

---

Resilience: able to withstand or recover quickly from difficult conditions.

Hey everyone. I want to welcome you wherever you may be happening to be joining us from, whether that's here local or global. We're really, really glad to have you a part of our digital Traders Point church family.

Today we are continuing on in this series of messages that we've been in for the past few weeks called *Resilient*. And we're studying the life of this guy by the name of Joseph. Today we're going to be in Genesis, chapter 39. So, if you have a Bible, go ahead and get there.

But before we get rolling, I just want to take a quick minute to just express my deep love and appreciation for our church family. Man, I'm just so grateful for all of you. You know, over the past couple of weeks I've received so many letters, DMs, text messages, emails from so many of you just encouraging us, letting us know you're praying for us, that you're in this with us.

I can't tell you how much that just really means to me. You know, what we are experiencing right now is incredibly challenging. And it's kind of wild to think about that what we are living right now, our grandkids are going to be hearing about in their history classes in the future.

So, because of that we're all physically and emotionally exhausted. In fact, I think a good word that comes to mind is just the word, fatigue. And maybe you're feeling a little fatigued right now. Maybe you're experiencing a little stay-at-home fatigue, a little cabin fever going on. And, you know, I'd be right there with you.

Maybe you're experiencing a little e-learning fatigue. And I don't know about you, but my respect for our teachers and families who home educate on a regular basis—my respect for you has just gone through the roof.

Maybe right now you're experiencing a whole lot of news and social media fatigue. Can I get a good: Amen? Man, I'm so sick and tired of the news and the comments on social media.

And, I don't know, maybe right now you're experiencing a little screen fatigue. You're just on the screen all of the time. You're on Zoom calls during the day and FaceTime and now church online. And I just want you to know that if you're feeling any of those things, then you are not alone, we'd be right there with you.

I'm so ready to get on the other side of this thing. And you know what? We're going to get there, but one of the things that I've been praying, just in my own quiet time, is that God would continue to reveal some things to me.

Here's what he's kind of been doing in my life and in my heart over the past couple of weeks. I've just been making a mental list of all the things that I never want to take for granted again. And I just want to be a more grateful person coming out of this.

I never want to take for granted going to my girls' plays or picking up my youngest daughter from tumbling. I never want to take for granted going to my son's soccer games or going to dinner with friends and having a conversation. I never want to take for granted hugs. I'm not even that big of a hugger, but I can't wait to hug a non-immediate family member once again.

And I never want to take for granted our church family. I can't wait 'til we can gather physically again, whenever it's safe to do so. But one of the things that I hope that this is sort of reinforcing in all of us is that we don't just go to church. In fact, I hope we never use that phrase ever again, because we don't go to church, we are the church. And this is a vivid reminder during these days.

Can I just tell you how proud I am of our church family? You've just stepped up to the plate and you are being the church right now through these challenging days. I'm hearing so many stories of you all just stepping up, providing meals, and food for people, paying utility bills, encouraging one another.

Two weeks ago we had about 400 people sign up to be a part of a group for the very first time. That's amazing and it's what we want to celebrate. I want to encourage you to continue to lean into and be a part of your life group, because our life groups are the backbone of our church right now.

Through your generosity, we've been able to donate over 10,000 masks, just our church alone, to medical professionals and first responders and people who need them. And we're continuing to give out masks. And I am so grateful for the way that you all are being the church right now. It encourages me so much. Your generosity has brought me to tears over the past few weeks.

You are all the very picture of resilience. And resilience defined, we've been saying, is simply this:

The ability to withstand or recover quickly from difficult conditions.

And God's word urges us on a consistent basis to be resilient people. We keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and stay resilient.

In Isaiah, chapter 41, verse 10 it says, "Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand."

I want you to be encouraged by that verse. Hold on to it and rehearse it daily. You see, resilience gives us the strength that we need, when we need it the most and it builds our character and it enhances our relationship with God and with others.

Here's the one thing about resilience that, depending upon how you look at it, might be kind of bad news, but it's really not. Resilience requires pain. I wish that weren't true, but it is.

Here's what I mean by that. You cannot experience the benefits of resilience without the setbacks of pain. In fact, I can't remember a single time in my life where I experienced personal and spiritual growth without the presence of pain.

For example, when it comes to physical exercise, if anybody tells you that they love physical exercise, they're kind of lying, because it's painful. It's not fun to have your heart rate elevated to over 160 and to be sweaty and you can't hardly breathe, and your muscles are tensed up—that's not fun. No, we enjoy the benefits of exercise once we get through the pain of it.

