Turning Our Crisis Into An Opportunity

**KEY PASSAGE:** Genesis Chapters 37-50 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 103:19 | Isaiah 55:8-9 | Romans 8:28-29
Ephesians 4:26

**SUMMARY**

**How do you respond to a crisis?**

At some point in our lives, we all will face hardships, losses, and painful circumstances. Too often, we fail to view suffering with an eternal perspective. But our heavenly Father always has a purpose for adversity in our lives, and we can profit from it if we respond correctly.

The Old Testament patriarch Joseph experienced difficulty, but he learned to react to it wisely. From his example, we can learn how to turn our crises into opportunities.

**SERMON POINTS**

**Seven Crises in the Life of Joseph**

From the time Joseph was a young boy, he knew the bitter taste of adversity. However, each trial he encountered prepared him for God’s ultimate purpose for his life.

Misfortune number one was being hated by his brothers because he was Jacob’s favorite son. He made things worse when he told them of his dream that one day they would bow down to him. Learning how to live with ridicule and mistreatment without growing bitter, resentful, or hostile served him well during his years as a slave in Egypt (Gen. 37:1-17).

Second, Joseph’s brothers threw him in a pit (Gen. 37:18-24). Although helpless, he remembered God’s promise that his brothers would kneel before him one day. That meant the Lord would not allow him to die. Through this crisis, Joseph learned that God was completely trustworthy.

Third, Joseph was sold into Egypt as a slave (Gen. 37:25-36). Instead of rebelling against his captors, Joseph took advantage of the chance to learn about the Egyptian culture and language, trusting that God had a purpose for allowing that hardship.

He leveraged the fourth setback—being sold to Pharaoh’s chief bodyguard, Potiphar—into learning about how an Egyptian family operated. Though as a Hebrew and a slave Joseph was considered inferior, he discovered how to manage a large, prosperous household (Gen. 39:1-6).

His fifth challenge occurred when Potiphar’s wife tried to seduce Joseph. He knew that giving into temptation would mean being disloyal to Potiphar and unfaithful to God. He successfully resisted her, though it meant being thrown into prison (Gen. 39:7-20). Through this crisis, Joseph discovered his own strength to resist temptation, and the depth of his devotion to the Lord.

Joseph’s refusal to yield to Potiphar’s wife brought on the sixth misfortune—prison. Even though Joseph was wronged, he was obedient to authority figures over him and learned how to treat others with kindness (Gen. 39:20-23).

The seventh and final trial was when Pharaoh asked Joseph to interpret a dream. When Joseph explained that famine was coming after seven years of abundant bounty, he advised Pharaoh to prepare by storing food from the years of plenty. In response, the ruler promoted him to second in command over all of Egypt and placed Joseph in charge of administering food storage (Gen. 41:15-16). Why was Joseph ready for such a responsibility? He had used each crisis in his life as an opportunity to develop himself into a wiser, godlier person.
The Lord also wants to use adversity to strengthen your relationship with Him and prepare you for the challenges that lie ahead.

**How to Turn a Crisis into an Opportunity**

- **Trust that God is working everything in your life for your good** (Rom. 8:28).
- **Believe that our heavenly Father is in control of everything.** When you and I believe in God’s sovereignty, it’s easier to retain our hope—even if we don’t understand why we are suffering.
- **Accept that the Lord’s ways are higher than ours** (Isa. 55:8-9). Don’t lose heart by asking why; simply trust God’s intimate involvement in your life.
- **Refuse to make quick judgments in the midst of a crisis.** Ask, “God, what are you doing in my life?”
- **Focus on the Father instead of the crisis.** Meditate on Scripture, which fuels your awareness of the Father’s comfort and unconditional love.
- **Avoid dwelling on the pain.** It’s normal to feel loss and suffering, but instead of fixating on the grief, go to the ultimate source of strength—the Word of God (Ps. 103:19).
- **Recall past crises and the opportunities that followed.** Seeing God’s handiwork through past hardships will encourage you in your current trial (See Romans 8:29).
- **Let go of your anger immediately.** Even if you feel upset at first, don’t let that emotion take root in your life (Eph. 4:26). Releasing your irritation frees you to see God’s purpose in your circumstances.
- **Submit yourself to God’s will.** Joseph faced every trial with a humble heart that was willing to grow and learn. When we believe the Lord’s promises, we are also motivated to surrender to His will in every situation.
- **Demonstrate a spirit of gratitude.** Even in the darkest valley, knowing the Lord has good plans for your life is a powerful motivator of thankfulness.
- **Determine to view the trial as a chance to see God at work.** Choose to approach the situation with hope and a desire to learn.

- **Refuse to listen to unscriptural interpretations of your situation.** No matter how well meaning others are, they are not in your exact situation. Ask God how you are to respond to adverse circumstances.
- **Remain in constant prayer, listening for the Father’s instructions.** God will often use hardship to draw you closer to Himself. Pain, trials, and suffering are all used by the Father to develop your intimate relationship with Him.
- **Do not give in to fluctuating emotions.** When you pray and your situation doesn’t change, you may want to give up. But remember that feelings are often the enemy of obedience, and resist the temptation.
- **Obey God and leave all the consequences to Him.** No matter what, know that the Father loves you and is in control. You can’t go wrong by trusting your entire life to Him.

**RESPONSE**

Are you facing a crisis today? If so, the Lord wants to turn it into an awesome opportunity for you to develop new skills, strengthen your character, and draw you closer to Him. If you obey God and leave all the consequences to Him, He will conform you to the image of His Son and use all situations for your ultimate blessing.

My prayer for you is that you will surrender to the grace and love of the Father, even in the midst of adversity. Then you will be able to turn each crisis of your life into an amazing opportunity to see Him work.

- **Sometimes our initial response to a crisis is anger.** Is it helpful or detrimental to be angry? Have you ever felt a physical relief when you released your anger?
- **How improbable does it sound to be thankful while in the midst of a crisis?** How might it improve your circumstances to give thanks first, and then wait for God’s will?