helps them understand what they're experiencing. Now, if you remember the story of Joseph, everything started to go very poorly for him with a dream. You remember that? He's like, "Hey, I had a dream, guys," tells his dad, his brothers. "I had a dream where you were all bowing down to me." So then they threw him in a pit, sold him into slavery, and ended up in prison. If it was me and a guy came to me and said, "Hey, I heard you do dream ministry," I'd be like, "I've retired from dream ministry. I took it off my LinkedIn page. It's no longer on my business card. I took it off my resume. I am a former dream ministry leader, and I'm now post dream ministry. Because the last time I told somebody about dream, I ended up shipwrecking my whole life." How many of you at this point wouldn't want to get involved? How many of you have tried to serve God, you've said or done something, it didn't go well, you're like, "That's it, I'm done."

Pastor Mark:

Now, Joseph is going to interpret their dream. God speaks sometimes through dreams, sometimes through angels, sometimes through internal conscience. And sometimes God will use supernatural, miraculous ways to reveal Himself, all of which is under what I'll call the supreme court of God's word. We take everything and we test it by the highest authority, and dreams are a lower form of revelation. Secondly, I need you to know that sometimes God's people get to see cool, supernatural stuff. Sometimes God shows up and heals somebody, I've seen it. Sometimes God shows up and speaks to somebody or just saves somebody or does something supernatural or provides for them. You're like, "That was amazing, God showed up." Sometimes God's people get to see God

show up in supernatural, special, and significant ways. We don't chase those things. We chase God, and those things follow us.

Pastor Mark: Verse nine, "So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph and said to him, 'In my dream, there was a vine before me, and on the vine there were three branches. As soon as it budded, its blossom shot forth, and the clusters ripened into grapes. Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup and placed in the cup Pharaoh's hands.' Then Joseph said to him, 'This is its interpretation. The three branches are three days. At three days, Pharaoh will lift up your head, restore you to your office. You shall place Pharaoh's cup in his hand as formerly when you were his cupbearer.'"

Pastor Mark: "Good news, he's going to get over it. He freaked out. It's just a long weekend. Just hang out in the prison, Monday, you'll be back to work. It's going to be okay." "Really?" "Yeah, I promise you, that's what it is." "Oh, good news." As Christians, sometimes we get to tell people good news. We need to tell the truth, whatever it is, but sometimes we get to tell them good news. Somebody came up to recently and said, "If I give all my sin to Jesus, will He really forgive me?" The answer is?

Congregation: Yes.

Pastor Mark: Yes. They're like, "That's good." That's why we like it. Yeah, it's true, it's true.

Pastor Mark: "Well, if I love Jesus, I live forever with Jesus and it all gets better?" "Yep, that's totally true. That's good news. That's good news." "God will never leave me nor forsake me?" "No, he won't." "God will never betray me? God will never lie to me? God will never do evil to me?" "All true. All good news." Joseph gets to deliver good news. And then he makes one humble, simple request. "'Only,' he asked, 'remember me when it is well with you.'" "It's going to go really well for you. When you get back to work, please tell the Pharaoh, 'Oh, there's this one guy, and I feel like we should help him.'" "'Only remember me when it all is well with you. And please do me the kindness to mention me to Pharaoh and sort of get me out of this house.'"

Pastor Mark: "'Hey, get me out for I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me in the pit.'" Is that a reasonable request? Sure. What he doesn't do is negotiate. He just serves. He doesn't say, "Okay, I'll make you a deal." How many of you you would negotiate this deal? I would. Maybe. Okay. Because previously a dream got me in trouble, now I'm in prison. This guy is going to get out of prison, go to the Pharaoh, you could negotiate a deal with this guy. "I'll make you a deal. I'll tell you the interpretation of the dream if you sign on the dotted line. Let's paperwork this up. You get me out, that's our deal." He doesn't do that. He, first, humbly serves, and then he makes his request.

Pastor Mark: He's not putting any conditions on his ministry. It's just a grace-oriented ministry. And he's asking, "I would appreciate it if you would seek justice for me as I have served you." This is what faith looks like. Faith is two things as we see in the life

of Joseph. It's waiting and working. Joseph is waiting on God to deliver him to his destiny. He knows that he has a destiny before him, so he's waiting. But while he's waiting, he's working. He's risen up the ranks. He's leading in the prison. He is doing ministry at every opportunity and availability. Some people when they think of faith, they think it's simply waiting on God. It is waiting and working. You work hard at your job. You do the best you can. You take up every opportunity that is before you, and you're waiting for God to open opportunity so that you can move into the next season of life, ministry, business, relationship, whatever that next season might be. He is making the most by working while he's waiting. Sometimes Christians just wait, and they do nothing until God shows up. And sometimes God is using those opportunities to form our character, to prepare us for the next opportunity that He set before us.