When it comes to my marriage—next month Lindsay and I will celebrate 21 years of marriage and we were dating two years before that. It hasn't been the times when Lindsay and I were getting along great and riding a tandem bike around a park on a sunny day—that hasn't been the time when our marriage has grown.

No, it's actually been the seasons of our marriage when we weren't communicating very well or when we felt stuck or we were missing each other emotionally, and we pushed through the pain of that and when we got on the other side of it, we realized that we had grown. But we had to stay resilient.

When it comes to my leadership, you know it hasn't been the seasons when I made all of the right decisions, and everybody is getting along, and there is no criticism—that hasn't been the time when I've grown. No, the times when I've grown is when I made a mistake and I owned it. The times when I've grown is when I've actually navigated through the criticisms or I was teachable. And when we get on the other side of it, we realize that we've grown.

The same is true in my relationship with God. I've grown closer to God, not when he answered all of my prayers the way that I wanted and everything was going my way, and I felt close to him. No, it's actually been the seasons when God felt distant and silent, and I prayed and there didn't seem to be a response and I didn't understand what God was doing or why he was allowing this. And I stayed resilient and I got on the other side of it and I realized that I had experienced a level of growth that I wouldn't have otherwise.

See every time I've gone through something painful in my life, whether it's due to my own poor choices or external circumstances that I couldn't control, I experienced growth of some kind. And usually the source of my personal pain is that God is trying to get me to let go of something that had been holding onto me, and I didn't see it. And when I let go of it, that's what caused the pain, but that pain produced the growth and I needed to stay resilient through the pain.

And this is what we see going on in the life of our guy named, Joseph. If you're just now joining us, we've been looking at Joseph's life. His story is found in Genesis chapters 37 through 50.

And from a very early age, you could tell that Joseph was destined for greatness. I mean, the dude was just different. He was talented, he was good looking, he was gifted in every way. And God had given him this promise at a very early age, that Joseph would grow up to do something and be someone significant.

In fact, Joseph would one day provide critical leadership to the entire nation during a global crisis, but not quite yet. Joseph's life would end up taking a 13-year detour that was incredibly painful.

And, in fact, it would take every ounce of resilience that he could muster to get on the other side of it. But God was trying to do a work in Joseph's life. He was trying to develop his character. God was trying to get Joseph to let go of some things that had been holding him back.

So last week we left off with Joseph in a prison cell. Joseph's brothers had beaten him up, they had thrown him into a well, they threatened his life, they sold him as a slave in Egypt and Joseph finds himself in this new normal so to speak.

And he gets a respectable job in Potiphar's house and he's trying to make the most of his circumstances. He's doing his absolutely best and then he ends up getting falsely accused of something that he didn't do by Potiphar's wife and he gets thrown into prison. That's where we left off with him last week.

I want to pick up in verse 21 of chapter 39. Follow along with me. It says, "But the LORD was with Joseph in the prison and showed him his faithful love. And the LORD made Joseph a favorite with the prison warden."

Now, one of the things that I want you to see is that I love the fact that despite Joseph's circumstances his giftedness still came through. He was the favorite of his father among all of his brothers, and now that he's thrown into prison, he's become the favorite of the prison warden over all of the other prisoners.

And it says in verse 22, "Before long, the warden put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners and over everything that happened in the prison. The warden had no more worries, because Joseph took care of everything. The LORD was with him and caused everything he did to succeed."

Now, a couple of things that I want you to see in this passage. Number one, I want you to see how many times it says that God was with him. It just keeps saying it over and over and over again through Joseph's story. God was with him, God was with him, God was with him, even when he found himself in circumstances that were painful and he didn't want to be in, God was with him in those moments.

And God is with you too. He is with you even through the difficulty, the pain, and the fatigue.

The next thing that I want you to see is that Joseph's leadership skills were coming through in big ways here. The warden put him in charge of everything in prison. He didn't worry about anything because Joseph was such a great leader. Here's the take-away for us. Resilient people continue to step into their calling despite painful circumstances. Joseph stepped into the calling that God had placed upon his life, even though the last place he wanted to be was in prison.

And can I just say that resilient people like you, you continue to lean into your calling, you continue to give your absolute best at work, even if you're working from home. You continue to give your absolute to school, even though you're doing e-learning and it might be kind of frustrating right now. You continue to lean into your calling, and you encourage people and you pray and you're generous and you step up now more than ever. You need to lean into your calling and not shrink back.

