

## GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE IN FAMINE

*God's promise is preserved in drought and sin.*



THE STORY: GENESIS 41:41-57

MONDAY

### Events always unfold according to God's plan

Events always unfold according to God's plan – Pharaoh was impressed with Joseph's wisdom. He placed Joseph in charge of Egypt. Pharaoh acknowledged that the dreams and plans were from God (Genesis 41:38-39). Joseph accepted the position. For the next seven years Egypt experienced a time of abundance - just as God had declared through Joseph. These years of plenty were followed by seven years of famine. People came from very far to buy grain from Egypt because the famine was so severe. Because of Joseph's trust in God and wise planning, Egypt was the only country that had saved enough food during the time of plenty to provide for others. Events unfolded just as God said they would through His servant Joseph.

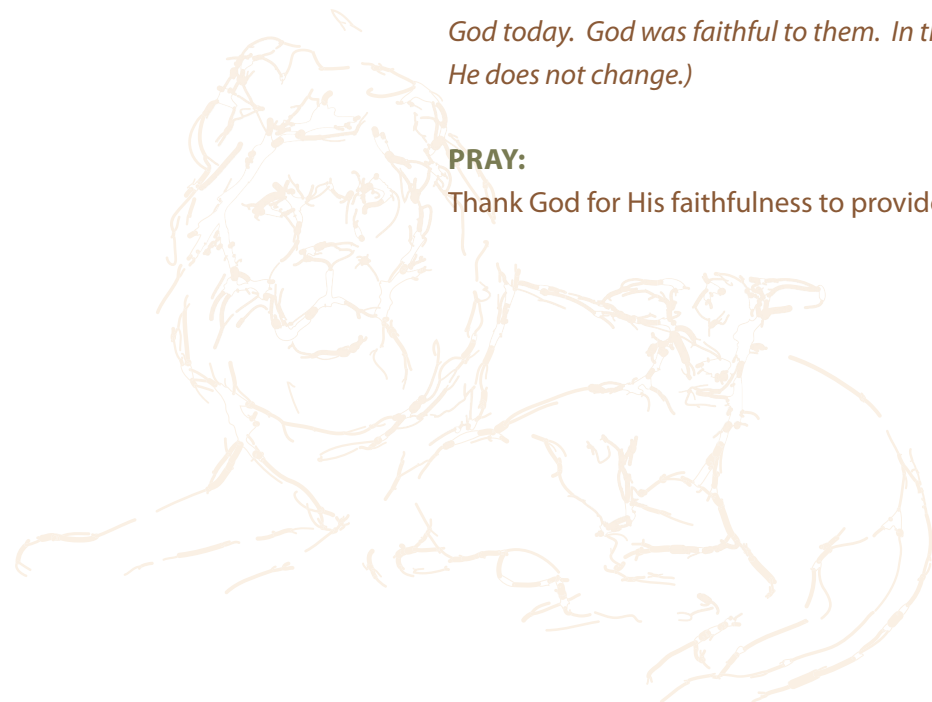
#### TALK ABOUT IT:

How did God use Joseph to preserve His promise to Abraham? *(Though God gave a troubling dream to Pharaoh, God did not give Pharaoh the interpretation. God sent Joseph to Egypt and placed him in a position to interpret the dream and provide food for Israel. God's promise to make Abraham and his people a great nation depended on surviving the drought.)*

How can this story build our faith to walk through difficulty and trials? *(The Bible stories which show God's faithfulness to His people long ago can encourage us to trust God today. God was faithful to them. In the same way, He will be faithful to us because He does not change.)*

#### PRAY:

Thank God for His faithfulness to provide for Israel and for us.





## God confronted Joseph's brothers

God confronted Joseph's brothers – When the famine hit Israel, Jacob sent ten of his sons to Egypt to purchase food. Only Benjamin, Joseph's youngest brother stayed home. Jacob's sons asked for food from Joseph, the governor in charge of all the grain. Joseph's brothers did not recognize him. However, Joseph recognized his brothers and remembered his earlier dreams about the wheat bowing down to his sheaf. He pretended to be a stranger, accused them of being spies, and threw them in prison. God used Joseph to bring a trial to his brothers. After three days in prison they began to reflect on their past sin against their brother.

After being released from prison, Joseph sent all but Simeon back to their father with some grain. He also ordered them to bring their youngest brother, Benjamin with them when they returned. He also had his servant secretly place silver in their sacks. This was both a gift and a judgment. When they discovered the silver, they became afraid that they would be viewed as thieves. Joseph's brothers saw God as the author of these events (vs. 28). But because of their fear, they still did not repent of their past sin against Joseph or confess to their father.

