

# Forgetful and Fruitful

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[ 0 : 00 ]     Genesis 41. We're going to read verses 41 through 57.! Chapter 41, verse 41.

We'll read through the end of the chapter. So Pharaoh said to Joseph, I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph's finger.

He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. He had him ride in a chariot as his second in command. And men shouted before him, Make way!

Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, I am Pharaoh, but without your word, no one will lift hand or foot in all Egypt.

Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zephanath-Peniah and gave him Asenath, daughter of Petipharah, Petipharah, priest of On to be his wife.

[ 1 : 03 ]     And Joseph went throughout the land of Egypt. Joseph was 30 years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from Pharaoh's presence and traveled throughout Egypt.

During the seven years of abundance, the land produced plentifully. Joseph collected all the food produced in those seven years of abundance in Egypt and stored it in the cities.

In each city, he put the food grown in the fields surrounding it. Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea. It was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure.

Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph by Asenath, daughter of Petipharah, priest of On. Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh and said, It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household.

The second son he named Ephraim and said, It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering. The seven years of abundance in Egypt came to an end, and the seven years of famine began.

[ 2 : 18 ]     Just as Joseph had said, There was famine in all the other lands, but in the whole land of Egypt, there was food. When all Egypt began to feel the famine, the people cried to Pharaoh for food.

Then Pharaoh told all the Egyptians, Go to Joseph and do what he tells you. When the famine had spread over the whole country, Joseph opened the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout Egypt.

And all the countries came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the world. God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Thomas Boston was a godly Scottish minister of the early 1700s, and he suffered greatly at the hands of an unwelcoming congregation.

He suffered under the slander of his own denomination, a lifelong debilitating illness of his wife, and then his own severe health problems.

[ 3 : 35 ] And out of this troubled life came the little book called A Crook in the Lot. He took the title from Ecclesiastes 7.13.

Who can straighten what God has made crooked? It speaks of those hard and humbling providences that God's hand brings into our lives.

Things that were straight, and by his mighty hands, he makes them crooked, and we can't fix them. We can't straighten them. Boston says our need in such circumstances is to match our humbling providence with a humble spirit, not proudly kicking against God's providence, not demanding that it change, but to humble our hearts under God's mighty hand, to receive it as from his hand, and to bow to his will, serving him with contentment and joy.

And as we do, God promises two things for the humble. First, he gives grace to the humble. Grace in your trial, grace for your trial.

And secondly, he promises to lift you up in due time. He has you low under his hand, but he will lift you high in his own due time.

[ 5 : 07 ] Whether that be in this life or in the next. And Boston learned to live upon those promises as he humbled himself under the different crooks in his lot.

Now, Joseph, too, had a crook in the lot that he couldn't fix. His life was straight and going great, he thought, and then God bent it, and he couldn't straighten it.

It was slavery and imprisonment in Egypt. But Joseph learned to humble himself under God's mighty hand of providence and serve faithfully where God had him.

And God gave him grace to do just that. He was with him. He blessed him, both in Potiphar's house and then in the prison as well. And after 13 years, in due time, at the right time, God lifted him up and exalted him over all of Egypt.

Now, these stories are in our Bible. This history happened to Joseph for our encouragement, Romans 15, 3 tells us. And sorely tried, saint, this promise still stands for you in your humbling circumstance.

[ 6 : 25 ] Match that humbling circumstance with a humble heart, a humble spirit that accepts it from the Lord's hand and goes on trusting and serving him.

And he will give you grace in your trial and for your trial. And in his own good time, he will lift you up. Perhaps even surprising you with just how good he is to those who trust him as he surprised Joseph.

Joseph. Now, last week, in one sense, this is leftovers. We didn't have time to cover and I didn't say all that I wanted to say and as often as found all that I should have said.

And so, last week, we noted that the pattern of Joseph's life, the pattern of Jesus' life, and the pattern of the followers of Jesus are all one and the same. And that pattern is suffering before glory.

But what I failed to emphasize is the fact that there is glory after suffering is all a matter of pure grace. Yes, there was glory after Joseph's suffering.

[ 7 : 43 ] And yes, for the child of God, there's glory coming. But that's only because of pure grace. It has nothing to do with our merit. through our sin, we forfeited every bit of God's goodness and grace to us.

Every bit of his glory. But our Savior Jesus, who deserved glory, took our sufferings and gives us his glory so that by trusting in him, we can know the end of our suffering and the blessings of eternal glory.

glory. And so, that ought to make us all the more appreciative of the fact that he lifts us up after our trials. We don't deserve that. We deserve to sink lower and lower and lower.