Pastor Mark: So then the story transitions. Missionary mindset number two: tell the truth when it's bad news. So the first guy is pretty easy. "Hey, I have good news." Who doesn't like to share good news? He now has bad news to share with the other guy. "When the chief baker saw the interpretation of the dream was favorable... " I love this, he's like, "You go first. You go first. Let's see how this interpretation things go. Oh, that went pretty good. Okay, I'll let you interpret my dream." This is like your college roommate buddy who is like, "Try the milk, tell me if it's good or bad." Like, "Why?" "Well, if it's bad, I'm not trying it. But if it's good, I'll put some on my cereal." "Right, it's you go first. You let him interpret your dream, we'll see what happens."

Pastor Mark: "He said to Joseph, 'I also had a dream, and there with three cake baskets on my head.'" This dream off to a good start, baked goods. Amen. How many of you don't like baked goods? How could this possibly go nefarious? You smell baked goods. Amen. And they're on your head. I mean, they're close to where they need to eventually be, this is a good dream, off to a good start. "'And in the uppermost baskets, there were all sorts of baked goods for Pharaoh.'" Good dream. "'But the birds were eating it out the basket on my head.' Joseph said, 'This is its interpretation. The three baskets are three days. In three days, Pharaoh will lift up your head from you and hang you on a tree.'" "He's going to hang you and behead you." "Ah, really? I should have went first with the interpretation." This is bad news, right?

Pastor Mark: The story continues. "'And the birds will eat the flesh from you.'" That means he's not even going to get wrapped up for a decent Egyptian burial. See, they thought that the pyramids were the connecting place between heaven and earth, almost like the temple in the Old Testament, where everything's counterfeit religion and spirituality and demonizing. And they thought that to preserve your body and soul into the next world, you needed to be in a mummified state. So if the birds are going to come and eat his body, well, this is worst-case scenario because it means eternal death. And this is the interpretation of the dream. How many of you would have a very hard time giving this news?

Pastor Mark: See, Proverbs 29:25 says that fear of man is a trap or a snare. When we fear people, we don't tell them the truth because we're afraid that it will impact us

negatively. So rather than telling them the truth, we lie, we flatter, we avoid the truth, we withhold the truth. Some people say, "Well, we need to have a positive Christianity." I know we should, but sometimes we need to tell the bad news or the good news. Sometimes we tell the bad news and the good news. But Christianity is not always and only exclusively good news, there's also some bad news. Right? What about positive ministry? Well, I'm positive people are going to hell. I'm positive of that. I'm positive that if you don't love Jesus it's going to end poorly for you forever. I'm positive that everybody's a sinner separated by God by nature and choice. I'm positive that people are in and of themselves doomed for destruction and death and devastation. I'm positive of all of that, so there's my positive Christianity. So, that's the bad news, and oftentimes we don't like to talk about the bad news. "You're a sinner." "What? No, I'm not, I'm a good person." "No, you're not. You're arrogant too. And now you're argumentative. Okay, so we're just piling it all up. Thanks for proving my case."

Pastor Mark: "Now, Jesus came. His mom was a virgin." "What?" "Okay, I know, just stick with me, Merry Christmas. And what happened was He water skied without a boat, and He gave a launchable to a kid. And He fed a stadium. And then He died, and He came back. He'll forgive you." "Okay, there's the good news." "It's Jesus, not you. You're bad, He's good. You die. And instead, He dies where you should die so that you could live with Him forever." We need to be clear about the bad news. People are sinners. They're separated from God. They need a savior. And that hell is hot and forever is a long time. That's the bad news. The good news: Jesus loves you. He comes to seek and save and serve you. He'll forgive you. He'll never leave you nor forsake you. He has a destiny for you that is only good with you.

Pastor Mark: God's people need to be truth tellers whether it's good news or bad news. And Joseph is one who tells both good news and bad news. He's more concerned about the fear of the Lord than he is the fear of man. But this could come back on him very negatively. If he gives bad news to someone who is a leading government official, who is leading alongside or was previously the Pharaoh who was worshiped as a God, this could have very negative consequences for his life and wellbeing. But he says and does what is right and true. So must you. There's a boldness there.

Pastor Mark: The story continues. "In three days, Pharaoh will lift up your head from you and hang you on a tree. And the birds will eat your flesh on the third day." Which was Pharaoh's birthday. Here's what's a little interesting, Pharaoh's the only guy in the Bible who actually celebrates his birthday. This is why your Jehovah Witness friends won't celebrate birthdays. They'll say, "Well, Pharaoh's the only guy who celebrated his birthday in the whole Bible." Pharaoh had a high self-esteem. It was like, "Today's a national holiday." "Why?" "It's the day I was born." That's a really high self-esteem. He makes his birthday a national holiday, and everyone has to celebrate it. It's not a sin to celebrate your birthday, but it is curious that he's the only man who does so.

Pastor Mark: "It was Pharaoh's birthday. He made a feast for all of his servants, and he lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his



servants. He restored the chief cupbearer to his position and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. But he hanged the chief baker as Joseph had interpreted to them. What a weird birthday. Amen.

