

"Trust the One Who Holds YOUR Plan"

A Sermon on Trust, Faith, and God's Unseen Plan

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INTRODUCTION

(Today I am going to continue what I began in my letter last night.)

We all have moments where life doesn't make sense. A door closes. A relationship ends. A diagnosis comes. A dream seems to die. In those moments we cry out — *why is this happening to me?* There are times when we don't understand.

This also happened to the disciples at the final Passover with Jesus when he instituted the new symbols of footwashing, water and wine:

"You do not understand now what I am doing, but someday you will." — John 13:7

This didn't just happen to the disciples. It happened frequently to individuals in the Old Testament, too. Joseph, David, Job, Hagar, Esther, Daniel, Samuel and many others

"These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age." — 1 Corinthians 10:11

These were real people, with real confusion, real pain, and real faith.

Specific Purpose of this Message:

Today we're going to look at seven examples of individuals in the bible who at times must have pondered what was happening in their lives, things they did not understand at the time. Through their stories we will see God has a bigger plan He is working out in our lives, even if we don't understand at the time.

PART ONE: THE BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

1. JOSEPH — Betrayed and Forgotten

"From the pit to the palace — but he couldn't see the palace from the pit."

The events that caused him to question:

- Sold into slavery by his brothers — Genesis 37:23-28

Genesis 37:18 NKJV - Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him.

Genesis 37:19 NKJV - Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming!

Genesis 37:20 NKJV - "Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"

Genesis 37:21 NKJV - But Reuben heard [it], and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him."

Genesis 37:22 NKJV - And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, [but] cast him into this pit which [is] in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"--that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.

Genesis 37:23 NKJV - So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph [of] his tunic, the tunic of [many] colors that [was] on him.

Genesis 37:24 NKJV - Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit [was] empty; [there was] no water in it.

Genesis 37:25 NKJV - And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry [them] down to Egypt.

Genesis 37:26 NKJV - So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit [is there] if we kill our brother and conceal his blood?

Genesis 37:27 NKJV - "Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he [is] our brother [and] our flesh." And his brothers listened.

Genesis 37:28 NKJV - Then Midianite traders passed by; so [the brothers] pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty [shekels] of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

- **Falsely accused by Potiphar's wife — Genesis 39:11-20**

Genesis 39:7 NKJV - And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me."

Genesis 39:8 NKJV - But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what [is] with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand.

Genesis 39:9 NKJV - "[There is] no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you [are] his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Genesis 39:10 NKJV - So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her [or] to be with her.

Genesis 39:11 NKJV - But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house [was] inside,

Genesis 39:12 NKJV - that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside.

Genesis 39:13 NKJV - And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled outside,

Genesis 39:14 NKJV - that she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, "See, he has brought in to us a Hebrew to mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice.

Genesis 39:15 NKJV - "And it happened, when he heard that I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside."

Genesis 39:16 NKJV - So she kept his garment with her until his master came home.

Genesis 39:17 NKJV - Then she spoke to him with words like these, saying, "The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came in to me to mock me;

Genesis 39:18 NKJV - "so it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside."

Genesis 39:19 NKJV - So it was, when his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, saying, "Your servant did to me after this manner," that his anger was aroused.

BUT he received additional training...

Genesis 39:20 NKJV - Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners [were] confined. And he was there in the prison.

Genesis 39:21 NKJV - But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

Genesis 39:22 NKJV - And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who [were] in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing.

- Forgotten in prison by the cupbearer — Genesis 40:23
Genesis 40:23 NKJV - Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

The moment of understanding:

- Joseph reveals himself to his brothers and declares God's purpose:

"But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive." — Genesis 50:20 (NKJV)

- Earlier acknowledgment to his brothers:

"And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance." — Genesis 45:7 (NKJV)

The point: Joseph couldn't see God's hand in his suffering — but God was working through every betrayal, every false accusation, every forgotten day in that prison cell.