But by grace, he lifts us up. And Joseph, in all his glory, was not as highly exalted as the lowliest of followers of Jesus will be in heaven.

And then, there's the matter of the speed of God's providence. We've spoken of the slowness of God's providence.

[ 8 : 51 ] But I wonder if you've noticed the two distinct speeds of God's providence in Joseph's life. There is the slow speed as most often God's providence works at a pace so slow that it tries the faith and the patience of his dear children.

And months and years on end pass as if we're stuck in the mud and going nowhere. Nothing seems to be happening. We can't find God.

We don't see him doing anything in our lives and in our troubles. And so we're made to wait on God in the dark without seeing. Evidently, it's an important lesson because he has so many of us in it.

But then, God's providence can kick into another gear. It finds another gear and suddenly it hits another speed. A fast speed.

And it seems that's what William Cooper was referring to in his hymn on Frowning Providence when he wrote, His purposes will ripen fast unfolding every hour. The bud may have a bitter taste but sweet will be the flower.

[ 9 : 58 ] What does he mean his purposes will ripen fast? That threw me at first. I thought he's denying what we've seen in Joseph. He had to wait long. His purposes were slow in unwinding and being fulfilled.

But upon further thought, I think Cooper affirms both the slow and fast pace of providence seen in Joseph's life. He's saying, though you may wait long with the bitter taste of the bud and see nothing of deliverance, all of a sudden almost out of the blue the bud will pop open into a sweet flower so that his purposes ripen fast unfolding not year by year month by month week by week day by day but unfolding hour by hour.

Isn't that what Joseph experienced? He had the slow speed the long, slow, bitter bud stage setback, delay, prison, being forgotten in prison for two more years, stuck and going nowhere, and then his purpose is ripe and fast.

Hour by hour, 13 years of waiting in the dark and suddenly in a matter of hours the bud burst forth into the sweet flower.

The day dawned just as many hundreds of his days in prison. That morning he was a slave cleaning toilets in the dungeon. But by that evening he's second in command dining with Pharaoh in the palace.

[ 11 : 40 ] A chariot to pick him up galloping in a hurry back to the palace. Joseph chosen or the dream told the interpretation given the council received Joseph chosen Joseph elevated the robe, the ring, the chariot over all Egypt.

Dizzying speed, God's purposes ripened fast unfolding hour by hour. It all happened so fast it must have left his head spinning.

Can you imagine Joseph going to bed that evening and just trying to comprehend what has happened in the space of that one day? Perhaps pinching himself to be sure that he's not dreaming and that this isn't just a dream.

We're told of the days of Hezekiah and the great revival that took place and the reforms that Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced at what God had brought about for his people because it was done so quickly.

Sometimes God works at a slow speed, other times so quickly. We can learn from this that though God's providence often takes time, it's not because He needs time.

[ 12 : 50 ] No, God can work quickly if He wants and when He's ready and when the time is right, He can work very fast. So let this be an encouragement to you.

If you're stuck in a long, hard providence, God's doing stuff that you're not aware of behind your back. Just because you've not seen anything yet, perhaps for years, His purposes can ripen fast, unfolding hour by hour.

It could be that helps at hand, just around the corner. Learn from Joseph, what a difference one day can make.

So I thought about that, I thought about the day of Christ's return. What a difference that day will make. Everything going on is normal, then suddenly He who is coming will come, skies open, Christ descend like a thief in the night finding most of the world unprepared and unwatchful.

But what a difference that will make for all. Or the day of your death, whenever that may be, maybe sooner than later, what an even faster and greater difference it will make for you than it was for Joseph, moving from the prison to the palace.

[ 14 : 15 ] Think of the believer. Your day began with all your same troubles and trials here and suddenly you're in the palace of your king and you're seeing the king in his beauty in whose presence is fullness of joy and in whose right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Pleasures unmixed with troubles. Joys uninterrupted with separation and sorrow. Gladness and joy will overtake you and sorrow and sighing will flee away forever.

From suffering to glory, from the cross to the crown, and it'll happen in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, you won't even have time to shave and shower and clean up like Joseph did as he went to the palace.

For to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, which is better by far. What a difference that day will make for the one who is trusting in Jesus.

But unbeliever, the day will make a huge difference in your life as well. You're lost, you're without Christ. Christ. When he returns or when you die, you'll move from this world where every day you had God's goodness and mercy.

