

We're so glad to have you join us today. I just want to welcome you, wherever you may be tuning in from in our country, or even around the world. We are so glad to have you be a part of our digital Traders Point church family.

I've got two things before we jump into the message today. First of all, I just want to wish all of the moms and the moms-to-be a very happy Mother's Day. We love and appreciate you so much, not just for what you do for us, but for who you are.

I know right now being a mom is maybe even especially challenging during these days we are in, because you've had a whole bunch of other titles and responsibilities attached to your daily routine. But I also hope it's doubly rewarding. We just want to celebrate you today.

I want to acknowledge too that even in the best of circumstances Mother's Day can oftentimes be difficult for a variety of reasons. So, I just want you to know if you've got a hurting heart today we are thinking about you and praying specifically for you.

The second thing I want to mention is I know we have a whole bunch of people who are hurting over the tragic murder of a young man by the name of Amad Aubrey. His life was taken simply because of the color of his skin. So, we refuse to look the other way on this. We want to acknowledge it.

I just want you to know that we are standing with our brothers and sisters of a variety of ethnicities to say that racism in all of its forms is wrong. And the Gospel of Jesus Christ gives us hope beyond it.

I want to just pray, celebrating moms and lifting up hurting hearts that are watching right now.

Father, we come to you today and I just thank you for all of our moms who are joining us today. I pray they will feel cherished and celebrated. God, I also want to

lift up all of the hurting hearts. This has caused a lot of fear over this young man whose life was so tragically taken.

Father, we ask that you would come, that your Spirit would come and unify us and give us courage, boldness, and strength. That the gospel message wouldn't just be something we believe, but it would be something that would change the way we live and the way we interact with one another.

So, I pray that your Spirit would be present right now in the life of everyone who is tuning in today. I ask that you would give them exactly what they need to feel comforted and encouraged right now.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

On the first day of fifth grade I ran out with my friends at recess. We were climbing on the jungle gym. It was a hot August afternoon. I jumped from one side of the jungle gym to the other. I grabbed ahold of the bar and my feet swung out in front of me, and even over my head. But because my hands were sweaty, the bar slipped out of my hand. It sent me hurdling through the air.

I landed on my head. It produced this big knot on my forehead and knocked the wind out of me. I remember rolling around on the ground. I know it was probably just a few moments, but at the time it felt like an eternity, where my head was throbbing and I couldn't catch my breath.

I remember very vividly having this thought, "When will the pain stop?" And I'm just willing to bet—maybe that question has crossed your mind a number of times here over the last several weeks. When will the pain stop?

I've asked that question a variety of times in my life. I've asked that question whenever a relationship or a friendship came to a bitter end. When will the pain stop? I've asked that question during a season of anxiety, depression, frustration, and confusion. When will the pain stop? I've asked that question when I've made a poor financial decision and it hurt our family in some way. When will the pain stop?

That's a question many of us are asking right now. It's a question that a young man by the name of Joseph asked a lot in his life as well. If you are just now joining us, we are in this series called *Resilient* studying the life of this guy named Joseph.

His story is found in Genesis 27 through 50. And Joseph grew up as a young, talented, gifted young man. In fact, God had given him a promise that he was going to grow up to be someone special and to do something significant.

And Joseph would. Joseph would eventually grow up to provide critical leadership to the entire nation during a massive global crisis. But first, his life would take a painful 13-year detour.

He would be beaten and thrown into a well by his brothers. He would be sold as a slave to Egypt. He would be falsely accused of something he didn't do. He would be thrown in prison. He would do some people some favors, and then they forgot about him in prison for another two years.

When most people would have thrown in the towel and given in to their own bitterness, Joseph stayed resilient. As a result, he is one of the very few leaders who we read about in the Bible who finishes well.

I don't know if you know this, but only about 20 percent of the leaders in the Bible finish in a respectable way. And Joseph is one of them. What makes his story that much more impressive is he went through probably more pain than maybe, perhaps anyone other than Jesus. Yet, Joseph still stays humble. Joseph has a servant's heart. I've just got mad respect for this guy. There is so much we can learn from him.

You see, pain often brings progress into our lives in unprecedented ways. And that's what Joseph's story teaches us, and that's why we're studying it.