Congregation: Amen.

Pastor Mark: "All right. Hey, all right."

Pastor Mark: (singing)

Pastor Mark: "Okay, blow out the candle. What do you want, Pharaoh?" "I want to get the cupbearer back, and I want to behead the baker." "Okay."

Pastor Mark: (singing)

Pastor Mark: What a weird birthday. You're beheading the guy who bakes your birthday cake. I mean, that's a weird birthday. Amen.

Congregation: Amen.

Pastor Mark: Can you imagine going to that party? They're like, "How was it?" "It got awkward at one point. It got really awkward. We had a cake, and then we had a beheading, and then we had ice cream. It was a weird transition. It was awkward. The cake was good. What a weird birthday." But Pharaoh's this guy, man, if he doesn't like you, he's just done with you. If he doesn't want to bless you, he's not going to bless you. This is how false gods operate. They're very capricious. They're very unfair. They're very unable to be trusted. And this man rules through fear, and the God of the Bible, He rules through love.

Pastor Mark: The story continues. Third missionary mindset: except God's timing. Chapter 40 verse 23, "Yet, the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph; but forgot him." So, Joseph's been in prison for most of his twenties. It said earlier that he was really handsome. So he was Brad Pitt. And now he is in the pit. I mean, he's lost his looks. He looks like the unabomber. He's got crazy eyes. He's not shaving. He smells like a honey bucket at a county fair. It's been a rough run for this kid. There goes his twenties. And there he is in prison and he tells the one guy, "Hey, when you get out, get me out." And the guy forgot.

Pastor Mark: How many of you have had this experience? You're like, "I served you, you didn't serve me. I gave to you, you never gave back. I helped you, you didn't help me. I was there for you, and you forgot about me." Welcome to ministry.

Congregation: Hallelujah.

Pastor Mark: Welcome to ministry. Ministry is unto the Lord whether or not people respond. Joseph has a heart to do what is right in the sight of God. He makes his request, which is absolutely reasonable, but tragically, he is forgotten. You know why? Because most people aren't like Joseph, they don't care about people, they use people. This world is filled with people who use people. And as soon as they've used you, they move on. Joseph doesn't use people, he serves people, because

he has the heart of God, he has a missionary mindset. Nonetheless, he is neglected. He is abandoned. He is forgotten. For a couple of years, here's what Joseph does. He gets up. He works in the prison. He goes to bed. He gets up. He works the prison. He goes to bed. There's no more dreams. There's no miracles. There's nothing happening. This is dull, mundane, boring life.

Pastor Mark: How many of you life feels like that? You're like, "It's just get up, go to work, come home. No bonus, no raise, no trophy, no plaque, no thank you, no recognition. Nobody seems to care. Nobody seems to know." Disillusionment can settle in. Entitlement can settle in. Frustration can settle in. Selfishness can settle in. Bitterness can settle in. Envy can settle in. Or character can be formed. What God is doing here is He is preparing Joseph's character for the next season of his life and ministry. I wish you could get character at Costco. I really do. They say they got everything at Costco. I looked on all the pallets, I can't find character. If I could buy character, whatever it was, I would swipe the card and pay for that. Because the only way I can find to get character is through suffering and hardship and pain and struggle and failure and strife.

Pastor Mark: Your greatest ministry comes from your deepest pain. Because Joseph is going to experience great pain, he will have a great ministry. Because he will forgive so deeply, he can proceed to proclaim forgiveness so broadly. Because he has been abandoned, he becomes someone who is faithful and doesn't abandon. Because he has been used and abused, he determines that he is not going be that kind of person. He is the person who will, instead, love and serve. Your circumstances will either make you bitter or they will make you better, and you have a decision to make. Joseph could have spent the rest of his life just talking about all of the injustice and all of the horror. Forsaken by his brother, sold as a slave, falsely convicted as a rapist, losing the majority of the best years of his life in prison, and after serving someone faithfully, they forgot him.

Pastor Mark: Joseph used those opportunities for his soul and his heart to get better and not bitter. This is extraordinary. I am sorry for what you have been through. I am sorry for what you are going through. I'm sorry for the status you have lost, the relationships you have lost, the betrayal you have experienced, the injustice you have faced, the lies that have been said about you, the people who have abandoned you, those who have turned their back on you, those who have not reciprocated toward you. But like Joseph, God might have a great destiny for you, and He's using this as an opportunity to form character in you so that you are prepared to love and serve at a greater level on the other side. Because the story of Joseph is literally one from his parents' house to the pit, to Potiphar's house to the prison. And he's about ready to make the pivot to the palace.

