

Could Things Be Worse?

*“In my distress I called to the Lord;
I cried to my God for help.”
Psalm 18:6 (NIV)*

In a previous devotional I made reference to the life of Joseph but the reference was to a particular point in time when he finally was living the good life for the rest of his life. What I would like to do is remind you of the whole of his life and have you consider how you would feel if that was your story.

Everything started well for Joseph. He was the darling of his father (Genesis 37:4). However, that fact sowed the seeds of hatred in the hearts of his older brothers. When he told his brothers of a dream that indicated they would one day serve him (Genesis 37:5-11), their hatred intensified.

Joseph's father, Jacob sent Joseph to check up on his older brothers and bring a report back to him. When the brothers saw him coming they decided it was time to murder him. They threw him into a dry well until they could decide what to do next. One brother, Judah suggested they sell him as a slave to a passing caravan instead of committing murder.

Joseph must have felt encouraged when the brothers lifted him out of the well. But his relief was short lived. Soon he was on his way to Egypt and sold to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials. Then his life took another turn for the better as God blessed his work and he was promoted to be in charge of the entire home and fortune of his owner.

Then he was thrown into prison when his master's wife falsely accused him of trying to seduce her. So things went sour again. Then, in prison he found favour with the warden and was promoted to be in charge of the entire population of prisoners. Once again things started to look up for Joseph.

Then Joseph asked a servant of Pharaoh, a fellow prisoner, who was going to be released in 3 days in order to return to Pharaoh's court, to speak to Pharaoh on his behalf. The man forgot and so Joseph continued to suffer for two more years.

Finally the court servant remembered Joseph's request and spoke to Pharaoh and Joseph

was finally released and God blessed him once again. This time God had Joseph appointed to be the greatest man in the land next to Pharaoh.

Perhaps your life has been a series of ups and downs similar to Joseph. Trouble comes and after you suffer for a time you think God is finally working things for your good. Then another difficulty comes along and once again you stumble. You feel like a tennis ball bouncing back and forth. You never seem to get your troubles behind you.

Psalm 18:6 gives us advice for times of trouble that keeps coming our way. If you are God's child He cannot turn a deaf ear to your cries for help. Keep praying, storm heaven with your complaints. If Jesus is your Good Shepherd His heart is certainly moved at your situation and He shall listen to your prayer and you will soon be led by "quiet waters" (Psalm 23:2) "I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry." (Psalm 40:1 NIV)

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