Now, pain is never fun. I would never wish pain on anyone. We never relish that pain. Yet some of the greatest gains in our lives come through seasons of profound pain. With that said, I think I would be remiss if I didn't point out that pain is never permanent.

Here is the illusion of pain. When you are in the middle of pain, it feels like it is never going to end. That's simply not true. When I was rolling around on the

ground that first day of fifth grade I thought, “This is never going to stop,” but it eventually did. The pain eventually subsided.

2 Corinthians 4:17 tells us that pain is momentary, but its effects and impact upon our life—it brings about this refining process that is long-lasting. That’s really important for us to remember right now, especially during these days of anxiety and uncertainty that we are all walking through.

We keep hearing terms like, “These are unprecedented times,” and “We’ve never, ever seen anything like this before,” and “Life will never be the same.” And I want to acknowledge that yes, this is a massive crisis that few of us have seen in our lifetimes. But that doesn’t mean that we haven’t seen this before.

These are not unprecedented times. We actually have plenty of precedent for this in history. We’ve been through even worse pandemics than this one. Here is the thing we need to remember. History shows us that pandemics end 100 percent of the time. We need to remember that.

About 100 years ago, we found ourselves in very similar circumstances with the Spanish Flu. The Spanish Flu led to the closure of schools, businesses, theaters, and churches. Did you know there were fines for coughing, sneezing, spitting, and kissing outdoors? In fact, they would say, “You need to wear a mask or you’re going to go to jail.”

We’ve been here before. That pandemic ended, by the way, without any treatments and without any vaccines. What followed on the tale of that was this time in our history, maybe you’ve heard of it, called the Roaring 20s.

And during the Roaring 20s, stadiums full of people came together. There was this incredible period of economic, cultural, and industrial boom in our nation. You see, that leads to this important principle we need to remember right now.

If you only look around you and don’t look behind you, you won’t see what’s ahead of you.

As Jesus followers right now, we need to not only remember that but we need to be examples of that to the rest of the world. As Christ followers, we want to be responsible, wise, and sensible. We want to put the health and wellbeing of our

communities as the top priority. Yet, at the same time, we are going to refuse to give in to fear, conspiracies, and hopelessness.

I've had just a couple of people reach out to me and say, "Aaron, would you check out this documentary on YouTube?" or "I've read this story about this," and it's a conspiracy. Like, there is going to be a vaccine that's going to get developed. It's going to get injected into all of us, and it's going to be the mark of the beast. And it's the end of the world.

We just need to chill on the conspiracies. It's not good theology, and it actually distracts you from mission and takes your eyes off Jesus.

That's nothing new. When I was growing up in the 80s, the president was Ronald Reagan. And Ronald Reagan, the first, middle, and last name were six letters. There were people who thought because of that, 666, that he was the anti-Christ. Well, Ronald Reagan passed away a few years ago. He clearly wasn't.

We need to remember Isaiah 12:2. *"I will trust in him and not be afraid. The Lord God is my strength and my song; he has given me victory."*

Look at me. God is faithful. He was faithful yesterday. He is faithful today. And he will be faithful in the future. I promise you he is going to redeem these painful days we are walking through.

Last week we left off with Joseph getting to this place in his life where he finally let go of his pride that had been blinding him so long. Now, he is ready to grow. And he gets called into Pharaoh's courts. Pharaoh has had some dreams that nobody can interpret.

And Joseph comes in and says, "I can tell you the interpretation your dream means there is going to be seven years of incredible prosperity followed by seven years of famine. So, you better get prepared." And Joseph flexes his leadership muscles here.

Look with me at chapter 41 verse 37. *"Joseph's suggestions were well received by Pharaoh and his officials. So Pharaoh asked his officials, 'Can we find anyone else like this man so obviously filled with the spirit of God?' Then Pharaoh said to*

*Joseph, 'Since God has revealed the meaning of the dreams to you, clearly no one else is as intelligent or wise as you are. You will be in charge of my court, and all my people will take orders from you. Only I, sitting on my throne, will have a rank higher than yours.'*”

What I love about this is it was so clear to Pharaoh, who, for all we know was not a believer in God—from the outside looking in he could see the Spirit of God so clearly in Joseph.

And right now, more than ever, our world needs to see Jesus in you: a calm heart, a clear mind. Not a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind as we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.