Pastor Mark: God is always preparing His people for the next season of life and ministry. Suffering is a classroom, and class is always in session to form character in the children of God. Okay, Joseph is not a perfect man, but he's an exemplary man. I love the fact that he loves and serves even those who do not love or serve he or his God, because that is the heart of God toward us all. And disillusionment does not set in. Bitterness does not set in. Entitlement does not set in. Joseph does not say, "God, I have done what I am to do. They have not done what they were

to do. When will You do what you are ought to do?" There is none of that. There is a humility. There's an integrity. There's a consistency in the character of Joseph that then means when God does pivot him, he will be a humble, loving, faithful leader seeing his governmental financial opportunity as ministry unto the Lord. It's a great story. And it's not just one that God wants us to admire, it's one that God wants us to emulate.

Pastor Mark: The story continues. Missionary mindset number four: wait for God to show up. Chapter 41, "After two whole years, two years." How many of you, it's two years, I'm praying for a job, I'm praying for a spouse, we're praying for a kid, I'm trying to get out of this difficult situation day after day after day, it's the grind. Back to the cubicle. Ah, again? Really? Two years. "Pharaoh dreamed." Pharaoh has a dream. Now, this is curious because no one can get a message to the Pharaoh. There's only one believer in the entire nation of Egypt that we are aware of. That is Joseph. He is in the pit, Pharaoh is in the palace, how do you get the message from the pit to the palace? You don't, but God can. God speaks to the Pharaoh. I think this is kind of funny because Pharaoh thinks he is a god, and then the real God shows up to have a conversation with the false god about the future that the false god does not know.

Pastor Mark: Let me just say this, if your God doesn't know what's going to happen and can't fix it, you may have picked the wrong god. Okay? They've got a god, a "god" who cannot lead them, cannot serve them, cannot save them because he doesn't know the future, he doesn't rule over the future, and he is not god. Other religions, other spiritualities, other ideologies, they are false, they're phony, they are demonic, they are deceptive. The real God breaks through all of this noise. Sometimes God is working on people in circumstances that we don't know about and no one else has any access to. Right now in the closed Muslim countries, the reports are coming out that there are many people who are becoming Christians, particularly in nations like Iran, which actually has a growing underground, young, youthful church movement of people who are meeting Jesus. The story that they continually tell is, "I was not a Christian. I kept going to bed, having dreams that I died and stood before Jesus to give an account for my life. I was very scared, so I gave my life to Jesus and became a Christian." Because God can work through dreams. God can get into closed countries. God can get to those people that even missionaries can't get to.

Pastor Mark: So let me just do an excursus on this. Sometimes people will say, "Well, what happens to those that have never heard about Jesus?" My answer is I don't know who has and has not heard about Jesus. Just because we haven't gotten to them doesn't mean God hasn't got to them. God is doing stuff that only He knows, and I'm not here to judge. I'm just here to trust and to serve and to preach and to pray and to wait and to see. I love the fact that God gets a message to the Pharaoh. It reminds me of a story. There was a friend of mine, he's a pastor up in Alaska, he was here a couple weeks ago. He told me a story that missionaries, I think it was his parents or grandparents, made it way, way, way up north in Alaska to a remote tribal group of people to tell them about Jesus. They got there, and they were like, "We have good news, God became a man, and He lived without sin. He died for your sins on the cross, and He rose

some the dead." And they were like, "Yeah, we know, we're Christians, we all know Him. We heard that story." They were like, "Why did we make this trip? We all got frost bite for nothing. We were trying to..."

Pastor Mark: What they said was, "One of our leaders kept having dreams about that guy, and so we all worship Him." The missionaries are like, "What?" So that's what God can do. Hey, clap if you want, I mean, I appreciate it. The nine o'clock is dead. If the dead and Christ rise first, that's the nine o'clock. But I love you guys, it's good to see you. No, it is. It totally is. It's like nappers for Christ meeting, it's just horrible. Some of you guys need to come back at nine tomorrow and help them out. Okay.

Pastor Mark: Chapter 41, verse one, "After two whole years, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile. And behold, there came up out of the Nile seven cows... " This is a little bit of a weird dream. Amen. There were seven swimming cows. What? What? This is different "... attractive and plum." So apparently, the chubby cows are the cute ones, okay? Amen. Okay, I heard an amen. All right, I'm just throwing it out there, just right here in the scripture, so okay. "... and they fed in the reed grass. And behold, seven other cows, ugly and thin, came up... " I don't know, what there's synchronized cows swimming team in the Nile. I don't know what's going on. "... came up out of the Nile after them and stood by the other cows in the bank of the Nile. And the ugly, thin cows ate up the seven attractive, plump cows."

Pastor Mark: Right? This is all different, right? "And Pharaoh woke." I'm sure he did. He's like, "What's up with the cows eating the cows? I thought they were all vegetarians." "He fell asleep and dreamed a second time. And behold, seven years of grain, plump and good, were growing on one stock, and behold, after them, sprouted seven years, thin and lighted by the east wind, and the thin air swallowed up the seven plump full years. And Pharaoh woke. And behold, it was a dream. So in the morning..." Because Pharaoh was troubled. He's bothered. He's like, "That was different. That was not just an interesting dream, that was a revelation, and I don't know what it means."

