

**TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP****JOIN A SERVE TEAM****NEW HERE?****CONNECTION CARD****STAY UP TO DATE****SUBSCRIBE TO DIGITAL BULLETIN****Series: How Long? Waiting on God with Honesty and Hope****Title: Healing in the Waiting****Text: Genesis 41:50–52; 50:20**

Time feels wasted when we simply wait. Time moves quickly, and it doesn't ask for permission or slow down. It just keeps going. Yet, waiting takes time, and time can bring healing. Time may heal physical injuries and trauma, but the passage of time is not the same as healing happening, especially when it comes to emotional and relationship healing.

Maybe you're waiting for healing from past trauma. Perhaps you're asking, "How long will this affect me?" "How long will this hurt?" "How long until I feel free from what happened?" Often, in the waiting, healing occurs as God meets you, not just to change your circumstances but to transform your story.

Perhaps no other person, besides Jesus, experienced so much suffering, trauma, and pain as Joseph did throughout his lifetime. Genesis 50:22 states that Joseph lived to be 110 years old. Many of his early years were filled with betrayal, false accusations, unjust imprisonment, and emotional scars inflicted by others. Yet, in the middle of the Joseph story, there are three verses that we could easily overlook without much thought. However, these three verses teach us something about the past through the most unlikely sources, the names of Joseph's two sons.

The book of Genesis includes several narrative cycles about the Patriarchs of Israel: Abraham (12:1 - 25:11); Jacob (25:16 - 35:29); Joseph (37 - 50).

**The Trauma That Shaped Joseph's Life (Genesis 37 - 41)**

- Joseph's life is a story marked by trauma, delay, waiting, and redemption, and divine providence.
- Joseph was the eleventh son of Jacob, born to Rachel. Jacob loved Joseph more than his other son and gave him a beautiful coat that made his brothers jealous. Joseph also dreamed two dreams in which his brothers bowed down to him (Gen 37:1-11).
- One day, Joseph went to visit his brothers who were far from home, tending sheep. The brothers plotted to kill Joseph, but Reuben and Judah saved his life by putting him in a cistern and selling him to Ishmaelite traders. The brothers told Jacob their brother was killed by presenting the evidence of his bloody robe (Gen 37:12-36).
- Joseph is taken to Egypt, where he becomes a servant of Potiphar and rises to rule over all of Potiphar's household affairs. One day, Potiphar's wife tries to seduce Joseph, but he escapes. Potiphar's wife falsely accused Joseph of sexual assault (Genesis 39:6-20). Despite his innocence, Joseph was imprisoned for years for a crime he did not commit. While in prison, he interpreted dreams and was forgotten by the cupbearer for years (Genesis 40:23).
- The cupbearer remembered Joseph when Pharaoh had a dream no one could interpret about skinny cows eating fat cows. Joseph interpreted the dream. Ultimately, Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of storing food during the seven years of abundance so that there would be enough during the seven years of famine that followed (Genesis 41:1-47). Joseph was 30 years old when Pharaoh put him in charge of Egypt's grain storage.

- 13 years had passed since the pit his brothers put him in, which then led to prison, and ultimately Joseph was put in the palace. Imagine the emotional trauma of all these events upon the mind, body, and spirit of Joseph. Each event left a mark. Joseph carried layers of grief, family betrayal, injustice, isolation, and loss of control. For many years, Joseph suffered the consequences of others' actions toward him as hurt people hurt him.
- In our lives, history occurs. However, the meaning we attach to our history has more power than we realize. The power of meaning we give to our history can keep us in bondage to our past.

### **Mannash: God Has Made Me Forget (Genesis 41:51)**

- Joseph's first son, *Manasseh*, means "to forget." Joseph revealed that his forgetfulness of the past was not his own doing, but it was God who enabled him to forget the past trauma that shaped him.
- Joseph's forgetfulness did not repress or deny the events that happened; rather, with God's help, he chose to forget the past trauma so that the hurt of others would not define him. Joseph didn't erase his past; rather, he freed himself from the power of the past to define him. The wounds remain real, but they are no longer raw. God's enabling to forget allows Joseph to heal and move on.
- We can allow the trauma of our past to define us in the present. Maybe others abused you, neglected you, overlooked you, or thought you weren't good enough. Perhaps, like Joseph, someone close to you betrayed you with emotional and/or physical harm.
- Through the naming of his first son, Joseph grieved his past, allowing God to help him forget the pain so that God could bring healing and comfort, helping him not be defined by the trauma of his past.

### **Ephraim: God Has Made Me Faithful (Genesis 41:52)**

- Joseph's second son, *Ephraim*, means "fruitful." Healing doesn't end with forgetting. It blossoms into fruitfulness. Again, Joseph doesn't take credit for his own recovery from trauma. He acknowledges that it was God who redeemed his suffering in Egypt into a flourishing situation.
- Joseph discovers that God's faithfulness can turn suffering into a seed of purpose. Egypt, the land of his pain, becomes the place of his productivity and purpose.
- God redeemed Joseph's past trauma. God's redemption took time, and even when it seemed like life might never turn around. God's redeemed Jacob's lost years, stolen by trauma, and replaced them with years of flourishing redemption for his good and the good of everyone in Egypt. This is the rhythm of redemptive time: forgetting the sting of what was, and receiving the grace of what is. The past isn't undone, but God redeems the past by rewriting your story.

### **The Lord Was With Joseph**

- Four times in Genesis 39, the phrase "the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success" is repeated (39:2,3, 21, 23). These phrases appear when Joseph is in Potiphar's house and in prison.
- The text does not say, "The LORD was with Joseph, so nothing bad happened." God's presence with Joseph didn't remove him from hardship. The Lord sustained him through the trials and trauma and worked within the hardships Joseph endured.
- In Genesis 50:20, Joseph told his brother, "*You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.*"

Waiting does not mean that God is absent. Sometimes God's presence is most evident in the places we least expect, in the trauma, pain, hardship, or the process of healing.

How do we seek healing in the waiting?

1. We grieve what could have been.
2. We ask God to help us define our history through his redemption.
3. We receive God's grace and presence today, no matter where you are in the waiting.