

40 Days, Week 2

HS=Hannah Schindler

LT=Lysa TerKeurst

[Music]

HS: Hi and welcome, friends! If you are studying with us live, then you know First 5 and Online Bible Studies are doing this study together! If you're doing this later, whether it's an archived OBS study or in the First 5 app, we're so excited you are here. Each weekend, we have an audio teaching to connect the chapters we studied this past week. This is where we will be able to dig deeper into the Scripture and content we studied together. So, we just finished Week 2 of our study, *The Answers to Your Deepest Longings: 40 Days through the Bible*. My name is Hannah Schindler, and I get to serve on the First 5 team here at Proverbs 31 Ministries. Today, we have a special teaching from our president, Lysa TerKeurst. This teaching will be a little different because Lysa recorded this as a podcast episode for our Proverbs 31 Ministries Podcast! So, if you didn't know we had a podcast, now you know, and you will have to check it out. It's so amazing. I'm going to go ahead and read the Major Moments from this week before Lysa starts her teaching.

- Genesis 50: God rescued Joseph from his murderous brothers, and in return, through Joseph, God saved his brothers from famine.
- Exodus 1: Over time, Israel became enslaved in Egypt and longed for freedom. Exodus 3: God saved Moses' life and called him to lead the Israelites.
- Exodus 9: God parted the Red Sea and rescued Israel from Egypt.
- Exodus 20: God gave the Ten Commandments.

HS: Okay friends, this is going to be such a special and wonderful teaching from Lysa. I hope that you all have your pen and paper and Bible ready because I know that you are going to want to take amazing notes. Enjoy!

LT: Today, I want to talk about no matter what season of life you're in, number one: recognizing that with seasons there needs to be a recognized transition. I'm encouraging that that recognized transition is what do I need to release? One of the best activities of release is forgiveness. I think that there's such a multiplied impact of unforgiveness. If we hold on to unforgiveness as we step from this season into the next season, then a breaking will happen, just like the picture of those trees. When we hold on from one season into a new season, we're going to take on too much.

LT: There's this beautiful thing called releasing that can happen if we will intentionally recognize that forgiveness is a beautiful transition point from one season to the next.

So, I want to go to the Bible and really illustrate the multiplied impact of unforgiveness, but also the beautiful reality of what can happen when we choose to forgive. One of my favorite verses in the Bible is Genesis 50:20; it says this, "*you intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.*" I love that verse. I love taking that verse sometimes and using it in a situation where someone has deeply hurt me or offended me. I will often preach a message to myself: look, Lysa, that person intended to harm you. Or even if I feel like the enemy is causing some attack in my life. Look, the enemy is intending to harm you, Lysa, but God intends it for good. God can take anything and use it for good. It will not only be to help you get better in your life, but it will be for the saving of other people. It will give you an experience by which you can relate to fellow humans and help them as well. Love that verse, but the context of this story and what Joseph, the person that said this verse, what he had to go through to get to this revelation.

LT: Well, it was 13 years of extreme hardship. And this extreme hardship required Joseph to get to this place. But Genesis 50 comes after many seasons and after Joseph has gone through the process of learning to forgive. "*You intended to harm me,*" he's saying this to his brothers, "*but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.*" Now that's in Genesis 50. Let's go back and find the true context of the story. Genesis 37, it starts off by saying in verse 2, "*This is the account of Jacob's family line.*" Now first, I want to say something. If somebody is about to give an account of their family line, I would expect a couple of things. I would expect it to go in order. I would expect them to start off with Jacob's oldest son and work down to the youngest son. Right? I would expect them to highlight the good parts of Jacob's family. I would not expect them to start off the family line by highlighting one of the younger brothers. I wouldn't start out by highlighting some dysfunction in the family. Right? Yet, this is part of the beauty of the Bible that God allows His divinity to be mixed and intermingled with messy humanity.