Pastor Mark: "He suddenly called for all the magicians of Egypt and all the wise men." So he brings in all the spiritual counselors. So here comes Oprah and here comes Dr. Phil and here comes Deepak Chopra, and some guy in the lotus position and some guy with all of his appointments and the dream catcher. Here they all come, and they're all going to parade before the Pharaoh. They're all on the payroll, this is his spiritual advisory committee. And he's like, "Okay, what's my dream mean?" They're like, "We have no idea. We got no idea what this dream means." "Pharaoh told him his dreams, but none could interpret them for Pharaoh." Are these very spiritual people? Yes or no? Yeah, they're very spiritual. They see no distinction between business, government, spirituality. It's all integrated under the leadership of the Pharaoh who's the fake Jesus, god-man ruling it all. This is a demonic counterfeit of the kingdom of God ruled by Jesus. So they're highly spiritual, and they don't know the real God of the Bible.

Pastor Mark: Here's what I want to tell you, spirituality is a phony, spirituality is fraudulent, spirituality is fakery. That's what it is. It's people speculating about God, and they have no idea of revelation from God. Spirituality is what people make up to fill the distance between themselves and God when they have not sought God, when they have not heard from God. That's exactly what's happening in their day. So in our day, people will be like, "I'm very spiritual." That's not of any use or help at all. Spirituality doesn't help them in the least. They need God. You don't need spirituality, you need the Spirit of God. You don't need spirituality, you need the Word of God. You don't need spirituality, you need the Son of God. And spirituality doesn't work when you need it most, like the day you die. You can't die and stand before Jesus and be like "I'm spiritual." He's like, "That don't count. Depart from me. I never knew you."

Pastor Mark: I love you. I'm worried about you. I'm glad you're here, but let me tell you there, spiritual friends, you need Jesus. You need forgiveness of sin. You need relationship with God. You need revelation from God. You need new life with God, not just spirituality. And that's the entire point of the story. The most spiritual man in the most widespread, long-lasting empire brings in the most spiritual advisors, and none of them has any understanding or inclination what God's Word actually means. So God's going to use the man of God to interpret the Word of God to reveal the purposes of God to these people whom God loves.

Pastor Mark: Missionary mindset number five: generosity is ministry. 41:9, "Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, 'I remember my fancies today.'" Pharaoh walks into work, he's like, "What's..." "Excuse me, the cupbearer walks into work, sees Pharaoh, said, "Why you upset?" "Had a bad dream, can't interpret it. I brought in all the professionals, nobody knows what it means." He's like, "Whoops, I know a guy. I know a guy. Whoopsie, Yeah, that guy. Yeah. Whoop forgot about that guy." When Pharaoh was angry, he tells him the story, "Ooh, actually, I know a guy." "When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, had put me and the chief baker in custody in the house of the captain the guard, we dreamed on the same night, he and I have a dream with its own interpretation, a young Hebrew..." "Different guy, different God. Different guy, different God. Maybe we're dialing the wrong number, that's why we're not getting any answer." "... Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. We told him, he interpreted our dreams to us, giving an interpretation to each man according to his dream as he interpreted to us. So what came about, I was restored to my office, and the baker was hanged."

Pastor Mark: Most ministry takes place in the marketplace. Most ministry takes place in the marketplace. Joseph's not serving as a priest in the temple. He's not serving as a pastor in a church. He's serving as a prison warden. He is serving in the place that no one else wants to be. And he's serving faithfully. Most of your ministry is going to happen in the marketplace. It's when you go to work. It's how you conduct yourself, with integrity. You bill honestly. You work hard. You treat people fairly. You seek the wellbeing of the entire organization of which you were a part. And what I'm not saying is that we all need to be like Ned Flanders, annoying Christians on the job. You know that guy? Shows up with a Christian t-

shirt, plays Christian music, waves Christian flags, and makes everybody into atheists because he's so annoying. I'm not talking about that guy. But it's, "Why do you work hard?" "Because my God is a servant." "Why do you bill with integrity?" "Because my God sees my work, and even if I can get away with things, I want Him to know that I acted appropriately." "Why did you feel forgive that person?" "Because my God is a God who forgives." "Why do you work hard?" "Because my God is a God who came and for 30 years worked as a carpenter and worked really hard and did a good job. He was humble in that way."

Pastor Mark: What we want to be is a bit of a representation of Christ and a little bit of presence of Christ in the marketplace. These people, they didn't know anything about the God of the Bible, but they could see the integrity of the character and the work ethic of Joseph as he was doing ministry in the marketplace by doing a good job. So let me say this, your work is your witness. Your work is your witness. And sometimes you can get very frustrated because you think, "I'm doing a good job, and nobody's really acknowledging that." For Joseph, it took a couple of years. So, for some of you, it's going to take a while before you're recognized for your service. For others of you, you will not be recognized in this life, but your boss's boss, the Lord Jesus, will tell you at the end of your life, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Just know this: God sees, God knows, and you'll either be rewarded in this life and the life to come, or at least in the life to come, but much of our ministry is, in fact, in the marketplace.

