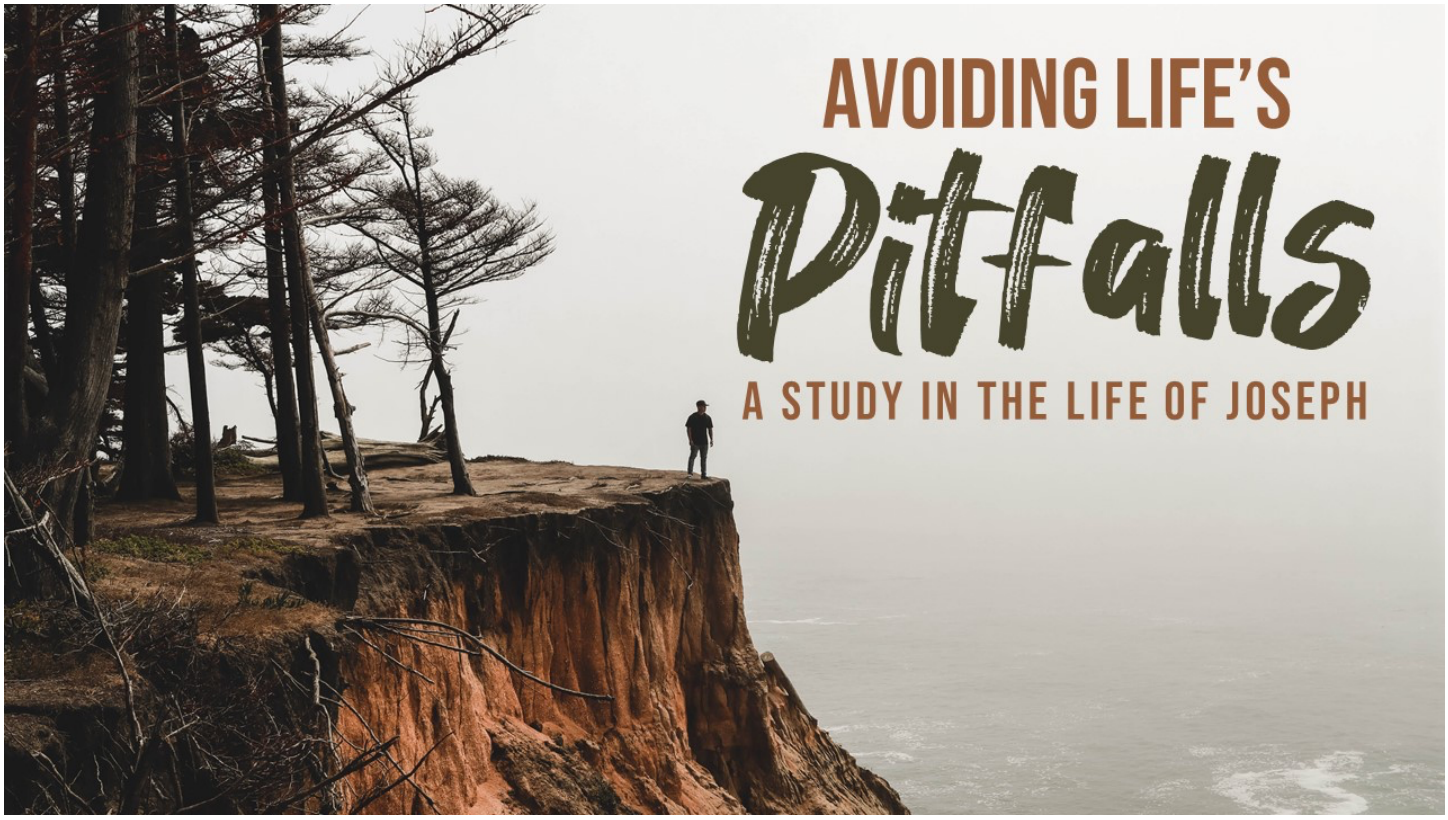

Title: Avoiding Life's Pitfalls- The Pitfall of Hard Times- Session 4
Scripture: Genesis 41:28-32, 47-54
Subject: Crisis
Central Theme: Responding to Crisis
Objective Statement: Here are three truths about crisis that will help us to avoid the pitfall of difficult times.
Keyword: Truths

Introduction:

Connection:

- There are things that happen in history that become markers in time for people.
- Often these things are crisis that happen in their lives.
    - I remember coming back from speaking at a spring-break camp in March of 2020 for my uncle Barri Evans.
    - When I got back from that trip with our whole family, I went in to work, and remember that they called all of us in.
    - We were being told that the governor was going to shut us down for 14 days.
    - Do you remember 14 days to slow the spread?