LT: That is what we see in Genesis 37:2. "*This is the account of Jacobs family line. Joseph, a young man of seventeen,*" see this is already bothering me because Joseph is like one of the younger brothers. I don't know why we're starting with Joseph. But wait, it gets even better than that. "*Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.*" See the dysfunction is already being highlighted here. Not only are we starting out with Joseph, which seems odd to me, but we're also starting out with Joseph tattle-tailing on his brothers. Joseph! Joseph! You see, Joseph was 17, and when you're 17, sometimes you don't know what you don't know. So, Joseph, I think it's important to know too that Joseph has a major calling on his life. God is going to use Joseph to be a leader, but sometimes leadership comes in an amateur package. That immature package is what Joseph is about to put on

display here. So verse 3 says, *“Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him.”* Israel is another name for Jacob, which — just to give you a little Bible history here — Jacob, this family line that we're talking about from Jacob is going to come 12 sons; these 12 sons are going to make up the 12 tribes of Israel. So, this is the birthplace, if you will, for this entire nation of Israel. The people that were prophesied by God to Abraham, that God would bring people that would outnumber the stars and the sands. Right? So now we see it coming about. Here comes this family line, here comes the whole nation of Israel, and it's going to start out from this family line where we already see some dysfunction.

LT: I don't know, but you that kind of gives me a little hope for my family line. Now Israel or Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other sons. Hello dysfunctional clue #2. Right? Because he had been born to him in his old age, and he made an ornate rope for him, and when his brothers saw that his father loved him more than any of them. How do you think that was working for the whole family dynamic? Not particularly good because his brothers, it says in the Scripture they hated him. Joseph's brothers hated him and could not speak a kind word to him. So, in the middle of all this dysfunction, Joseph has a dream. But instead of Joseph being self-aware enough, like “Hey, maybe I should probably keep this revelation, this dream to myself.” No, Joseph is 17. He doesn't know what he doesn't know. Here we go. *“Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. He said to them, ‘Listen to this dream I had: We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it.’”*

LT: Now y'all, I'm sorry, but I mean Jojo, come on. You know? That's like going up to somebody who already doesn't like you and being so braggadocious, like “oh you think you don't like me now? Well, one day you are going to bow down to me. Okay?” But Joseph is 17. He doesn't know what he doesn't know. Leadership, this is a leadership revelation that God has given him. That he is going to be a man of leadership. But he is disqualifying himself from being able to lead these brothers because he has not properly handled this responsibility of leadership that he's been given. So, it says now that his brothers hated him. In verse 8, *“His brothers said to him, ‘Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?’ And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.”* So, you'd think at this point, Joseph would learn to tone it down. Nope! Because he's 17, you don't know what you don't know. Right? In verse 9, *“Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. ‘Listen,’ he said, ‘I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.’ When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, ‘What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?’ His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept*

the matter in mind.” In verse 12, “*Now his brothers had gone to graze their father’s flocks near Shechem,*” and the father Jacob or the Bible calls him Israel is going to send Joseph to check on the brothers.

LT: Well when the brothers see Joseph coming from a distance, if it were modern day, they would start texting each other — “OMG here comes that dreamer.” Right? So, this is not going to be a welcome reception, and we find that in verse 18. “*But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him.*” Verse 19, “*‘Here comes that dreamer!’ they said to each other. ‘Come now, let’s kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we’ll see what comes of his dreams.’*” Alright so one of the brothers says, “well let’s just wait a minute — maybe we shouldn’t kill him.” And then another brother says, “I know! Instead of killing him, let’s make a profit from him.” So it says in verse 26, “*Judah said to his brothers, ‘What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.’ His brothers agreed.*” Verse 28, “*So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.*”

LT: Now, I want to say at this point that what’s happening here to Joseph, we cannot miss the humanity of the experience he’s having. Okay, so really let’s think about this a moment. We can laugh about the situation, but when you’re in the midst of a difficult situation, this would be very difficult. All you can see is what’s in front of you. But here’s what I want to challenge everyone listening today. There’s what we see, and then at the same time, there’s what God is doing. So, the brothers are discussing what to do. They come up with the plan to tear the rope, to dip it in animals’ blood, to take it to the father, and convince the father that Joseph has died. Jacob’s father is weeping for him. Verse 36, and if you write in your Bible, I want you to circle this first word of verse 36, “*meanwhile.*” If you happen to be taking notes today for this podcast, I’d like for you to title this message, “There’s Always a Meanwhile.” “Meanwhile,” it says in verse 36 of Genesis 37, “*Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh’s officials, the captain of the guard.*”