Pastor Mark: "Then Pharaoh sent," verse 14, "and called Joseph, and they quickly brought him out of the pit." Finally, he's getting out of jail. He's not been out of jail in years. Again he's spent the majority of his twenties in prison, falsely convicted as a rapist. "And when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes," he's looking better now, "he came in before Pharaoh and Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have it said that when you hear a dream, you can interpret it.'" He's back into dream ministry. How many of you at this point for sure would negotiate a deal?

Congregation: Amen.

Pastor Mark: You've really got a chip in this negotiation. Amen. "Okay, so what you're saying is you have a dream, I'm the only one who can interpret it. I am a prisoner falsely accused of rape. How about if we negotiate a deal? Have you seen Shark Tank? Let's do that, okay? Let's do that." How many of you at this point you'd be negotiating your deal? He does not. He serves. In a world where everyone is negotiating, it is very unusual to find someone who is just serving. Joseph is not trying to manipulate circumstances for his benefit. He wants to do what is right in the sight of God and right for those in leadership and authority over him. There's tremendous humility and integrity there.

Pastor Mark: "Joseph answered Pharaoh, 'It is not in me. God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.'" What he's saying is this, "Pharaoh, it's not me. If this goes well, I'm not looking for you to honor me, I want you to know my God. If my God allows me to serve you, you need to know that it was my God and not me." Joseph has a missionary mindset. When he gets his opportunity and he's before the Pharaoh,

he can represent his interests or God's interests. He represents God's interests. That's why he's going to be elevated to a significant position of leadership because he is a man of character and integrity. And so, he's ultimately pointing the false god to the real God. "Pharaoh told Joseph, 'Behold, in my dream I was standing on the banks of the Nile.'" They thought that the Nile was supernatural. They thought it actually was like pantheism or panthenism or radical environmentalism, that there's a spirit that flows and imbues all of creation, and that includes this river, and it bring forth life. So it was part of their religious worship, was the river.

Pastor Mark: I thought that was crazy till I moved to Arizona. I'm like, "Yeah, water's a big deal." Right? "Seven cows, plump and attractive, came up out of the Nile and fed in the reed grass. Seven other cows came up, poor, ugly, thin, such as I've never seen in the land of Egypt. The thin, ugly cows ate up the first seven plump cows. But when they had eaten them, no one would've known that they'd eaten them for they're still as ugly as the beginning." Here's what he's saying, "The skinny cows ate the fat cows and they didn't get fat." I wish it worked like that, don't you? Don't you wish you could just eat a fat cow and not put on a pound? Be it so, Lord. I received that. All right. Because if I eat carbs, I'm over 40, I blow up like a puffer fish. It's a horrible situation. Have you experienced that? Okay, just something to throw out there. All right.

Pastor Mark: "Then I awoke. I also saw in my dream seven years growing on stock, full and good, seven years, withered, thin, and blinded by the east wind sprouted after them. The thin ears swallowed up the seven good ears, and I told the magicians, the religious guys, but there was no one who could explain it to me." Most of the time people want our faith to be private, not public. "Joseph, go to your jail cell, pray. It's worship. Don't bring that out here. Your faith is for private life not for public life." A missionary understands that's not even possible, because I'm in God's presence when I'm alone and God's presence goes with me wherever I go. That's what Joseph understands. And they understand that he is a man who knows God.

Pastor Mark: You know what? If you will be open about your faith and not fall into the myth and the lie that it needs to be private but it can be public, you'll actually see people starting to talk to you about the Lord. The last thing's like, "Can you pray for me? Or my aunt got cancer?" "Yeah." I one time had an atheist ask me to pray for his grandma. He was a hypocrite, but he asked me to pray for him. Okay. He's like, "Will you pray for my grandma?" I'm like, "Dude, I thought you're an atheist." He's like, "I am. But if there is a God, pray for my granny." "Okay. I love your granny. God loves your granny. And you may not be the most devoted atheist if you're giving prayer request for your granny, but it opens up a conversation and an opportunity for us to talk about God."

Pastor Mark: Once people know that you love the Lord and if they see integrity in your character, eventually they might start to approach you for a conversation. This is where Peter says in the New Testament to always be ready to give an answer for the hope that lies within you with gentleness and respect to everyone who asks. The assumption is we live our faith publicly, people have conversations and ask

questions, and we try to lovingly, humbly, kindly point them to our God so that they can understand the experiences of their life in light of His work. That's what Joseph is doing. "Then Joseph said to Pharaoh," verse 25, here's the interpretation, "The dreams of Pharaoh are one. God has revealed to Pharaoh... " This is where he rings the bell, this one moment. "Okay, Pharaoh, here's what you heard, you heard a Word from God. This is a revelation from God. God has spoken to you." Now, Pharaoh thinks he's god, and he's going to hear from the real God. That's what Joseph is saying.