[ 15 : 35 ] You ate his food, you drank his water, you lived on his estate, you enjoyed his sunshine, you breathed his air, you enjoyed his good providence that upholds you and provides for you even more than what you need.

And then suddenly all that is left behind and everything you lived for comes to an end as you go to your just punishment of eternal torments.

Uninterrupted with any rest periods, unending hopelessness and despair, forever shut out from the presence of the Lord and his goodnesses.

What a difference that day will make. A day starting out like every other one of your days without the Lord, suddenly followed by an eternity in hell without him. Friends, don't boast about tomorrow.

You don't know what a day may bring forth. How many people, young people especially, are boasting about tomorrow? I know I need to get right with God, you say.

[ 16 : 40 ] I know I need to seek the Savior. I know I'm headed to hell, but not today. You're boasting about tomorrow. You're boasting as if you had tomorrow. You don't.

You don't know what a day could bring. It could be this day that you appear before him. And therefore, we're told, today, if you hear his voice, he is speaking through his word.

And so if you hear him today, don't harden your heart, but seek him. Come to him. He's willing and ready to receive you. And what a difference this day would be.

you woke up under condemnation. You could go to bed tonight forgiven of all your sins. All of them washed as white as snow, even as we sang. A difference that one day made in Joseph's life.

God now has positioned Joseph in a place where he can now save all of Egypt and save his own brothers and father, though that's not yet entered his mind.

[ 17 : 46 ] It wouldn't for another seven to eight years when the famine would be so expansive and severe that even his brothers would show up one day bowing before him in Egypt seeking food.

And only then would he realize the reason why all this has happened to him. Not only to save Egypt, but to save his brothers, that very line from which the human nature of our Savior has come.

So the dreams have been interpreted, Joseph's exalted, and it all starts happening. Just as Joseph said.

I don't know what the crop was the previous year, but we do know that year it was a bumper crop. And they started to store the grain. And the next year it was the same. Amazing.

Harvest. And it's being stored up. So much so that they quit keeping records. But the real test would come after the seventh year, wouldn't it?

[ 18 : 54 ] Okay. Maybe we're just in a good cycle here. But is it going to switch? And is it going to turn to famine on the seventh year? Would it all change, as Joseph said?

And change it did. As the famine hit hard and fast, not only severe in Egypt, but we read that it reached to all the surrounding countries.

The famine would not, would only serve to raise Joseph even higher in the estimation of the Egyptians when they saw, after seven years, now famine, and the next year, famine.

Suddenly, Joseph is just growing higher and higher in their view. It's all happening just as Joseph said it would, and he's ready for it, for he opens up the granaries and sells grain to all of Egypt as they were in need of food.

And the chapter, chapter 41, ends with this verse, and all the countries came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph because the famine was severe in all the world.

[ 20 : 01 ] And that sets the backdrop for the arrival of Joseph's brothers. We'll have to wait till next time, God willing. But just a couple more lessons this morning on hard providences before we leave chapter 41.

Verse 50 tells us, before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph. And the names that Joseph gives to those sons tells us something about the heart of Joseph himself and it also tells us something about the ways of God's providence.

Let's look at them. His firstborn son, he named Manasseh. Do you know anybody named Manasseh? No? It sounds like the Hebrew word for forget.

So that means every time Joseph called his son, he was saying forget. Finish your corn, forget. Forget. It's time for bed.

Don't forget to brush your teeth, forget. Now why would any father name his son forget? Well, he tells us, it's because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household.

[ 21 : 20 ] Verse 51. And in praise to God for his trouble forgetting blessings, Joseph names his son forget. forget. In the Hebrew Manasseh.

So Joseph was continually testifying that it was God who made him forget his troubles. It was God who got him out of prison. God who he'd tie honor on him from Pharaoh and all Egypt.

It was God who was giving the years of abundant harvest and then giving him now the added joys of family life with a wife and the birth of a firstborn son. So Joseph clearly identifies God's providence as the cause of his blessings and of the forgetfulness of his troubles.

Lady luck sure been good to me. No, not from Joseph. This too will pass. No, an atheist can say that. God has made me forget my troubles.

Just as when he gave the interpretations of the dream to Pharaoh. God is the one who gives the interpretation. Here he gives glory to God. He recognizes the hand of God's providence.

[ 22 : 29 ] He is so thrilled me with his blessings that I've forgotten my troubles. Remind me now, what were they? Oh, that's right. Slavery, prison, 13 years of it from age 17 to age 30.