LT: Now for time sake, I want us to go all the way to Genesis 39, which is for Joseph to pick back up. But while we’re making this transition, I want you to really think. Think about what Joseph felt right now. Think about how Joseph would have analyzed his life right now in this season. All Joseph could probably see is the rejection by the brothers. But remember there’s what we see and then there’s what God is doing. Those two realities are always operating not only in Joseph’s life but in our life as well. In our life, there’s always a meanwhile. So, what Joseph sees as a rejection, God is seeing as a protection on the calling on Joseph’s life. Remember, God had given Joseph a vision to

be a leader. He just didn't handle that situation at 17 very well. So, his brothers rejected him. Because he could not leave there, God gets him out of a situation where he cannot fulfill his calling and puts him in a situation where he can practice leadership. God is more interested in developing Joseph's character to match his calling than in comforting Joseph and getting him out of the situation that he's in. I guarantee you, as Joseph is being probably bound and led by these strangers into a strange land, he is probably begging God: "don't let this happen. Let my brothers feel bad for what they've done. Let them come and get me. Please let my father see the truth that I'm not really dead." But all the while, God is loving Joseph too much to answer Joseph's prayer request. Don't miss this. Because it does not feel like a good God should allow this kind of situation. But here's one of the complex realities of God.

LT: We serve a God who will allow hurt. But before you park on that statement, I want to also remember we also serve a God who will take that hurt and use it for good. Remember one of the blessings of Joseph's story is we can read it with Genesis 50:20 in mind. Where Joseph eventually gets to the point, "*you intended to harm me,*" but God will use this and has used this for good for the saving of many many lives. Right? But Joseph doesn't see this now. However, one of the blessings of reading this story is that while we know Joseph can't see it, maybe by reading his story, we can start to see it in our life. I want you to think about a situation where someone's really wronged you, and could it be that what you felt was a terrible rejection that God is using it or has used it as a protection of a calling that God has in your life? You may not feel it. You may not see it, and you probably do not want to live through it. However, we get to see it in Joseph's story, and that gives me so much encouragement. Listen, I'm telling you what over these past couple years in my life, I have experienced some very extreme rejection. Some deep hurt and some deep pain. Sometimes, the only thing that helped me release the pain of that season so I could move on freely into this season without breaking was even before I could see it standing on reality. What they intended to do to harm me, God will use for good and it will be for the saving of many lives.

LT: I'm telling you that one verse has saved me. That's why I think it's so important for us to look at this. Now at this point, Joseph is in Potiphar's home. Genesis 39:1, "*Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there.*" Now don't miss this. Despite the fact that Joseph was in pain, despite the fact that he was still wrestling with his brother's rejection, I'm sure he still honored God right where he was. He still had to make the choice to release that situation and let God take care of it, even though his brothers weren't coming to him saying, "We're so sorry for what we did." However, Joseph was somehow able to set that aside and still honor the Lord right where he was at. We know that from verse 2, "*The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When*

his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned.”

LT: Okay, really think about this now. What is Joseph doing? He's leading. He's practicing leadership. He's just been put in charge of a household and he entrusted everything he owned to Joseph's care. Okay, things don't go great for Joseph. At this point, I want us to just pause and think. We want Joseph's story to tie up in a neat nice bow. Okay, just keep Joseph there. Joseph has finally reached a good place, let's just keep in there. But remember: God is developing Joseph's character to match his calling. Joseph is practicing leadership. Now Potiphar's wife, it goes on to say that she takes a liking to Joseph — actually kind of loose translation but basically, she thinks he's hot. It gets spicy up here. I'm just telling you. Whoever thinks that the Old Testament is boring. Nope! Because actually, the way that she phrases it, and I will give you a direct quote from the Bible in Genesis 39:7, *“and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, ‘Come to bed with me!’”* She makes advances towards Joseph several times. Joseph resists, but eventually she gets so tired of Joseph resisting, there's an encounter where he resists her one last time. She falsely accuses Joseph and Joseph gets thrown into prison. Okay? You got to read all the details of the story. Go back and read it on your own. Why do we want to watch reality TV when the Bible is this good? Here we go.