Well, in verse 41 Pharaoh said to this to Joseph. *“Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘I hereby put you in charge of the entire land of Egypt.’”*

Wow. That is amazing. Talk about a dramatic turn of events. He goes from a prison cell to being in charge of the entire land of Egypt.

*“Then Pharaoh removed his signet ring from his hand and placed it on Joseph’s finger. He dressed him in fine linen clothing and hung a gold chain around his neck. Then he had Joseph ride in the chariot reserved for his second-in-command. And wherever Joseph went, the command was shouted, ‘Kneel down!’ So Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of all Egypt.”*

This new chapter of Joseph’s life just looks dramatically different from where he has been. What I love is he didn’t let any of it go to his head. I mean, he is rolling around in Pharaoh’s Range Rover, and everybody is bowing down to him. Here is the thing. Joseph’s character had been forged by the fire of his pain. So, he could handle it now.

It says this in verse 51. *“Joseph named his older son Manasseh, for he said, ‘God has made me forget all my troubles and everyone in my father’s family.’ Joseph named his second son Ephraim, for he said, ‘God has made me fruitful in this land of my grief.’”*

And right now, what we just read, this is the beginning of the deep waters of recovery in Joseph’s life. He is saying, “God, help me to forget all of my trouble,”

but did you also notice he said, “and forget my father’s family?” So, there is some pain still in Joseph’s heart. I don’t blame him.

So, when he says, “Forget all my troubles,” he is not saying that he will literally forget all the trouble, but he is saying that where he is now that God’s faithfulness has overshadowed all of the pain that he has gone through in his life.

What Joseph is doing is not just looking around him; he is looking behind him so he knows where he is going. He is acknowledging the faithfulness of God, but there is still some recovery that needs to happen in his life.

This last week I was talking to my wife, and I just said, “Honey, I would love to text or call myself one year from now just to find out how all this played out.” I know that sounds kind of twisted, but that’s how my mind works. I would just love it if my future self can coach my current self, just tell me what decisions to make and how to frame up expectations, and how to lead through this thing.

She just kind of looked at me like, “You can’t do that, but what you could do is write yourself a letter and describe what you are feeling, what you are going through, the questions you have, the prayers you are praying. And then seal it up in an envelope and in May of 2021 open it up and read this letter from your past self.”

And maybe you would want to do that too. And I think if we do that, this is what we would find a year from now. We would see God’s faithfulness to us. We would see how he saw us through some difficult days. We would see there is probably going to be some pain and some unmet expectations, yet at the same time we’re going to see some rewards, some growth. We’re going to see how God carried us through.

Well, the seven years of plenty come and go, and by verse 53 they are upon the seven years of famine. It says this in verse 55. *“Eventually, however, the famine spread throughout the land of Egypt as well. And when the people cried out to Pharaoh for food, he told them, ‘Go to Joseph, and do whatever he tells you.’ So with severe famine everywhere, Joseph opened up the storehouses and distributed grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout the land of Egypt.*



*“When Jacob heard that grain was available in Egypt, he said to his sons, ”I love this, “Why are you standing around looking at one another?”” apparently they were not the sharpest tools in the shed. “I have heard there is grain in Egypt. Go down there, and buy enough grain to keep us alive. Otherwise we’ll die.’*

*“Joseph recognized his brothers instantly,” and what would that have been like? Years had gone by and he sees them, maybe a little older, a little grayer, but he recognizes them. “But he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them.” I would have too. “Where are you from?’ he demanded. ‘From the land of Canaan,’ they replied. ‘We have come to buy food.’”*

Like long before the show Undercover Boss, you had this going down. Now Joseph is the boss, and they are the ones in need. How is Joseph going to respond to this? There is a part of me that just thinks, “This would be a sweet opportunity for some revenge. Let me give them a bag of food, I’ll spit in it as I give it to them.”

Joseph has some decisions to make here, and we see that there is this kind of like back-and-forth between Joseph and his brothers in the middle part of chapter 42. But I want to point out to you verse 23. *“Of course, they didn’t know that Joseph understood them, for he had been speaking to them through an interpreter.”*

Now that is interesting. I’ve never caught that before. Joseph has been in this foreign land for so long, for so many years, that he’s actually learned a different language. He spoke in a different language. They didn’t realize he could understand them. That just shows not only the emotional gap that is between them, but very literally the cultural gap that is between them.