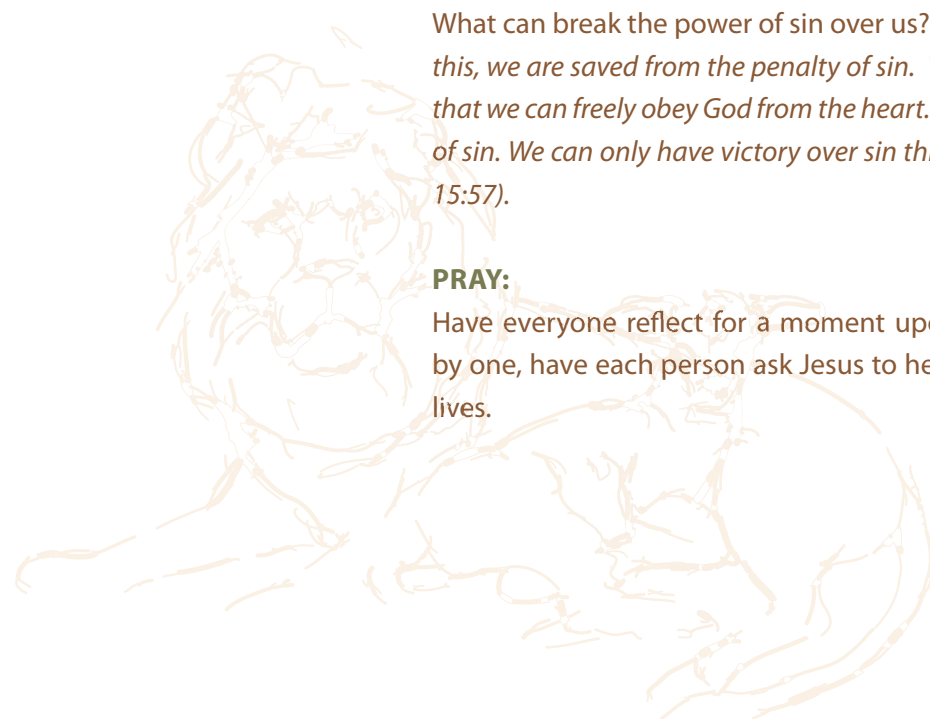
### TALK ABOUT IT:

What do we learn about the hold sin has upon people from the lives of Joseph's brothers? *(One sin leads to another. Even after they realized they were being judged by God, the brothers remained in their sin and did not confess to their father what they had done. Though Joseph had become a slave to his masters in Egypt, his brother's had become slaves to sin. The grip of sin is powerful.)*

What can break the power of sin over us? *(Sin has been defeated by Jesus. Because of this, we are saved from the penalty of sin. We are also set free from the power of sin so that we can freely obey God from the heart. One day we will be saved from the presence of sin. We can only have victory over sin through Jesus and what He did (1 Corinthians 15:57).)*

### PRAY:

Have everyone reflect for a moment upon the sins of their own lives. Then, one by one, have each person ask Jesus to help them break the power of sin over their lives.





## Where is Jesus?

Although the story of Joseph's kidnapping, slavery, and imprisonment is tragic, God was at work, behind the scenes, preparing to save His people. Ultimately, Joseph led Egypt to store grain for a coming famine. It is this grain that Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to purchase so that Abraham's descendants would not die.

Story after story points to God as a God who saves. God would ultimately save His people from a different kind of hunger and death – a spiritual hunger and death. Jesus offered Himself as the "Bread of Life" to all who are hungry. His words are all we need to live. And when He died on the cross He took our place so that we might have life with Christ. Behind the scenes, God was, and is, working all things together for good.

### TALK ABOUT IT:

Who was at work behind the scenes in the life of Joseph? *(God was at work behind all that happened in Joseph's life.)*

Why is Joseph significant in God's Story of redemption? *(Joseph was used of God to provide food in a severe famine. If it were not for God providing food through Joseph in Egypt, Israel would not have survived and the promised One would not have come to save His people from sin.)*

### PRAY:

Thank God for the wonderful way He provided for His people and kept the promise He gave to Abraham.



## The trial continues

The trial continues – When their food supplies ran low, Joseph's brothers returned to Egypt again for more food. This time they brought their brother Benjamin. Joseph continued to test them by placing a silver cup in Benjamin's grain sack. Still, in spite of being accused of stealing, Joseph's brothers maintained their lie about what had become of their "other" brother, Joseph. Instead of confessing their crime, they once again told the lie that Joseph had been torn to pieces (vs. 28). Though they sensed they were being judged by God, they still did not admit their guilt.

**TALK ABOUT IT:**

What was more important to Joseph's brothers - telling the truth or hiding their sin? *(They were more concerned to hide their sin.)*

The Bible tells us that we are slaves to sin (Romans 6:6). How were Joseph's brothers "slaves to sin?" *(In spite of many opportunities to be free from their lies, they would simply not tell the truth. They would rather take their chances in Egypt than to admit to their father or anyone what they had done. These men needed a Savior, just as we need a Savior.)*

**PRAY:**

Have everyone confess an area of sin that has a hold on their lives. Then pray that God would help everyone trust in Jesus and the Gospel which can free us from those sins. *(Parents should begin this time of confession and help draw out the children.)*

**THE STORY: PSALM 110****FRIDAY**

## On the road to Emmaus.

This psalm has several references to Christ. God extending his rule from Zion (Jerusalem) is fulfilled in the life of Jesus who is king over all. Jesus is the one at the right hand of God who will judge the nations. The most direct connection to Christ, however, is the reference to Melchizedek. There is only one priest who can be a priest forever, and that is Jesus.

Hebrews 5:6 directly attributes this passage to Christ.

**TALK ABOUT IT:**

Who does Hebrews 5:6 attribute this passage to? *(Hebrews 5:6 directly quotes this passage and attributes it to Christ.)*

**PRAY:**

Thank God that Jesus will remain a priest forever. Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient to pay the penalty for our sins and His blood pleads for our forgiveness forever, just as His presence in heaven intercedes (prays) for us forever.

