

Joseph: Showers in the Desert

I've noticed in my life that even during the long, hard years, God was always there. I see the same thing in Joseph's story. And I believe it will be true for you as well.

The Lord will encourage you in big and little ways—a kind word at work that cheers you up, a special time in prayer or reading your Bible, a friend who asks you to lunch with no agenda, warm times with your family. In those special moments, you will sense His goodness or will be reminded that He hasn't forgotten you. These times may feel too brief. But they're real—like a cloud bursting open in the desert that makes flowers bloom in the least likely places.

Think of it like this: When God sends you on a mission, He will also send His favor. Look at the strong connection between God's favor to Joseph and the mystery-shrouded mission God sent him on:

- "The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered" (Gen. 39:2, NIV).
- "When ... the Lord gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor" (vv. 3-4).
- "The Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor" (v. 21).
- "The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did" (v. 23).
- "It was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you" (Gen. 45:5).
- "God sent me ahead of you" (v. 7).
- "It was not you who sent me here, but God" (v. 8).

The simple truth is that we can endure almost any amount of pain if we believe it has a purpose.

Chuck Colson told a story in *Kingdoms in Conflict* about some

prisoners in a Nazi concentration camp. Every day they were forced to fill wheelbarrows with sand and push them from one end of the prison yard to the other, then empty them. The next day they put the sand back in the wheelbarrows, pushed them back to where they started the day before, and emptied them again.

This went on day after day. The prisoners started going crazy. One man collapsed and began to sob uncontrollably. Another man ran into the electric fence and was electrocuted. Why? It was because there was no purpose in his ordeal. It was a form of torture.

You may be enduring something right now that makes no sense to you. It feels like torture. But God has given us the story of Joseph to show us that He never deals with us like those guards in the concentration camp. God always has a higher purpose, a greater good for our lives. And in the midst of even the toughest circumstances, He is at work, not just in the circumstances themselves, but in us—shaping us as His sons to be more usable and beautiful for Him.

The preceding is an excerpt from Patrick Morley's book How God Makes Men, Multnomah, 2013.