

ESF, Lord's day service message  
2/1/2015

**Faith in God's Goodness**  
Genesis 50:19-20

*But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."*

Here with Joseph's faith, God teaches us how to live with hope and to make the hope come true regardless of who we are, and no matter what happens to our lives. What made Joseph the man of hope and the final winner was not his circumstances. It was not luck. It was not lots of money. It was not a good education. It was his attitude of how to handle everything that happened in his life. He summed up his attitude: "*Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.*"

His attitude came from faith that believes God always turns everything into good.

How can we have faith like Joseph and live a life of hope?

**Claim the privilege as a child of God**

Joseph always remembered that he was a child of God. Although he was hated by his brothers and sold to be a slave by them, he never forgot that he was a child of God. When his master's wife was trying to seduce him, he remembered that he was a child of God and God was watching over him. And he refused to yield to the woman's temptation: "*How could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?*" (Genesis 39:9).

With these words, he confessed his duty to fear God and to live a holy life. He also claimed the privilege which God gave him as His child.

And as he confessed, God became his heavenly Father and turned all things in his life into good.

Paul puts the truth this way, “*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose*” (Romans 8:28).

In the year of 2004, a little robot named Spirit landed on the surface on the planet Mars and started sending live photos of the planet. A week after Spirit landed on Mars, another robot named Opportunity also landed on the opposite sides of the planet. The people at NASA and many Americans were proud of this remarkable achievement in space pioneering exploration. But where did the names of the two robots come from? They came from a little girl from Siberia, Russia.

A few years before the robots were launched, a little girl by the name of Sofi was born in Siberia, a bitterly cold and desolate area of Russia, a difficult place for a child. But Sofi's life was going to be even rougher than most. She was an orphan. Then suddenly at the age of 2, she was adopted by Laurie Collis a single mother in Scottsdale, Arizona. In 2003, when she was in the third grade, she entered an essay contest. And out of 10,000 applicants, she won! Toy maker Lego and The Planetary Society sponsored the event. As a result of winning, her family received an all expense paid trip to the Kennedy Space Center in Florida to watch the lift off of the Mars Rover. While there she was asked to read an excerpt from her winning essay. Here is part of it: “*I used to live in an orphanage. It was dark and cold and lonely. At night, I looked up at the sparkly sky and felt better. I dreamed I could fly there. In America, I can make all my dreams come true. Thank you for giving me the ‘Spirit’ and the ‘Opportunity’.*”

From her inspiring words, NASA took the name “Spirit” and “Opportunity” for their Martian exploring robots.

There may be many orphans in that Siberian orphanage. But the hope of only that one girl came true. Because she was adopted by an American parent.

Not every child who looks up to the sky can get a spirit of hope. Not every child who has hope can be adopted by a parent who can make the child's hope come true.

However, everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God, can be adopted to become a child of God. And as a child of God, that person can claim the privilege to make their hopes come true.

*“He (God) predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ”* (Ephesians 1:5).

*“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father’ ”* (Romans 8:15).

If you believe that Jesus is the Savior and the Son of God, you are an adopted child of God. You can claim all the privileges as a child of God. You can claim the privilege of God to turn everything in your life to good.

### **Believe in God's good purpose for your life**

When God brings you into this world, He has a good purpose for your life. How could Joseph maintain the spirit of hope in all trials? He constantly believed that God had a good purpose for his life.

When he was a young boy, he was sold by his own brothers who were jealous of him. And he became a slave in a foreign country. There, he lived many years of difficult trials. As a slave, he did not have freedom to visit his home. He couldn't get time off to go back home to see his

father Jacob and his beloved brother Benjamin. He had to live as a slave without any promise of becoming a free man again.

When he refused to listen to his master's wife who tried to seduce him, she falsely accused him and put him in prison.

In all those trials, the Devil tempted Joseph to give up hope, to live with a bitter grudge against his brothers and the master's wife. But Joseph refused to listen to the Devil's tempting voices. He did not develop a grudge against his brothers, or against his master's wife. He maintained a spirit of hope in all those circumstances. How? By believing in God's goodness. Did he understand how God was good to him in all those trials? No! He could not. He just trusted that God had a good purpose for his life.

On the night of December 9, 1914, Edison Industries was virtually destroyed by fire. Edison lost two million dollars that night and much of his life's work went up in flames. He was insured for only \$238,000, because the buildings had been made of concrete, at that time thought to be fireproof.