2. DAVID — Anointed but Hunted

"He knew the promise, but couldn't see the path."

The events that caused him to question:

- Anointed king, yet hunted like an animal by Saul — 1 Samuel 23:14

1 Samuel 23:14 NKJV - And David stayed in strongholds in the wilderness, and remained in the mountains in the Wilderness of Ziph. Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand.

- His honest cry of confusion:

"How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?" — Psalm 13:1 (NKJV)

- Living in caves, fleeing for his life — 1 Samuel 24:1-3

1 Samuel 24:1 NKJV - Now it happened, when Saul had returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, "Take note! David [is] in the Wilderness of En Gedi."

1 Samuel 24:2 NKJV - Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men on the Rocks of the Wild Goats.

1 Samuel 24:3 NKJV - So he came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there [was] a cave; and Saul went in to attend to his needs. (David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave.)

The moment of understanding:

- David's reflection after God's faithfulness:

"I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works." — Psalm 9:1 (NKJV)

- God's explanation through Nathan the prophet, looking back on His provision:

"I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel." — 2 Samuel 7:8 (NKJV)

The point: David had the promise but not the timeline. Sound familiar? God's promises are sure — but His timing is His own.

3. JOB — When Everything is Stripped Away

"The man who lost everything and still sought God."

The events that caused him to question:

- Loss of children, wealth, and health — Job 1:13-19, Job 2:7

Job 1:13 NKJV - Now there was a day when his sons and daughters [were] eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house;

Job 1:14 NKJV - and a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them,

Job 1:15 NKJV - "when the Sabeans raided [them] and took them away--indeed they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"

Job 1:16 NKJV - While he [was] still speaking, another also came and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"

Job 1:17 NKJV - While he [was] still speaking, another also came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three bands, raided the camels and took them away, yes, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"

Job 1:18 NKJV - While he [was] still speaking, another also came and said, "Your sons and daughters [were] eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house,

Job 1:19 NKJV - "and suddenly a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"

Job 1:20 NKJV - Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped.

Job 2:7 NKJV - So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

- His raw, honest cry:

"Why did I not die at birth? Why did I not perish when I came from the womb?" — Job 3:11 (NKJV)

- His declaration of confusion:

"Behold, I go forward, but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him." — Job 23:8 (NKJV)

The moment of understanding:

- God speaks from the whirlwind — Job 38:1-4

Job 38:1 NKJV - Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said:

Job 38:2 NKJV - "Who [is] this who darkens counsel By words without knowledge?

Job 38:3 NKJV - Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me.

Job 38:4 NKJV - "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell [Me], if you have understanding.

- Job's response after encountering God:

"I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You." — Job 42:5 (NKJV)

- God restores Job:

"And the Lord restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before." — Job 42:10 (NKJV)

The point: Job never got a full explanation — but he got something better. He got a deeper encounter with God. Sometimes understanding comes not as an answer, but as a presence.

4. HAGAR — Cast Out and Forgotten by Everyone but God

"The one on the margins whom God still saw."

The events that caused her to question:

- Cast out into the wilderness with her son — Genesis 21:14

Genesis 21:14 NKJV - So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting [it] on her shoulder, he gave [it] and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba.

- Her moment of despair:

"Let me not see the death of the boy." — Genesis 21:16 (NKJV)

The moment of understanding:

- God hears and responds:

"What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is." — Genesis 21:17 (NKJV)

- Earlier, when she first fled, she gave God a name that has never been forgotten:

Genesis 16:9 NKJV - The Angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand."

Genesis 16:10 NKJV - Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude."

*"Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her,
You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, 'Have I also here seen Him who sees
me?'" — Genesis 16:13 (NKJV)*

The point: Hagar had no covenant, no promise, no community. She was alone and afraid. And yet God saw her. If you feel invisible today — El Roi sees you.

5. ESTHER — Called to the Impossible

"She didn't choose her moment — but she rose to meet it."