LT: So, verse 20 of Genesis 39, *“Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined. But while Joseph was there in the prison,”* — Okay, now look. Remember, there's what Joseph sees, and then there's what God is doing. Joseph sees a problem. Joseph sees commotion. It seems like unnecessary problems and commotion that Potiphar's wife is putting him through. False accusations — that's painful. Right? But what Joseph sees as a problem and as unnecessary commotion, God is going to see as a promotion of Joseph leadership. Look at the very next verse, halfway through verse 20. *“But while Joseph was there in the prison the Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. So, the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there.”* It's a promotion. He's getting promoted to be in charge, to lead even more. He's not just leading a household. Now he's leading all those in prison. He's putting together systems. He's practicing leadership on some real hard people. Right? Like if you can lead the people in prison, if you can lead there, you might be able to lead anywhere. Right?

LT: Look at how God is entrusting more and more and more. Because, remember, the calling on Joseph's life is to be a leader. The calling on our life is probably not going to take shape exactly the way we would want it to take shape. But we can look at Joseph's

story and get so much encouragement from that. It says in verse 23, "*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.*" Now while he is in prison, he meets two people, significant encounters: a cup bearer and a baker. Things don't go well for the baker. You can go read all about that. With these two men, he interprets dreams. Things go a little better for the cup bearer. The cup bearer eventually gets released from prison, and Joseph says — and we can see how Joseph is still not happy about his situation. Even though he is honoring God, and God is giving him success. remember there's what Joseph sees, and then there's what God is doing. This is such a clue. Joseph doesn't really see this grand plan of God unfolding. Right? Just like I often don't see that as well.

LT: So look at this in verse 14 of Genesis 40: "*But when all goes well with you,*" this is Joseph talking to the cup bearer, "*remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison. I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon.*" That does not sound like a man who's like "that's okay. There's what I see and then there's what God is doing." Right? Joseph's like "I'm in the middle of being deeply hurt by people. When people say things about me that are not true. When I feel the sting of rejection, I am not going, 'That's okay.' Whoa, man. It's God's protection; it's God's promotion. I'm just going to walk in that." But maybe as I mature, maybe I can look at Joseph's story and I can start releasing some of those things so that I can take on the beauty of what God wants to entrust me with in this next season. So, Joseph does not feel like he's been given a promotion here in prison, and he's probably aggravated because the cup bearer gets out. The cup bearer does not remember Joseph, doesn't remember him. Because look at this Genesis 41:1, "*When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream: He was standing by the Nile.*" That cup bearer had left Joseph in that prison for two full years. However, I want to think about something important. If the cup bearer would have gotten out and mentioned Joseph to Pharaoh, Joseph may have been released from prison. However, that would not have been a blessing for the calling on Joseph's life. Because Joseph had to stay there for two more years to wait for Pharaoh to have a dream, because now the cup bearer is going to remember Joseph. When we learn Genesis 41, the cup bearer remembers Joseph when Pharaoh can't find anyone to interpret the dream. He's like "I just had a V8 moment," right? "There's this Hebrew man, he's in the prison. He can interpret your dream." I want you to look at Genesis 41:14: "*So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was quickly brought from the dungeon. When he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came before Pharaoh.*" You know when it is God's right time, it'll be immediate. God loves us too much to answer our prayer at any other time than the right time.