That's a lot of troubles to forget. And yet, he says, God has made me to forget. All that trouble and hardship endured back in Canaan at the hands of my family.

And indeed, one sense, all of his troubles could be traced back to the troubles he received from his brothers, their daily hatred and jealousy, their nearly killing him and then selling him off into slavery far from home.

when he says that God has made him forget his not only all his troubles, but my father's household.

I don't believe that means that Joseph never thought about his dad and never thought about his brothers. But he surely did have pushed out of his mind that continual preoccupation about what's happening with my family.

[ 23 : 42 ] He had so much blessing in front of him and keeping him occupied that that was pushed out of his mind, especially the troubles that they caused him.

He was enjoying God's blessings. And the good stuff crowded out the memory of the bad stuff. That's one reason why we need to stop and count our blessings.

When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed, when you are discouraged, thinking all is lost, count your many blessings and name them one by one and it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

It may even make you forget your troubles in light of all the blessings that God has given you. When troubles press in and would rob you of your joy, open to Ephesians 1 and count all the spiritual blessings that are yours in Christ.

And if God never did another thing for us, that would be enough to fill us with joy, unspeakable and full of glory. Should be. You read that. Ephesians 1 1 through 14.

[ 24 : 56 ] And then add all the material blessings and our troubles would be so much more forgotten. Well, this gives us a look into Joseph's heart. He has an eye for God's providence.

He recognizes it. God has made me forget that because of his blessing in my life. He recognizes him. And that's part of what kept him looking up and giving him hope in God, even in the worst of his troubles.

But it not only reveals something of Joseph's heart and recognition of God's goodness to him, it reveals something of the way of God's providence, the ways of God's providence.

How does God's providence work in people's lives? And I think it teaches us that we should not think that just because we're hard pressed by providence today, that it's always going to be this way.

And we have a tendency to think that. And we'll see it especially in Jacob as we go on. But since I'm in trouble, it's always going to be trouble.

[ 26 : 01 ] You might feel you're in such darkness that the sun will never rise again, that you'll never sing for joy again. But it's just not so. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.

We saw last week that suffering, yes, is God's agenda for his own in this world before glory, but glory does come after suffering. And yes, preeminence, preeminently, that that glory and that joy has to do with heaven that will make us forget our troubles.

Isaiah 65, 16 to 19. For the past troubles will be forgotten and hidden from my eyes. Behold, God says, I will create new heavens and new earth.

The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy.

I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people such that the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. Such joys in God and in his people in the new heaven, the new earth, will crowd out our former troubles.

[ 27 : 21 ] They simply will not come to mind. But Joseph wasn't in heaven yet. He's not talking about heaven. He's still in Egypt. He's still on earth.

And he's telling us that even here, such is the goodness of God's providence, that he can and does deliver us from our troubles and bring us into brighter days such that our troubles are pushed out of our minds.

Let me give you two promises. There's many just like them, many of them in the Psalms, Psalm 37, 17, and 19. Hear them. The righteous cry out and the Lord hears them.

He delivers them from all their troubles. A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all.

Now, it's true that some of those deliverances from trouble have to wait for the return of Christ and the age to come, but not all of them. Not at all.

[ 28 : 28 ] Think of Joseph, the full story of Joseph. Think of Job. Think of Esther. Think of Ruth, of David, of Daniel, of Paul, and Peter, and Jesus, and your life.

Who saw trouble like Job did? And yet James, in the New Testament, gives this commentary on him in James 5, 11. you've heard of the patience of Job, and you've seen the hand of the Lord, what the Lord brought about in the end.

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy. What we read at the end of Job is that the Lord blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first.

Doubled his wealth, gave him seven more sons and three more daughters whose beauty was unsurpassed anywhere in the land, and gave him 140 years to enjoy with his children and their children to the fourth generation.

That was all in this life. 1 Peter 5, 6, as we humble ourselves under God's mighty hand, he exalts us, he lifts us up. And Joseph testifies to this truth of God's providence by naming his firstborn, Manasseh, because God has made me to forget all my trouble and my father's household.

[ 29 : 57 ] To not forget God's blessings in our lives, let's be counting them one by one. Let's be living in continual praise and thanksgiving for his good gifts to us. Be here Wednesday night.

Add your voice to the praise of God's goodness in this past year. Manasseh. He had a second son, and Joseph names him Ephraim.

Sounds like the Hebrew word for fruitful. Come here, fruitful. Be kind to your older brother. Forget. Why would he call him fruitful?

He tells us it's because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering. He's made me fruitful, not back in Canaan, the land of milk and honey.