Well, an issue arises in the prison cell. Check this out. It says, "Sometime later, Pharaoh's chief cup-bearer and chief baker offended their royal master. Pharaoh became angry with these two officials, and he put them in the prison where Joseph was, in the palace of the captain of the guard."

"Why do you look so worried today?" he asked them. And they replied, "We both had dreams last night, but no one can tell us what they mean." "Interpreting dreams is God's business," Joseph replied." And that would be true. Interpreting dreams can only be done by God.

Now, check out what Joseph says next. "Go ahead and tell me your dreams." Do you just see what has happened here? Joseph said, "Interpreting dreams is God's business." Now, why don't you, "Go ahead and tell me your dreams."

I mean, Joseph, put on the brakes here for just a second, buddy. I mean, do you realize what you just said? Joseph's pride here comes through loud and clear and he's totally oblivious to it. He seems to be blinded by his own pride. Interpreting dreams is God's business and Joseph just stepped and said: I can do what only God can do.

And he's become so blinded by the very issue that got him into trouble with his brothers. If you remember a couple of chapters ago Joseph said: Hey, I've had a couple of dreams here and you all are going to bow down to me. That was pride and his pride got him into trouble.

Now, his pride is continuing to hold on to him and to hold him back. And you know what? More times than I care to admit in my life, it has been pride that has been at the source of so much of my personal pain, and often I was the last to see it. I was totally blinded by it.

You know, some of the problems that Lindsay and I have had to navigate in our marriage really, it's been at the source of my pride. Whenever I've had a relationship or a friendship break down in some way—it's been pride. Whenever my leadership wasn't the best that it could be—it's been pride. Whenever I haven't been the father that my kids deserve in me—it's been my personal pride. And I was usually the last to see it.

A guy by the name of William Temple said this. He said, “Humility does not mean thinking less of yourself than of other people, nor does it mean having a low opinion of your own gifts. It means freedom from the impulse to think about yourself at all.”

Now, what does that mean? Well, oftentimes when we're only thinking about ourselves, really what that reveals is where our trust has been all along. It's the question, “Where have I placed my trust? Have I placed it in God, or have I placed it in myself and in my own ability to get through this?”

See, here's what's happening with Joseph. Joseph is still relying upon his own talents and abilities to get him through these incredibly challenging circumstances.

So, check out what it says in verse 14. Joseph goes on and he say, “And please remember me and do me a favor when things go well for you. Mention me to Pharaoh, so he might let me out of this place. For I was kidnapped from my homeland, the land of the Hebrews, and now I'm here in prison, but I did nothing to deserve it.”

I want you to notice the contrast of how many times it says God was with Joseph and then how many time Joseph just said *me* in this passage. See, there's a description for what Joseph is doing here. The label we could put over it is called defensiveness and self-preservation. And both of those things are kryptonite in our relationship and in our own leadership.

Man, when you have a leader who gets defensive and is trying to self-preserve, that's the beginning of the end of his or her influence in other people's lives. And Joseph here, there almost seems to be a little bit of a whinny tone to this. And he's just sort of looking out for himself. He's happy to help these guys, just as long as they do him a favor. I'll scratch your back if you scratch my back. Would you please remember me whenever you get out of prison?

Now, I want to go easy on Joseph, because everything that he's saying here—I mean, there's some truth to it. I mean, Joseph has been mistreated. Joseph has been misunderstood. I mean, if I were in his position, I probably would have said something very similar. You can hardly blame him.

However, God has called Joseph to something bigger than this. God has called Joseph to be someone bigger than this. And he wants more for him and you know what? He wants more for you as well.

And in order for God to do a heart-shaping, character producing work in his life, he's got to get Joseph to this place where Joseph is willing to let go of the pride that had been holding onto him.

See, pride causes you and me to think, “Man, I'm glad I've got this conquered. Other people need to listen to this.” Pride is maybe what is causing you right now to go, “Hey, Pastor Aaron, I'm so glad that you are talking about this right now because I have a co-worker, or I've got some in-laws who really, really need to hear about their pride, because it's really holding them back.”



See, it's pride that is causing you to think that. See, it's your pride that says, "Well, I really hope my husband is listening to this right now, because he's so controlling." Or, "My teenager is really hearing this right now because he's so self-absorbed." Or, "My wife really needs to hear this right now, because she always has to be right."

So, it's easy for us to spot pride in other people and to see how damaging it is, but at least from personal experience, I often rarely see it in my own life. And the reason why is because pride is blinding.

In Obadiah, chapter 3 it says that the pride of your heart has deceived you. So what keeps you and me from seeing the pride in our lives is the pride in our lives. And if you say, "Well, I don't have a problem with pride," it's likely pride that is causing you to say that.