*“Now he turned away from them and began to weep.”* That verse right there is a pivotal moment in Joseph’s life. *“When he regained his composure, he spoke to them again.”*

Joseph’s raw emotion and real tears here reveal the beginning of the deep waters of recovery in his life. They reveal that Joseph had gone through a severe trauma. It’s been said that tears are the irrigation of the soul.



I love how he regains his composure and decides to go back in to speak to them again. Joseph's character shines through here. He is going to serve his brothers even though they have caused him so much pain and so much heartache.

You know what we need to all acknowledge right now? We haven't just experienced an unprecedented event, what we've experienced over the last eight weeks is trauma. Every single one of us in some way, we've experienced a trauma.

There are a number of ways we can choose to respond to that trauma. We're seeing it play out right now. We can get angry. We can become fearful. We can give into conspiracies and fear and paranoia. And those are all just coping mechanisms with trauma.

You see, trauma isn't just about what gets taken from you. Trauma is about what it leaves with you. This is going to leave something with us. That's why we need to address it. That's why we need to work our way through it. That way we can be healthy because of this. It can strengthen us.

You see, Joseph could have become a very, very angry, bitter, and cynical old man because of the pain they had caused him. A lot of other people had done that with far less painful circumstances happening to them. But Joseph didn't.

He worked through his grief in a healthy way, and as a result God produced incredible fruit in and through his life and his leadership. So, in just the last few moments of our time together, can I just give you some application takeaways?

Here is the first question all of us need to ask of ourselves. Maybe it's a great discussion to have around the table or maybe with your Life Group on Zoom.

What has this crisis taken from me?

I think all of us need to speak it, and we need to be as specific as we can. Maybe this crisis has taken your job, your financial security. Maybe it has taken your health or the life of someone you love.

Maybe it's taken an opportunity from you. Maybe it took your high school graduation, your prom, or your last year of high school sports. Maybe you had a special anniversary trip planned, and that got cancelled.

You see, we need to be specific about what this has taken from us because that's the first place to begin the process of recovery. Pressure always reveals the contents. So, what is happening is that when we've been under pressure right now, it has revealed some things about the contents of our character, for good or bad. Now is the time to see it and address it, so that way we can grow from it.

Here is the second application:

Give yourself permission to grieve what you've lost.

I don't know if you've done that yet. You just need to stop, and give yourself permission. You're going to have to do this over and over again. Just give yourself permission to grieve what you've lost.

If I could just get really transparent with you, I'll just pull back the curtain in my own life. My wife's birthday was yesterday. And I'm not going to tell you how old she is, but it was a milestone birthday. Let's just say it that way.

For the last year I have been planning a special birthday trip for her. She is the love of my life, my best friend. I wanted her to feel so special. I had the whole thing planned. We were going to travel somewhere special with some friends. This whole itinerary.

Clearly, this crisis interrupted all those plans. And yesterday morning I was just sad about it. I had to give myself permission to grieve one of the things we've lost. And I know that maybe this crisis has taken something far more meaningful to you than maybe just a trip. I know the sources of our pain run deep.

That's why extreme statements right now like, "We've never seen anything like this before," and "life will never go back to normal again," those extreme statements are very foolish. We have plenty of precedent for this. We are one day closer to having all of this behind us.

How you view things is how you'll do things.

And the fear and the psychological impact of this, I think is going to be big, maybe even bigger, than the threat of the virus itself. Right now, we know addiction, alcoholism, domestic and child abuse, unfortunately, are all on the rise right now.

Everyone's routine has been disrupted and we are forming new habits right now as we speak.

Some of those habits are good, and some of those habits are destructive. More than ever, right now, you and I, we need to manage the way we see things. Everywhere you look you just see more bad news, more fear. And all this stuff is coming at us. It's click-bait. These companies that are producing new stories, and I'm not trying to say all of them have negative intent. But I am saying you need to really pay attention what the motive is behind it.

They are trying to get you to click on stuff, so they use dramatic extreme statements. You've got to change the lens through which you see things. You cannot let that stuff get into your heart.