Pastor Mark: "The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven good years. The dreams are one. The seven lean and ugly cows came up are seven years, and the seven empty ears blighted by the east wind are also seven years of famine." Here's what he's saying, "The skinny cows, those are famine years. The fat cows, those are fruitful years." You know what '07/'08 was? Skinny cows coming out of the Nile here in the valley. Since I moved here, the only two things people talk about, they're like, "It's hot, and my home isn't worth enough." Those are the only two things people talk about. Right? I met one guy, he said, "I bought in '07, and then it went down again in '08. It's like I've never recovered my money." I've heard that story over and over and over. What he's saying is that there's seasons and cycles to the market, that there are fat years and lean years. And you're going to see where he has an economic plan to protect the people.

Pastor Mark: He goes on, "But after the seven years, verse 31, "and the plenty will be unknown in the land by a reason of famine that will follow, for it will be very severe." Economic downturn. Double dip. The bottom's going to fall out of the market. Everything's going to be on a fire sale. Bankruptcies are going to go through the roof. The doubling of Pharaoh's dreams means the thing will follow for it will be very severe. It is fixed by God, and God will bring it about. He says, "We got to hustle, it's coming fast." Pharaoh doesn't know the future because Pharaoh isn't the real God. The real God does know the future, and so He reveals it to Joseph, His servant. Now, what Joseph comes up with is a governmental economic plan. Okay, 15 minutes earlier, this guy was a prisoner. This is quite a pivot. Amen. It's outhouse/penthouse in 15 minutes. That's a pivot.

Pastor Mark: "Now, therefore, let Pharaoh select discerning and wise men and send them over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers," that's governance, "over the land and take one fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plentiful years. Let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities and let them keep it. That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine that are to occur in the land of Egypt, so the land may not perish through famine." Here's the Joseph principle: in the good years, don't spend it all, save some. Don't get over your skis. Don't overextend yourself. Don't overextend your credit lines. Right, what happens is things are going good and there's this addictive mentality that the run will continue forever. And anyone who's been around a while or knows anything about economics knows that eventually the run comes to an end and the



bottom falls out quick. And it can be a famine. It could be a terrorist attack. It could be an economic downturn. It could be any one of a number of things, some of which we're completely unconscious of until they occur and they blindside everybody.

Pastor Mark: And so, what Joseph is saying is, "Everything is great now. Housing market is up. First-time home ownership is up. Interest rates are down. People are making money. Things are going great. But tell them, 'Don't go buy a new car. Don't go get a fatter house. Don't go rack up your credit card debt. Save, save, save, save, save because you're going to need that.'" The Joseph principle is that oftentimes God provides exactly what we need, but we don't steward the resources as He would intend. And as a result, we overextend ourselves and find ourselves in crisis. What God is saying through Joseph is, "Take all that will be the excess, store it, and then when the time comes, there will be margin, cash flow, runway. There will be an opportunity for survival." This is because God loves nations. God loves people who don't love Him. God serves people who don't serve Him. God is revealing something to one man so that He can love, bless, and serve many, many, many in His nation, and you'll see as the story continues, even those from other nations.

Pastor Mark: I hope that God would give to some of you great wealth, great real estate, great portfolios, great businesses, great success, and great prosperity. And I pray that you would save much of it, and then you would be generous and you would share it in times of need with others. Joseph is being set up to become a generous man who oversees generosity, and generosity is ultimately part of ministry. And so, when we talk about God being a gracious giver and a generous God, it is through being gracious and generous that that grace of God is seen in the practical lives of others. I'll tell you, there's a lot of work to be done in Arizona, least charitable state in the country, fastest growing city and county in the country, which means there's not a lot of Joseph mentality. It's not about advancing the kingdom, it's about increasing our standard of living, not increasing our degree of giving. Joseph has had nothing. Now he's going to have everything, and he's going to give it away. That's the heart of God, that our God is a giver not a taker, for God so loved the world that He gave His only son. Right, our God is a generous giver, and Joseph is being positioned to give generously.

Pastor Mark: Missionary mindset number six, here's the close, 41:37, "This pleased Pharaoh and all his servants." The economic advisors come in. This had to be a weird meeting, guys with all their MBAs and business experience, and they're like, "Well, that shepherd prisoner really nailed it. He has a great plan, we're going to roll with that." Had to be a weird day on the floor at the stock market. "Well, today, the news, Bob, is fat cows and skinny cows and Hebrew convicted rapist is now running the economy. Back to you, Bob." Okay. "Pharaoh said to his servants, 'Can we find a man like this...'" Here it is, "... in whom is the Spirit of God?" Pharaoh says, "I've got money. I got fame. I got glory. I got power. I got servants. I got advisors. I got education. I got spirituality. I don't have the Spirit of God, and I can't find anyone else who has the Spirit of God. There's one man who's different than all men. There's one man that has more integrity than all

men. There is one man who has insight more than all men. And that man has the Spirit of God."