If you are taking notes, here are a few things you might just jot down and reflect upon later.

Pride makes me defensive.

So when I get defensive, I know that the root of that is pride. If my wife comes to me and she says, "Can you please help the kids with their e-learning this afternoon?" And my immediate response is, "Well, what's that supposed to mean? I help the kids with their e-learning just as much as you do." That's pride.

Pride makes me stubborn.

Pride keeps a friend from saying they over reacted. Pride keeps us from reconciling and saying we're sorry. Pride keeps a co-worker from owning up to something that was maybe his fault. Pride keeps a husband from saying, "You're right. I think we might be lost."

Pride makes me self-consciousness.

Somebody once defined vanity as not being able to walk past your own reflection in the mirror without really stopping to take a look at yourself. Or, when you look at a group picture and you're in it and the only one you're really focusing on or where you go first is yourself. It's just this self-consciousness spirit. That's pride.

Another one is:

Pride makes me self-absorbed.

Pride is the believe that my opinion, tastes, and preferences are clearly the right ones and the most reasonable. And so we find it difficult to keep our preferences to ourselves.

Philippians, chapter 2 says, "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Pride says, "How can I get my interests promoted and pushed to the front of the line?"

I don't know. Talking about pride is challenging and you might even, right now, find yourself a little bit irritated with me. Or maybe you're pushing back a little bit. And can I just lovingly point it out that it might be pride that's causing you to push back?

Three times in Scripture we are reminded that God opposes the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. Why? Because wants you to lean on him and not yourself, so that you can develop a strong inner character, so that you can chip away at all of those things in your life that do not look like Jesus. And we come out on the other side of this crisis looking more like Jesus.

Now you might say, "Aaron, it just seems a little bit unusual that you would be talking about pride when we're in the midst of a pandemic and in the midst of circumstances that we're in, because how in the world can we be prideful when we're all going through a really tough time?" Well, Joseph was going through a tough time too and it was still his pride holding him back.

Pride is what causes us to become bitter, and it's what causes us to become overwhelmed by our circumstances and we lash out, or there's a lack of patience. Right now is the best time for us to acknowledge and work on our pride and to give it to God, because right now he wants to do a heart-shaping work in your life and in mine.

We see this as we finish up the passage in verse 23 of chapter 40. It says, "Pharaoh's chief cup-bearer," Joseph interpreted their dreams, they get released and it says that they, "however, forgot all about Joseph, never giving him another thought."

And then check it out, chapter 41, verse 1. It says, "Two full years later, Pharaoh dreamed..."

That's painful to read. I'm sure that Joseph was asking himself the question that maybe you and I have likely been asking ourselves, "When is this all going to end? How much longer are we going to have to be in this?" And for Joseph, he was in his prison cell another two years, completely had been forgotten by the very people who said they would remember him and that they would speak well for him and they would do him a favor. How's all of this going to play out?

Well, Joseph is about ready to break through on the other side of this pain. Look at what it says in verse 15, Pharaoh has this dream and he says to Joseph, "I had a dream last night, and no one here can tell me what it means. But I have heard that when you hear about a dream you can interpret it."

Now, look at how differently Joseph chooses to respond this time around. Verse 16, he says this, "It is beyond my power to do this," Joseph replied. "But God can tell you what it means and set you at ease."



That right there shows a break through in the development of Joseph's character. It's humility. And God is still using him. Joseph is still gifted. He's still going to be used by God in powerful ways, but this time around Joseph is like: No, I'm going to give the glory where the glory is due. It's only God who can interpret dreams. If God wants to use me to help with that, I'm willing.

Joseph's change in response here says volumes about his personal growth. He had finally let go of the pride that had been holding onto him and holding him back. And this right here is the turning in Joseph's story. And what I want you to see is that it was his character that changed first, well before his circumstances had changed. And he was in this longer than he would have ever thought.

And I want you to hear this principle right now. I want you to write this down:

You can go through the valley or you can grow through the valley.

And I want to encourage you right now, not to just go through this valley, I want you to grow through this valley. And part of that growth is just recognizing those things in your life that you just need to submit or re-submit to God.

And while I cannot wait to get on the other side of these challenging days that we are in right now, I also don't want to miss the incredible opportunities that there are for growth. See, crisis is an accelerator in every way. Crisis can accelerate innovation. Crisis can accelerate unity. Crisis can accelerate the development of your own character, both in our individual lives and in the life of our church.