(Edison's son) Charles was 24; Thomas was 67. The young man ran about frantically, trying to find his father. Finally he came upon him, standing near the fire, his face ruddy in the glow, his white hair blown by the December winds.

"My heart ached for him," Charles Edison said. "he was 67 - no longer a young man - and everything was going up in flames."

Edison spotted his son, Charles, and shouted, "where's your mother?"

"I don't know, Dad," the son said.

Edison said, "Find her. Bring her here. She will never see anything like this again as long as she lives."

The next morning, walking about the charred embers of all his hopes and dreams, Edison said, “There is great value in disaster. All our mistakes are burned up. Thank God we can start anew.”

Three weeks after the fire, his firm delivered the first phonograph.

To live with a spirit of hope in all circumstances, we have to trust in God’s goodness even if we do not understand. It is not a matter of understanding but a matter of trust. God tests your trust in Him through trials. God has a plan to bless you. But to receive the blessing, you must pass the test. James 1:12, “*Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.*”

There’s the true story of an attorney, who after studying several scriptures, decided to cancel the debts of all his clients that had owed him money for more than six months.

He drafted a letter explaining his decision and its biblical basis and sent 17 debt-canceling letters by certified mail.

Sixteen of the 17 letters were returned, unsigned and undelivered.

Why? Because the clients refused to sign for them and open the envelopes. They were afraid that the attorney was suing them for their debts. So - in their fear - they ended up running away from his forgiveness.

When you are facing trials, do not listen to all the negative voices of the Devil. Just trust in God’s goodness. Confess His goodness in your life. And God will fill your heart with the spirit of hope. 1 Peter 4:12-13 also says, “*Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But*

*rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.”*

### **Be faithful with your duties in all circumstances**

If a person believes in God’s goodness and lives a life with a spirit of hope, does the person have to sit doing nothing?

No! The person must faithfully do his duties in all circumstances. By doing all things faithfully, the person can become a trustworthy person not only before men, but also before God.

While Joseph trusted in God’s goodness, he did his best in all circumstances. And God was with him and turned everything into good. While he was living as a slave to an Egyptian high officer, Potiphar, he served the master with all his heart. He faithfully did every duty. He became a trustworthy person to the master. The master put everything in his house under Joseph’s care (Genesis 39:1-6).

When he was falsely accused by the master’s wife and was put in prison, he did not allow his heart to be filled with anger and bitterness. He did not spend time in jail with a bitter grudge against the woman. Again, he just did his best in all duties given to him. As a result he was recognized as a trustworthy person in the jail (Genesis 39:21-23).

While he was in jail, he met a couple of high officials of the Egyptian king. They were put in the prison for some reason. One day, Joseph helped them by interpreting their dreams. He knew that one of the officials would be out of the prison soon and his position would be restored. So Joseph told the official that he had not committed any crime worthy of jail. Joseph asked the official to help him get out of the prison when his position was restored. The official promised Joseph that he

would surely do so. But as soon as he got out of prison, he completely forgot what he had promised to Joseph. And Joseph remained in jail without any hope of vindication. But again, Joseph did not spend his time in anger against the man who forgot him. Joseph continued faithfully doing whatever he could in jail.

After two years, the king had a dream and nobody could interpret his dream. At that time, the official remembered Joseph and recommended him to the king. The king called Joseph out of the prison. God gave Joseph—a supernatural wisdom to interpret the king’s dream. The king was so impressed by Joseph’s wisdom that he gave Joseph the highest position in the kingdom.

When we are faithfully doing whatever we can in all circumstances, we become trustworthy persons. And God brings great opportunity sooner or later.

In the parable of the talent (Matthew 25:14-30), Jesus teaches this truth plainly. When the servants faithfully took care of the talents they received, the master blessed them with great opportunities: *Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!* (Matthew 25:21)

So, when you are in trials, don’t let your mind be filled with hopeless thoughts, or complaints. Fill your mind with faithful thinking. Don’t think this way: *I will work harder when things get better. I will live differently when my circumstances improve.* No! You have to change that attitude today. You have to say to yourself, *I will do my best now regardless of my circumstances, regardless of my conditions.* Try to do

your best in being faithful with all duties in all circumstances. Be faithful with small things you do now. Be faithful in doing whatever you can do in your current situation. And you will become a trustworthy person. God will bring you great opportunity as He did for Joseph. Opportunity will surely come.