He's made me fruitful in the land of my suffering. Now, the land of suffering is hardly the place you expect to see a rich harvest of fruitfulness.

[ 30 : 59 ] That's probably how Joseph felt as he went into those years that turned into 13 years. Egypt, the land of my slavery, the land of my imprisonment in a dark dungeon.

What good can come out of the land of my suffering? Well, he was surprised by joy. He was surprised by the deliverance out of his troubles, by the exaltation to number two in the whole land, by the family blessings of a wife and now a second son, but also surprised by the goodness of God in bringing a harvest of fruitfulness to his spiritual life, his walk with his God.

In every way, Joseph flourished in the land of his suffering. And this teaches us one of the ways of God's providence. And it's just this, that suffering produces greater fruitfulness.

And it's not just Joseph that we see it in. But I want to ask you, can God make you fruitful in the land of your suffering? We often think that suffering is poor soil for fruitfulness.

When I'm suffering like this, I can't do anything for God. I can't contribute anything to the praise and honor of God. Not while I'm suffering. Get me through the suffering so I can glorify you, God.

[ 32 : 24 ] And providence teaches us, no, suffering is the way to greater fruitfulness. God seems to glory in bringing forth the richest harvests from the most unlikely soils of suffering.

Listen to Isaiah 58, 11. Those who love and keep the Lord's day holy. He says, the Lord will guide you always.

He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.

What a picture. What a promise. You'll be like what? A well-watered garden with plants, with all kinds of produce hanging on them. Where?

In a sun-scorched land. Only the Lord can bring such fruitfulness out of such soil. And it seems he does it because it leaves all the glory at his feet, doesn't it?

[ 33 : 29 ] What a gardener he is to bring forth such fruits out of such soil. So whatever the land of your suffering is, whatever the unpromising soil of your situation, even there the Lord can make you as fruitful as a well-watered garden.

He knows how to get grace to grow in sun-scorched hearts, in desert-like sufferings. He did it with Joseph. He can do it with you and with me.

He's able to make the suffering of his saints to promote greater fruitfulness in them. Consider some of the rich fruits hanging in this well-watered garden that he produces through sufferings.

First and perhaps foremost is a humble submission to God's will. Back in Canaan, Joseph grew up with the silver spoon in his hand, didn't he?

Daddy's favorite. All the perks and privileges being pampered by his father. It would be in Egypt, the land of his suffering, that his heavenly father would cross his pampered will and would cross his pampered desires and would teach Joseph to bow to the will of God in his life.

[ 34 : 44 ] Rather than fighting it, rather than chafing against the yoke and pulling against it, rather than complaining about it or licking his wounds and self-pity, Joseph learned to surrender his will to God's.

And that's what enabled him to get on with life and be such a blessing there at Potiphar's estate and then in prison to the other prisoners. He surrendered his will to God's.



No, it wasn't the life he wanted. No, it wasn't the life he would have chosen for himself. But since it's what God wanted and since it's what God has chosen for me, then he humbly embraced it and got on with serving God in it.

It's not easy. I think it's one of the hardest things in the Christian life to humbly submit to God's will. To be content with what God has chosen for you and to be content because God has chosen it for you.

To sincerely say to God, not my will, but yours be done. Here, you take the pen and write the story of my life. Your will will, not mine.

[ 36 : 09 ] You know what it cost our Lord Jesus to pray that prayer in Gethsemane? Bloody sweat. Bloody sweat. Ever sweat so bad in such agony that you bled great drops?

You sweat great drops of blood? That's what it cost Jesus to pray, not my will, but yours be done. and we won't find it easy either. It's a death after all.

It's a death to our will, to what we wanted, the life we would have chosen. It's death to that and to embrace what God has chosen instead.

Humble submission to God's will. It's one of the rare fruits that grow in the land of suffering in a sun scorched land. What other fruits?

Well, there's the fruit of patient waiting on God for his timetable when our troubles are to end. In his due time, not mine, to go on living with that difficult person, that dead end job, that ongoing health problem, that situation that's like a crook in the lot that can't be straightened.

[ 37 : 29 ] You wait. And you wait with patience because you're waiting on the Lord, the Lord who loves you, the Lord who is all-wise and knows best how to bless you.

And then there's the fruit of getting to know God better. I suppose those days in a dark dungeon would provide a lot of time for reflection and converse fellowship with God to get to know him, to trust him with the unknown, with our future, with our confusing present, because we know him.

