

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS
Commentary by Michael Sigler
January 22, 2012

Learning to Trust

Read Genesis 50:15-26

Key verse: “Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as He is doing today” (Genesis 50:20).

A little boy tried all afternoon to put together a new picture puzzle, which was a birthday gift from his father. Some of the pieces were bright, some dark. Some seemed to go together, others seemed to fit nowhere. Frustrated and tired and with little to show for his efforts, the boy finally gathered the pieces, put them in the box, and gave it to his dad. “I can’t do it,” he explained. “You try it.”

In just a few minutes, the father had assembled the entire puzzle. His son was amazed. The father said, “You see, I knew what the picture was like all the time. I saw the picture in the puzzle, but you saw only the pieces.”

Romans 8:28 tells us that, in all things, God works for the good of those who love him. Those “all things” are the pieces. God promises to take them all, the good and bad pieces of our lives, and work them for good, as we trust Him.

Are you hurt or upset over some difficult thing you are facing? Do not take the situation out of God’s hand and try to work it into your own design. God made the picture your life is composed of, and He will complete it—if you will trust Him.

Joseph’s life story is a demonstration of this great truth. God took all of the difficult things that happened to Joseph and worked them for good. In fact, Genesis 50:20 is the Old Testament counterpart to Romans 8:28. When Joseph’s brothers came before him following their father’s death, they were fearful of what Joseph would do to them. After all, those same brothers had once sold Joseph as a slave into Egypt. But having seen God work so faithfully in his life to bring good out of evil, Joseph responded to his brothers by saying, “Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good” (v. 20).

One verse earlier, the Bible records Joseph saying to his brothers, “Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God?” (v. 19) This verse demonstrates another dimension of trusting God: *A life of faith involves letting go of our need to control circumstances in order to let God have control of our lives.*

It is so easy to put ourselves “in the place of God,” sometimes with the best of intentions. But only God knows the end from the beginning. So, if we are to let God be God in our lives, we must not hold on too tightly—to our dreams, our money, our

jobs, our relationships. Sure, we should plan and work toward our goals. But we must always give room for God to surprise us, to change our plans, and to guide us in new and unexpected directions. If we hold on too tightly, in an effort to control everything about our lives, we may miss an opportunity for God to work.

The relationship between a movie actor and a director can make or break a movie. In a film director's hands, one actor remains a lump of coal. With that same director, a different actor can metamorphose into a shining diamond. *Trust* often makes the difference! An actor must trust a director with his performance on screen.

The same is true in our relationship with God. God knows the beautiful picture he can make from the scattered pieces of our lives. The question is will we turn over control of our lives to God? Will we trust Him?

One final great truth about trusting God is found in verses 24-25. Knowing that he is soon to die, Joseph remembers God's ancient promise to restore the Jewish people to their promised land. In confident faith and trust, Joseph says to his brothers: "I am about to die; but God will surely come to you, and bring you up out of this land to the land that He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." So Joseph made the Israelites swear, saying, "When God comes to you, you shall carry up my bones from here."

Joseph had lived a life in which, through good times and bad, he'd learned to trust God. When he came to the end, he could look ahead with utmost confidence that God would be faithful to all of His promises.

What a heritage comes to those who, like Joseph, live a life of trusting God. Each time we trust Him and prove Him faithful, our faith capacity is increased and we are better able to trust Him for whatever life brings.

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