    - We were in one of our Sunday School classrooms watching the governors conference, and I remember saying to my boss, "I hope this doesn't last more than the two weeks. I hope it doesn't go to 4 weeks." I remember him telling me, "4 weeks! We better not go four weeks. How could we handle that?"
- I believe Covid will be that way for us and for our children.
- 9/11 and the twin towers were that way for people.
- I have read that the bombing of Pearl Harbor had that kind of an effect on people, too.

Tension:

- There is no doubt that 2020 and 2021 were much different than 2018-2019.
- We live in a time where there is agreement on one thing- We are living in very turbulent times.
- Sometimes that turbulence spills over into our own personal lives.
- People's health and jobs have been impacted.
- It's also been a time of incredible and increasing division.
- The country is divided.
- Families have been divided.
- There have been churches that have been divided over many issues in this crisis.
- And here we find ourselves, Thanksgiving week 2021, steal dealing with turmoil and difficulty- and yes even crisis, and again we find the Bible to be so relevant.
- Joseph found himself in a place where he had personally dealt with individual crisis in his life.
    - Over the last 3 weeks we saw him deal with the pitfalls of:
        - Betrayal.
        - Temptation.
        - Injustice.
- As we got through the end of the text last week, we find Joseph being forgotten even thought He had done so much that was right.
- God had been sovereign and used all of these personal crises to get him exactly where he needed to be.
- He had been brought to Egypt.
- He had learned the culture and the language as a slave in Potiphar's house.

- He had showed himself faithful in the prison even when he had been falsely accused and forgotten.
- He gained experience interpreting dreams.
- And his faithfulness to live as though God was with him had lead him to be called on by Pharaoh in the palace.
- Pharaoh had a dream and he needed someone to interpret it for him.
- The butler remembered Joseph and told Pharaoh about Joseph.
- Joseph came and heard the dreams.
- And guess what the dreams were about? They were about crisis.
- I know that this doesn't seem like a thanksgiving text to do at a thanksgiving service, but I want you to hang on. God has used this to help me in this season, and I think he will help you, too.
- There are right ways and wrong ways to respond in crisis.
- Joseph helps us to avoid pitfalls that we can fall into in times of crisis.

Truth:

Here are three truths about crisis that will help us to avoid the pitfall of difficult times.

1. Crisis is seasonal. V.28-32

Genesis 41:28-54

(28) This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh.

- We don't necessarily understand this as we read it with 21st century, American ears, but Joseph was talking to a leader who proported himself to be a deity.
- So when he interprets the dream, gives credit to God, and tells Pharoah, who thinks he's a God, that the God of the Hebrews is going to do something, that takes some courage.
- What was the interpretation of the dream?

(29) Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt:

(30) And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land;

(31) And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous.

(32) And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

- There are going to be good times for the next seven years, and then there are going to be times of crisis.
- Time's of plenty followed by times of famine is what is foretold.

Application

- While God doesn't always forecast in dreams when crisis is going to happen…
- And also while times of crisis and times of plenty aren't always in seven year increments like this…
- There is something that is similar to our experience:
    - Crisis is seasonal.
    - Difficult times are potentially seasonal.
- Life is not usually all mountain tops or all valleys.
- Life is usually a series of hills and dales.
- Some seasons are better than others.
- Someone once said that their favorite statement in the Bible is "it came to pass".
- I like that, too.
- How things are for you right now may not be exactly how things always are.
- So, we can be encouraged on the one hand that crisis is seasonal, but we must be warned on the other hand that prosperity and good times can be temporary as well.
- You know what you call everlasting happiness, contentment, joy, and plenty? Heaven!
- We believe that Jesus is coming back, but that doesn't preclude our need to do this second thing that we know about crisis.

Here are three truths about crisis that will help us to avoid the pitfall of difficult times.

1. Crisis is seasonal. V.28-32

2. Crisis demands a plan. V.33-50

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(33) Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the

land of Egypt.

- Now this part is interesting.
- Again, remember who Joseph is talking to here.
- He was invited to interpret the dream.
- He was not necessarily invited to give advice as to what the government of the land ought to do to respond.
- He wasn't even sure that the Pharaoh would believe in the interpretation of the dream or of the God to whom this dream was given credit to by Joseph.
- Joseph was being bold to not only give Pharoah the interpretation, but he was bold to give him a plan.
- The plan started with needing a leader. *"Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt."*
- Problems are often solved by leaders.
- It takes leaders to help solve problems.
- Joseph had demonstrated this at Potiphar's house and in the prison.
- So the plan included leaders.
- It also included a hierarchy.