LT: So, Joseph is now going to have an audience with Pharaoh, which is crucial because Joseph's calling on his life is to be a leader. If he would have been released

from prison, he would have never had an audience with Pharaoh except right now, and two years had to pass for this moment to happen. Joseph then interprets Pharaoh's dream. Basically, the dream is that there's going to be seven years of plenty and then seven years of famine. When Joseph presents interpretation of the dream, he also is presenting a system by which Pharaoh can ensure the safety of the people. Now, where would Joseph have learned to take a dream and turn it into leadership systems that will work to help people? He learned it at Potiphar's house when he was held in Potiphar's house, and he was a slave there, but he led Potiphar's house, and he learned how to develop systems, and where else did he learn, in prison, an even bigger place to practice developing systems? So, you see what Joseph saw as a rejection ... What Joseph saw as a problem, God saw as a protection of his calling and a promotion to help Joseph get where he needs to be. Pharaoh likes Joseph's plans so much that he then puts him in charge. He becomes the second most powerful man in all the world. He goes from prison to power in an instant because it was God's right time. But it's kind of like when people tell me about my books that have appeared on a bestseller list. People often say, "how does it feel to be an overnight success?" I'm like, "girlfriend that is called being an overnight success that took 25 years in the making." Right? Joseph was not taken from prison to power in that instant. He had been prepared. Now he's almost 30 years old. It took 13 years. So, what happens eventually is there are seven years of plenty then there's seven years of famine. The famine extends all the way to Israel, which is where Joseph's brothers are. So, the brothers come to Egypt looking for food, having no idea that Joseph is in power, and then they go through a process of engaging with Joseph. Joseph recognizes them. They don't recognize him. Joseph really must work through some forgiveness. But look at where Joseph lands. He lands in Genesis 50:20: *"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."*

LT: So, for this week, I want to just kind of park here. I want to park on this reality that always in our life, one of the most crucial things we need to remember about forgiveness is what we see is not all that there is. There's what we see in the situation, the hurt, the betrayal, the person whispering about us or back talking about us or the person doing us wrong. That's what we see, but I wonder if we could just take a step back and release some of that so that we are free to take on a new revelation from the Lord. The Lord at the same time is doing something good. We may not feel good, but we can stand in the truth and in the courage after reading Joseph's story that good is there. Alright, so talk to me. Next week, we're going to talk a little bit more about how we forgive and some of the dangers of the multiplied impact of unforgiveness. But for this week, I want to just go ahead and sit in this place. I call this a foundational teaching because if we learn to forgive, I promise it will change the way we see our lives and it will change the relationships that we have in our life.

HS: Well, friends, I hope that you enjoyed that teaching as much as I did. I took so many notes. Some of the things that Lysa talked about this topic of forgiveness. Our longing for this week was the longing for freedom. But I love how forgiveness and freedom go hand in hand. So, we saw Joseph in Genesis, and we got to hear a lot about his story. I just want to read some of the things that Lysa shared with us. She said, "God allows His divinity to be mixed and intermingled with messy humanity." Thank God that we have our Savior who does that. One of her favorite statements that I try to remember often is that "God doesn't answer our prayers at any time but at the right time." I don't know what you were going through today. I don't know what you've been going through in the past couple of months. Maybe it's been a few years. But I want you to know that God is still listening, and He is still going to answer those prayers. And even when it's not making sense, of maybe the hurt that you've experienced or the overwhelming feelings that you have, God is still there. I pray today that you, like Lysa shared, take a step back and release some of that so that we're free to take on a new revelation from the Lord.

HS: Friends, I hope that you've loved this teaching again as much as I did. I'm going to go ahead and close this in prayer. Father God, we thank You so much that You do not leave us where we are, God. We thank You, Lord, that You allow us to step into freedom and forgiveness with Your help, God. Lord, I pray for each and every one of our friends who are listening today that they take the time to pause and see how You have been faithful in the past, and You're being faithful even in the present, even when it doesn't make sense to us, God. Lord I don't know what everybody's going through, but You do, Lord. So, Lord, I pray that You hear the cries of their hearts. I pray, Lord, that we all just lean into You, and so like Joseph, he saw the rejection, but God saw it as protection. I pray, Lord, in the midst of any rejections we may be experiencing, we can see it as You are protecting us. Lord, we love You, we thank You, we give You all the praise, all the honor and all the glory, and thank You for sending Your son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins and being raised from the dead so that we can have life, eternal life, with You. Jesus, we love You, and we thank You and praise You. In Jesus' name, amen.