So, I want us to be stronger in every way as we come through this. I want us to be stronger in our ministry, stronger in our character, stronger in our generosity, stronger on mission together—that's the goal as we go through this together.

So, let me just give you a few applications nuggets for you to take with you today. It's just a simple equation. I want you to know that:

Growth always = Change

See, if you're going to grow in any way, something has got to change. But then that leads to the next part of the equation:

Change usually = Loss of some kind

See, it's not that... Maybe you've heard the phrase: None of us like change. Well, I think that most of us like change, what we don't like about change is what we might potentially lose in the change. And that leads to the next part of the equation:

Loss often = Pain

And that's what we're experiencing right now. And it brings me back to what I told you a little bit earlier. There is not a single area of my life where I've grown that hasn't involved loss and pain of some kind. But pain has a purpose. And God can use the pain to develop our character and to help us let go of some things that maybe have been holding onto us.

See, your personal and spiritual growth will be determined by your ability to push through the pain with the help and the power that the Spirit of God gives you. You push through the pain, knowing that there is a purpose behind it, knowing that God is doing a redemptive work in it and that he is making us stronger as people.

You've got two choices when it comes to pain. You can allow it to be a springboard to make you better or an anchor that maybe makes you bitter.

And Jesus is the ultimate example of resilience. Jesus subjected himself to all of the pain that you and I would experience, and Jesus pushed through that pain, particularly the pain at Gethsemane and at Calvary, when Jesus went to a cross.

And those were incredibly painful circumstances, but what took Jesus to a cross was recognizing that he wanted to give us hope beyond our pain and he wanted to do an incredibly eternal work in our characters that could only be accomplished through the cross. Jesus pushed through that pain so that you and I might have hope beyond ours.

Yesterday my wife came in and she just shared with me the Bible reading that she was in. She was in Mark, chapter 7 yesterday. She came in and she showed me this passage that I've read a thousand times, but I've never really seen this word in it.

It's the healing of the deaf man. Jesus is getting ready to heal a deaf man and it says that right before Jesus healed him, he sighed. And I've never really stopped to think about that. It's kind of an unusual thing that you would sigh right before you would heal a deaf man.

I would think that were a number of other things that Jesus could have done. Like, Jesus could have clapped his hands and said: Hey, watch this. Jesus could have celebrated. But Jesus sighed. And I looked a little more closely at that word and that word actually means this idea of frustration and sadness. That word *sigh* captures this idea of anger and tears. And I immediately thought, "That's a pretty good description of the last several weeks: frustration and sadness, anger and tears."

Jesus sighed. What would prompt him to sigh right before he healed the deaf man? Well, this was not the way that he intended things to be. When God created this world and when he created you and me, he didn't create it with sin, he didn't create it with fallenness and disease and death.

God created it perfect and it was sin that entered the world through our pride, that caused this fallen world. And Jesus sighs and he was like: this is not as it is supposed to be.

And this is not as it will be forever. He is coming to undo the things that have been done through our sin and pride. And he is relating to our anger, and our tears, and our frustration, and our sadness. And he has promised to make all things new.

And right now, today, if you have never submitted your life to Jesus Christ, I want to invite you to do that, to just invite him into your life and into your heart.

If you've been following Jesus for a while, now is the time to draw that line in the sand and say, "God, I want to let go of some things that have been holding onto me and holding me back and it's taken this crisis to get me to see it. And instead of going through the valley, God, I want to grow through the valley, and I want to look more and more like you."

So, I want to pray for us today that that would be the thing that God would do in us as people and as a church. So, let me pray for you right now.

Father, I come to you today and I just want to acknowledge that there is so much frustration and sadness, anger and tears, and fatigue right now. God, we're tired as people and we can't wait to get on the other side of this crisis, but right now instead of just going through the valley, we want to grow through the valley.

So, Father, would you please help us to see some things in our lives that maybe we've been holding on to and are holding us back from being the men and women that you have created us to be and that we would have the courage to let go of them, even though it is painful, and allow you to do the redemptive work in our lives that only you can.

Father, if there are some who are here today who have maybe begun to drift from you or they've allowed their hearts to become a bit bitter in these days that we've been going through, or they've been giving in to hopelessness and despair, God, I pray that they would renew their hope that can only be found in you.

And if there are some here today who for the very first time are choosing to give their life to you, God, we want to celebrate that as they find new life and new hope in Jesus, who promises to be with us through all of our trials and challenges.

So, God, we give this to you right now. We thank you so much for the hope that can be found in Jesus alone. And we ask this in his name: Amen.