Pastor Mark: Even if somebody doesn't know the Lord, they may have the opportunity to sense the presence of God in the life of the believer and see the Spirit of God at work in the character of the believer. I love the fact that, ultimately, Pharaoh who does not know God says, "I see that guy has God in a way that I don't and we don't." And as a result, he trusts him because of his relationship with God. "Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Since God has shown you all this, and there is none so discerning and wise as you are, you shall be over my house.'" "You're the vice president. We're going to put a tie on you. You got to go on tour. You got to go do campaign speeches. It's going to be awesome for you. But just remember," he says, "you're the vice president, right? The president, that's already taken, so you're in the second chair."

Pastor Mark: Joseph always serves from the second chair. Served his dad from the second chair. Served Potiphar from the second chair. Served the prison warden from the second chair. Serves the Pharaoh from the second chair. The key is not to be in the first chair, the key is to find your chair and sit in it and do your job faithfully to the glory of God and see what opportunities God opens for you.

Congregation: Amen.

Pastor Mark: He then goes on, "'You shall be over my house, over the people, and they will do as you command. Only in regards to the throne will I be greater than you.'" 1 Peter 5, "God opposes the proud. So humble yourself, and God will lift you up when it's His time." This is the time for Joseph. From ages 17 to 30, that was the time of humility, this is the time of glory. That was the time of preparation, this is the time of execution. And let me say this, my dear friend, Joseph has the one thing that Pharaoh cannot get, that is the Spirit of God. And so you, my friend, you may not live a rich lifestyle like Pharaoh, but you can have the Spirit of God like Joseph. And you may not live in a big house like Pharaoh, but you can be a house for the Spirit of God like Joseph. You may not be worshiped as a god like Pharaoh, but you can worship God by the Spirit like Joseph. You may not be one who has tremendous power like the Pharaoh, but you can experience God's power through the Holy Spirit like Joseph.

Pastor Mark: For those of you that are here and you are believers and you find yourself in a difficult circumstance, let me just say this, your life on the earth, it's your pit time and it's your prison time. Your palace time is coming. But this is your pit time, and this is your prison time. This is as bad as it gets. This is as close to hell as you will ever be. This is as bad as it will be, but God is forming in you character. He's forming in you integrity. He wants to pour out His unfailing love as you enjoy His presence. He wants you to have a missionary mindset. He wants you to walk in wisdom. He wants you to make the most of every opportunity. And even if you don't get the promotion, and even if you don't get the raise, and even if you don't get the acknowledgement, and even if you don't get the praise, ultimately, our king is coming back. He is far greater than the Pharaoh. He has a kingdom that doesn't just last for 1300 years. He has a kingdom that will never

end. And when our king returns, all kings will be put down, all nations will be brought down, all kingdoms will be brought to an end, all that is high will be laid low.

Pastor Mark: And our king, the Lord Jesus, He will rule and reign forever, and He is the greater Joseph. He was sent by His father on a mission far from home. He was betrayed by His brothers. He was thrown in a pit and left for dead. He was falsely accused and thrown in prison. And ultimately, he got out and he ascended to the right hand of the Father. And right now, He's ruling over His kingdom and He's preparing a seat for each of you.

Congregation: Amen.

Pastor Mark: It's time to worship. It's time to worship Jesus. It's time to enjoy the presence of God. It's time to remind ourselves of the kingdom of God. Father God, thank you so much for the story of Joseph. God, it just feels like bad government and corrupt economics and circumstances beyond our control and false accusations and character assassinations and controversy and conflict and selfishness and spirituality and demonizing rules the day. And then, Lord God, we see Joseph who is a little picture of the Lord Jesus, and we realize that, Lord God, Your providence has a plan not only for our life, but all of human history. We see Your presence in the life of Joseph, and we crave that presence right now in this place. And, Lord God, as we see that the key to his integrity, the key to his humility, the key to his longevity was the Spirit of God, Holy Spirit, we invite you to be in us, to be for us, to be through us, to turn us into ones who are always and only servants of our king, advancers of His kingdom, tellers of the truth seeking the good of all.

Pastor Mark: Lord God, we pray for this great valley because Scottsdale needs Jesus and Tempe needs Jesus and Chandler needs Jesus and Mesa needs Jesus and Queen Creek needs Jesus. In addition, Lord God, Peoria needs Jesus, Avondale needs Jesus, Glendale needs Jesus, Buckeye needs Jesus. Everybody knows Jesus is needed in this place. Lord God, we confess today that we want this place to be a place of Your presence, a place where Your Spirit is with us and among us, where He strengthens us, He convicts us, He encourages us. He fills us, and He sends us on mission in the marketplace so that others would hear about this good, gracious, generous God named Jesus. In His name we pray. Amen.