The events that caused her to question:

- Faced with approaching the king uninvited — a potentially fatal act — Esther 4:11
- Her moment of fear and hesitation — Esther 4:9-11

Esther 4:11 NKJV - "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, [he has] but one law: put [all] to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days."

The moment of understanding:

- Mordecai's words reframe everything:

*"Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" —
Esther 4:14 (NKJV)*

- Her courageous response:

*"And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!" —
Esther 4:16 (NKJV)*

The point: Esther's story shows that sometimes understanding comes not after the trial — but in the middle of it. Mordecai's words gave her enough to take the next step. Sometimes that's all we need.

6. DANIEL — Faithful When It Cost Everything

"The lion's den wasn't a punishment — it was a platform."

The events that caused him to question:

- Thrown into the lion's den for praying

Daniel 6:5 NKJV - Then these men said, "We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find [it] against him concerning the law of his God."

Daniel 6:6 NKJV - So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: "King Darius, live forever!"

Daniel 6:7 NKJV - "All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.

Daniel 6:8 NKJV - "Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter."

Daniel 6:9 NKJV - Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.

- The king's own anguish reflects the uncertainty of the moment:

*"Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you." — Daniel 6:16 (NKJV)
(spoken with hope but not certainty)*

The moment of understanding:

- God shuts the lions' mouths — Daniel 6:22

Daniel 6:21 NKJV - Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever!"

Daniel 6:22 NKJV - "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."

- The king's proclamation afterward reveals the purpose:

"For He is the living God, and steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed." — Daniel 6:26 (NKJV)

The point: Daniel's faithfulness in the den became a testimony to an entire kingdom. What feels like your lowest moment may be your greatest witness.

7. SAMUEL — Young, Inexperienced, and Called Anyway

"God speaks to those who don't yet know His voice."

The events that caused him to question:

- Samuel hears God's voice but doesn't recognize it — 1 Samuel 3:4-7

"Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, nor was the word of the Lord yet revealed to him." — 1 Samuel 3:7 (NKJV)

The moment of understanding:

- Eli helps him recognize God's voice — 1 Samuel 3:8-9

1 Samuel 3:8 NKJV - And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. So he arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you did call me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD had called the boy.

1 Samuel 3:9 NKJV - Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and it shall be, if He calls you, that you must say, 'Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears.' " So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

- Samuel's obedience leads to a lifetime of hearing God clearly:

"So Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground." — 1 Samuel 3:19 (NKJV)

The point: You don't have to have it all figured out for God to work with you. Samuel's story is an encouragement to the young, the new believer, and anyone who feels unqualified.

PART TWO: THE THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

These weren't just interesting ancient stories. They point us to timeless truths about who God is and how He works.

God has a plan — and it is good:

"For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." — Jeremiah 29:11

God is accessible in the confusion:

"Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." — Jeremiah 29:12-13

God's plans cannot be derailed:

"The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations." — Psalm 33:11 (NKJV)

God personally guides us:

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye." — Psalm 32:8 (NKJV)

Everything — even the painful things — is being worked together:

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." — Romans 8:28 (NKJV)

Conclusion:

The ultimate assurance — nothing can separate us:

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." — Romans 8:35, 37 (NKJV)

Circle back to your anchor verse:

"You do not understand now what I am doing, but someday you will." — John 13:7

Joseph didn't understand the pit.

Samuel didn't understand why he had to leave his mother.

David didn't understand the cave.

Esther didn't understand why she was made queen.

Job didn't understand the silence.

Hagar didn't understand the wilderness.

Daniel didn't understand the lions den.

But God did. He always did. And He understands whatever you are walking through right now.

You may not see the bigger picture today. But He does. And He **is** working in your life.

2 Corinthians 13:5 NKJV - Examine yourselves [as to] whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? ...

Proverbs 3:5 NKJV - Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;

Proverbs 3:6 NKJV - In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

Trust the One Who Holds YOUR Plan... in HIS hands!