

Lesson #5 – Sunday, August 30, 2026

BIG IDEA: God is always in control even when it seems like He is not.

INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ What can go wrong in a week? Have you ever had “one of those weeks?”
- ⇒ A normal week can be shattered by a text, phone call, doctor’s visit, an accident, etc. We make plans, set goals, and assume that tomorrow will be like today – until it’s not.
- ⇒ Most of us live with the quiet assumption that tomorrow will go the way we have scripted it. But what do we do when life doesn’t follow our script?
- ⇒ Joseph is a Biblical example of a life full of unexpected turns.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH: God is in control.

- ⇒ The story of the Bible is the evidence of God’s control. He created the world and everything in it. His creation rebelled and then God orchestrated the events of history so that man could be reconciled to Him.
- ⇒ The greatest evidence of the sovereignty of God is the cross and the empty tomb.
- ⇒ Quickly read these verses that teach us the sovereignty of God: Psalm 33:10-11, 103:19, 115:3.
- ⇒ The question is not if God is in control. The question we must wrestle with is: Are we willing to respond to life’s uncertainties with the certainty that God is sovereign?

BIBLE STUDY:

1. Joseph’s **Difficult** Life

- a. Joseph didn’t struggle with a bad day or week. He had years of difficulties and trials that he certainly did not understand. We can summarize his life in three divisions.
- b. Division 1 – **Leading** to Egypt (Genesis 37)
 - i. We are introduced to Joseph as his father’s favorite son (vs. 3). This caused some serious conflict between Joseph and his brothers.
 - ii. Their hatred came to a boiling point in 37:19-20. Fortunately for Joseph, his brother Reuben convinced his other brothers not to kill him. Instead, they sold Joseph to some Midianite traders (vs. 28) and Joseph ended up in Egypt as a slave of Potiphar (vs. 36).
- c. Division 2 – **Lost** in Egypt (Genesis 39-40)
 - i. Read 39:2-6 and point out that even in a bad situation, God was with Joseph and He blessed Joseph.
 - ii. Eventually, Joseph had a run in with his master’s wife. She falsely accused Joseph of attempted rape and the end of chapter 39 we find him now in an Egyptian prison.
 - iii. But there is another interesting note in verse 21. When he was falsely accused – God was with him.
 - iv. In chapter 40 Joseph meets Pharaoh’s butler and baker. Both men had dreams they could not understand. With God’s help, Joseph was able to explain the meaning of their dreams. Joseph only had one request (read verse 14).
 - v. Joseph’s interpretation was correct, but the butler forgot his end (read verse 23). In verse 1 of chapter 41 we see that Joseph remained in prison another two full years. But even when he was forgotten in prison – God was with him.
- d. Division 3 – **Leader** of Egypt (chapters 41-50)
 - i. Two years later Pharaoh had a dream that no one could seem to interpret (vs. 8). The butler remembered Joseph and Pharaoh summoned him out of his cell.

- ii. Not only did Joseph interpret Pharaoh's dream, but he also presented a comprehensive strategy on how Egypt could survive the coming famine.
- iii. Even when his luck seemed to be improving, Joseph still trusted in the Lord. Read verse 16.
- iv. Verse 37 tells us that Pharaoh was impressed – so impressed that he put Joseph in charge of the entire operation (vs. 41).
- v. The climax of Joseph's story comes in the last chapters of Genesis. After a life of mistreatment, disappointment and endless tragedy, the tide finally appears to be turning when Joseph's brothers appear in his presence seeking food.
- vi. In chapter 45 when Joseph finally reveals himself to his brothers. Instead of revenge, he shows great insight into God's sovereignty in his life. Read verses 4-9 and point out the following phrases:
 - 1. Vs. 5 – "for God did send me"
 - 2. Vs. 7 – "God sent me"
 - 3. Vs. 8 – "but God"
 - 4. Vs. 9 – "God hath made me"

2. God's **Guiding** Hand

- a. Did Joseph do anything to deserve or cause his circumstances – both good and bad? Joseph's life is a powerful reminder that God is always in control even when it seems like He is not.
- b. There are three truths that we need to remember from Joseph's life in relation to God's sovereignty.
- c. First, God is sovereign over **PEOPLE**.
 - i. We have an advantage in that we know Joseph's entire story. God had a great purpose for Joseph's life. But we often forget that Joseph lived through some difficult times before he could understand what God was up to.
 - ii. Remember: God's purpose is not dependent on people, and it cannot be deterred by people.
 - iii. Joseph's brothers seemed evil. Who would sell their own flesh and blood into slavery? But God used his brothers to get Joseph right where he would be needed in due time.
 - iv. Think about the decisions of Joseph's brothers, Potiphar's wife, and the butler. How do their actions seem to contradict God's plans?
 - v. How does it make you feel to know that God is not dependent on you for His purposes?
 - vi. Is it possible that God has put certain people in your life (that you might not like) that He is using to fulfill His purpose in your life?
- d. Second, God is sovereign over **CIRCUMSTANCES**.
 - i. God used and caused events to accomplish His purpose in Joseph's life. As we saw in our summary, the Bible points out several times the fact that God was with Joseph every step of the way.
 - ii. We love to control our own lives. When circumstances don't seem right, we typically stress out. But just like Joseph, we have the same promise of God's presence.
 - iii. What difference would it make in your life if you could remember that God is sovereign over life's circumstances?
- e. Third, God is sovereign over the **OUTCOMES**.
 - i. God directed the outcome as we saw in those selected verses in chapter 45.
 - ii. God directed all the details for His purpose.
 - iii. Knowing God has His hand on our lives at all times, why is it difficult to trust His sovereignty in our present circumstances?

APPLICATION: Questions are worked in throughout the lesson...

LIFE CONNECTION:

- ⇒ What was Joseph's responsibility throughout the ups and downs of his life? He simply had to be faithful in the moment. That is our responsibility, too! We don't always understand what God is doing, but we only must take the next step in faith trusting that God is in control.
- ⇒ God is sovereign; we are not. Our job is to be faithful in the place and the time that God has placed us in.
- ⇒ What are you going through right now that is causing you to doubt God's ultimate control? What can you do to start walking in faith and trusting that God has a plan that will one day make sense?