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(34) Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years.

(35) And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities.

(36) And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.

- The plan also included being wise and saving in times of plenty knowing that times of crisis would come.
- This is still a great plan.
- If you spend everything you have when you get it, this is not a good plan.
- Crisis will come. Are you ready for when it comes?
- This is the plan that Joseph proposes.
- Joseph had been prepared for this moment.

- He had been prepared with people management, asset management, crisis management, dream interpretation, and dealing with people.
- He was prepared, and now he had made his proposal. Look at what happened.

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(37) And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants.

(38) And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?

- Even unbelieving Pharaoh believed that God was with him.
- Look at what else he told him:

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(39) And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art:

(40) Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.

- Have we heard that phrase before? “only in the throne will I be greater than thou”.

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(41) And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

(42) And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;

(43) And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.

(44) And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

- Talk about an upgrade.
- From the pit, to Potiphar’s house, to the prison and now to the palace.
- Joseph believed that God was with him during crisis, and he gave Joseph the ability to handle crisis.
- Joseph believed God and proposed a great plan for dealing with crisis.
- Now God was blessing him and using him.

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(45) And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.

- There is some argument over what Zaphnathpaaneah means.
    - Some say it means “The Nourisher of the Two Lands, the Living One”
    - Others say “a revealer of secrets” or “the man to whom secretes are revealed”.
    - Jerome says this name signified in Egyptian “Savtorem mundi” or “the Savior of the world.”
- It was certainly a title of honor.

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(46) And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

- So here comes the plenteous years just as God predicted.

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(47) And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls.

(48) And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same.

(49) And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number.

(50) And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him.

Here are three truths about crisis that will help us to avoid the pitfall of difficult times.

1. Crisis is seasonal. V.28-32
2. Crisis demands a plan. V.33-50

3. Crisis can help us to trust God. V.51-54

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(51) And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.

- Manasseh means “causing to forget”.
- Joseph sure did have a lot that would have been healthy for him to forget.
    - The coddling of his dad.

  - The betrayal of his brothers.
  - The lying of Potiphar's wife.
  - The treatment by Potiphar throwing him in jail.
- See he believed that God used all of those things- all of those crisis for his current place.

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(52) And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

- Ephraim means double fruit.
- God had used Joseph's affliction to prosper Joseph. He also used Joseph's affliction to prepare him to lead the Egyptians to manage prosperity and the crisis that followed well.
- Joseph had put his faith in God in his own crisis. He had learned to trust God.
- And now that trust was paying off dividends.

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(53) And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended.

(54) And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

Conclusion:

- Joseph's circumstance reminds me of Jesus.
- Paul said this in 2 Corinthians 8:9:

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2 Corinthians 8:9

(9) For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

- God used crisis and difficulty to help Joseph learn how to manage prosperity and future crisis.
- Joseph could be trusted with the pit, Potiphars house, prison, and now he could be trusted in the palace.
- Joseph's perspective on his own affliction is telling. This is where it connects to thanksgiving for us.
- Joseph's crisis did not make him bitter.

- Joseph's crisis taught him, and was used to make an incredible difference.
- As we have experienced this past year, we can be bitter.
- There are many things that many of us can dwell upon and complain.
- Or we can choose to be grateful, knowing that God is growing us in the midst of crisis for a better plan than we could ever come up with.
- In my Discipleship group we had this memory verse this week:
- "In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." 1 Thessalonians 5:18
- What an incredible and important verse.
- We are called to remember and give thanks in everything.
- One of the ways we do that is through the Lord's table.

XIV. OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER: We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer; in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, with the authority of the local church, to show in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Saviour, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is pre-requisite to the privileges of a church relation and to the Lord's supper; in which the members of the church, by the sacred use of bread and wine are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ preceded always by a solemn self-examination.

Acts 8:36-39; Matthew 3:6; John 3:23; Romans 6:4-5; Matthew 3:16; Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; Acts 2:41-42; Matthew 28:20; I Corinthians 11:23-28.

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1 Corinthians 11:23-34

(23) For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: (24) And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. (25) After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. (26) For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. (27) Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. (28) But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. (29) For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. (30) For this cause many are

weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.(31) For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.(32) But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

(33) Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.

(34) And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

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1. The Bread

Mat 26:26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed *it,* and brake *it,* and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

2. The Cup

Mat 26:27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

Mat 26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Mat 26:29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

Mat 26:30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.