**Thursday, February 20th, 2020**

**The Hardest Places**

**Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea. Genesis 41:49**

Geoff is a youth pastor today in the same city where he once abused heroin. God transformed both his heart and his circumstances in a breathtaking way. “I want to keep kids from making the same mistakes and suffering the pain I went through,” Geoff said. “And Jesus will help them.” Over time, God set him free from the slavery of addiction and has given him a vital ministry in spite of his past.

God has ways of bringing unexpected good out of situations where hope seems lost. Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt and falsely accused and sent to prison, where he was forgotten for years. But God restored him and placed him in a position of authority directly under Pharaoh, where he was able to save many lives—including the lives of his brothers who’d abandoned him. There in Egypt Joseph married and had children. He named the second Ephraim (drawn from the Hebrew term for “twice fruitful”), and gave this reason: “It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering” (Genesis 41:52).

Geoff’s and Joseph’s stories, while separated by three to four thousand years, point to the same unchanging truth: even the hardest places in our lives can become fertile ground for God to help and bless many. Our Savior’s love and power never change, and He’s always faithful to those who trust in Him.

*When have you seen God bring something good out of difficulty in your life? How can you use your past problems to encourage others today?*

*All-powerful Father, I praise You that nothing is too hard for You! Thank You for Your perfect faithfulness, today and forever*