There's the fruit of learning to depend more upon God as our portion, finding him all that we need, and then indeed finding Christ more precious, more a sympathizing friend than we ever knew.

Isn't that worth 13 years in slavery and prison? Joseph would say yes, yes. It's some of that amazing fruitfulness that God grows in the land of suffering.

There's the bearing the fruit of holiness, Hebrews 12, likeness to Jesus. What rare fruits to love like Jesus, to rejoice like Jesus, to groan like Jesus, to have the peace of Jesus, the patience, the gentleness, the kindness, the self-control, all like Jesus.

[ 39 : 04 ] Well, that's part of the fruitfulness in the land of our suffering. And then there's the fruit of a better understanding of scriptures. The psalmist says it was good for me to be afflicted that I might learn your decrees.

There are depths to some scriptures that are only opened with the key of affliction. And in the affliction, those texts suddenly bear a witness to our hearts that we never saw before.

There's the fruit of rearranged priorities. Oh, we get out of alignment, don't we? Just like cars after hitting chuck holes all winter long.

We find we need an alignment. And going through this world, we get our priorities out of line. And we start living for things that don't count for eternity.

And then we're thrown into the land of suffering. And we start to see what's really worth living for. And our hope is realigned, and our joy is realigned, our delight, our treasure.

[ 40 : 11 ] As the Lord says in Newton's hymn, these inward trials that I employ from self and pride to set you free and break your schemes of earthly joy that you might find you're all in me.

Those are just some of the fruits in the land of suffering. It'll take heaven to unpack what everlasting gains have resulted from our time spent in the land of suffering.

And in the end, we will acknowledge that adversity will prove to be far better soil than prosperity with far better fruits in our lives.

And so in that day, we will cry Ephraim. When we see Jesus, we will cry Ephraim because God has made us fruitful in the land of our suffering. We will praise him.

We will glorify him as we see how he was using that suffering in our lives to produce an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

[ 41 : 14 ] He's able. He's willing. Trust him. How happy you will be and how glorified God the gardener will be for the fruit produced in you in this sun scorched land.

And then we'll cry Manasseh as by the glories of heaven and the king, God will make us forget all our troubles.

By his good providence, he's working even now working our troubles together for our everlasting good. You know, he's more desirous of us receiving those good things of heaven than we are at present to receive them.

And that's why we chafe against the yoke because we want something else. And he says, no, I want the best for you. And that's why I have you going this route. Isn't it good that he's more committed to our good than we are?

We fight him, but he's the potter. And he puts his hand on the clay and he says, I'm going to bless you even though you're fighting me. I'm going to teach you to humbly submit and to say, have thine own way.

[ 42 : 31 ] Thou art the potter, I'm just the clay. Mold me, make me, after your will, while I'm waiting, yielded, and still. We don't find that to be a one-time thing, do we?

But over and over, we must humbly submit to God's will in our lives. Your will, not mine. Don't know when the last time you've done that.

When you've thought about my life, what I want, and what I have, and just said to the Lord, recognizing all that you have, and all that you hope to be, not my will, but yours be done.

He who tries to save his life will lose it, but he who loses his life for my sake in the gospel will find it, Jesus said. I'm going to give you that opportunity as we sing just one verse from Grace Hymns, Have Thine Own Way, Lord.

It's number 20, and you talk to the potter and humble yourself under his mighty hand in whatever hard providences you're facing and know that he has your best in mind and is working all things together for your good.

[ 43 : 57 ] Let's stand as we sing just the first verse of number 20 in our grace hymns. We thank you, Father, for lessons on your providence from the life of Joseph.

Thank you that you don't change and that these lessons remain the same for us. We thank you for the Lord Jesus who went this way before us and entered into suffering like we will never know that we might enter into glories that we would have never known all by his grace.

It was our Lord that taught us that if a kernel of wheat remains as it is, it remains alone, but if it dies and falls into the ground, it multiplies.

there is fruitfulness in death, there is a fruitfulness in suffering. Would you make us fruitful in this land of suffering? Would you even cause us to bear much fruit like a well-watered garden to the praise of your glory?

It is to my Father's glory that you bear much fruit, Jesus, you said. So enable us to trust you, to trust your goodness and so to daily offer ourselves up to you.

[ 45 : 23 ] Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee. What is my life if it's not for you? Why do we breathe if it's not for you?

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for dying for us. Thank you for the glories that are coming. Oh, bring that day soon. And we pray for those that are not ready for your coming, not ready for the day of death.

Awaken them today to reality, to a willing and ready Savior to embrace them and to save them. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.