

The Life Challenge

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10

Series: Live by Faith...Dream for More
Title: Doing Well When Life's Not Well
Text: Genesis 39
Speaker: Matt Ewert
Date: May 12, 2019



WARM-UP

Share one personal "take away" from this past weekend's worship service.

DISCUSSION

Read Genesis 39. What stands out to you as you read this narrative?

Pastor Matt suggested this weekend that "sometimes the way forward is down."

- Has this ever happened in your life? Have you experienced setbacks that, in hindsight, were stepping stones to something God was doing in your life?

How do you find yourself doing life when life's not well?

- When you find yourself in a season of life where you feel like things are going the wrong direction:
 - * What are the feelings that you predominantly experience? (anger, worry, frustration, numbness, hope, optimism, etc.)
 - * What kind of actions, or reactions, do you tend to engage in? (Going into "fix-it" mode, withdrawal, distracting yourself with certain habits, keeping yourself busy, prayer, seeking advice from others, etc.)
 - * Are there portions of scripture that you cling to or meditate on when life's not well? Share those with the group, and explain why they give you hope.

Read Romans 5:1-5

Of this passage, N.T. Wright says that Paul "...sees a steady progression in which God uses our sufferings for the same purpose as he gives us his own presence and love: to transform us into the truly human people we were made to be. That progression leads from patience to character, and from character to hope. We live in a world that wants everything immediately; that has no stability of character except a hollow media image; that wanders this way and that because it has no idea where it might be going."

- Are you able to celebrate in your sufferings as Paul says?
- Can you identify good things that have come about in your life as the result of seasons of hardship?

Pastor Matt made the statement that life is both confidently settled (verses 1-6a; 21-23) and profoundly uncertain (verses 6b-20).

- Which end of that spectrum best describes the current season of life you are in? Or are you experiencing life as a mix of both right now?
- If you are able, share why you answered as you did.

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DISCUSSION

Take time to pray for one another, specific to the season of life that they have just described being in.

(Life Group Leaders: We would love to have feedback in regards to any questions your group has from this, or any future Life Group discussion. While we may not be able to engage in every question, we are looking to create a forum by which to carry on the conversation and engage with feedback and questions as we are able. Please use the form at <https://www.southabbotsford.com/Messages> to interact in this way.)



GENERATIONS

Here's what our families are discussing together this week:

*We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better. **Colossians 1:9b-10***

Warm - Up: How does it feel to get in trouble when you didn't do anything wrong? Describe a situation like this that happened to you or someone else.

We HEARD: Read from Genesis 39-41.

We KNOW: God sent Joseph to E_____ and blessed him so that he rose to a position of great authority. God used Joseph to help Joseph's family and many others. When Jesus came to earth, He gave up His position of honor in heaven to be the S_____ of the world.

We LIVE: What do you think this means: "Sometimes the way forward is down." How does going through hard times help grow us into all that God has planned for us? What does Philippians 2:6-8 say? How did Jesus' and Joseph's lives show this statement to be true? How do we respond when things in life seem to be going the wrong way? Who is with us in good and bad times?

We PRAY: Lord God, thank you for being with us always. Help us to choose faithfulness, and to believe in your faithfulness, even when life seems to be moving us down and not up. We know you are good at all times and we can trust you.

Family Activity: Bake bread together as a family. Give different members different roles, like measuring, mixing, kneading, or shaping the dough. Talk about the baker and cupbearer. Discuss how God used them in His plan.