There is a great example of this in Lamentations. The prophet Jeremiah had been looking at things in a really destructive way. We see this in verse 18, *"Everything I had hoped for from the Lord is lost!"* That's not true, but that's how he felt. *"The thought of my suffering and homelessness is bitter beyond words. I will never forget this awful time, as I grieve over my loss."*

That was the way Jeremiah felt, but then he is going to choose to see things differently. *"Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this: The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning. I say to myself, 'The Lord is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!'"*

Amen, Jeremiah. So, one of the best things you can do right now is to master the mornings. That first hour of the day is crucial. It sets the tone for the rest of the day. So, be disciplined in the way you navigate through the day.

What a shame it would be if we came through this crisis avoiding the virus, but then we went unchanged. Now is the time for God to do this deep work in our lives.

You know, I've had a number of you reach out to me and say, "What is the plan for the church as we begin to move forward in the days ahead?" Honestly, our

team is working so hard right now trying to figure out what our plan is. We're holding those plans loosely and seeking the wisdom and the direction of God.

Can I just say how proud I am of our team at Traders Point? You can be proud of them too. Because, under pressure, the contents of their character have been revealed, and it is really, really good. They are leveling up in amazing ways. This has made us all better leaders. This has made us all better men and women, seeking and following after the heart of God.

So, we're trying to figure out what our plan is in the weeks and months ahead. I've got a peace about it. I produced a video last weekend we put on the church's social as well as mine. If you missed it, you can go and check it out. It says, "Here is what we are thinking moving into the future." We'll continue to communicate with you what all that is.

Honestly, I can't predict the future, but what I do know is we're not going anywhere. The church is still here. It's going to be stronger than ever. And the church is not a building, the church is not some place we come to, but we are the church. This is a very, very vivid reminder of that.

Physical gatherings are super-important. They are not going away. One day we will all get together. But they are just there to stir us up so we can be the church every other day during the week.

So, here is what I want to just encourage our church to do right now

### Pray

I just want to call our whole church to prayer, that we could pray for healing, that we would pray for our medical professionals and first responders, that we would pray that the fear would begin to subside, that we would pray that lives would be changed through this forever.

2 Chronicles 7:14 says this, *"Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land."*

Church, I want to call us to prayer. Let's just pray every day fervently for God to intervene and see us through this. The second thing is this:

### Give hope

We're going to give hope daily. Hope is a far better motivator than fear. And we are one day closer to all this being behind us. Our hope is in the Lord who controls the biology of this universe.

The last two things:

### Serve and Support

Our ministry is ramping up, not down. We are not closed, we are more open than ever. We are going to continue to serve our city, our communities, and the world in Jesus' name. Let's come around each other and serve and support one another.

Lastly this:

### Stay close and connected

I know these are trying times. I know online church—maybe for some of you, you think is great. Maybe others are struggling with it. You are like, "It's really hard to adjust to this."

I totally get it. I am tired of preaching into a camera. I can't wait to actually preach in a room with real live people once again. Until that day, this will do. And you know what? We're still close. We're still connected. We're still here.

You know, back on that first day of fifth grade, I was in the nurse's office. I had a bag of ice on my forehead. I was lying there waiting for my mom to come pick me up from school.

I will never forget the school nurse who came in to see me that day. Her name was Mrs. Burnett. I'll never forget her. Mrs. Burnett carried herself with such elegance and grace. She was a Christian.

I remember she came in that afternoon and really encouraged me. She pulled up a stool, she sat down, and she said, "Aaron, what happened?" I told her. She looked at me and said, "I'm so sorry that happened," and then she said, "You're going to be okay. Can I pray for you?"

Can I just look at your right now and say, “I’m so sorry this has happened? You’re going to be okay. Can I pray for you?”

Father, we come to you right now and we know you are in control of yesterday, today, and forever. We have plenty of precedent for the challenges and the pain we are walking through. God, remind us of your goodness and your faithfulness to see us through this one.

And we’re just going to declare it in Jesus’ name, that you are going to help us to recover, rebuild, and you’re going to redeem this for our good. And there will come a day in the future when we will look back at this and say, “That was so painful, and yet God used it. God used it in ways that maybe we can’t even anticipate right now.”

So, God, help us to do the work of the deep waters of recovery in our soul so that we would come through this closer to you, not further away. We’re so grateful you’re a good, good Father. We trust you. We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.