

When We're Overcome

“Do not touch my anointed ones; do my prophets no harm” (Psalm 105:15).

Scripture: Psalm 105:12-25

Song: “God Will Take Care of You”

Maya lived in the shadow of her student-loan debt. She owed more than \$100,000 to various lenders and was unsure of how she would escape from the weight of her obligations. She had desires for the future: to buy a house, get married, and have children. However, to her, none of this would be possible with her limited finances, damaged credit, and a battered spirit. She cried out to God daily, asking Him to help deliver her from her financial burden. One day she received a notice stating that a large portion of her loans had been forgiven. In doubt, she contacted the lender to inquire, thinking there was some mistake. The lender replied, “We don’t know what happened, but the bill has been paid.”

When Pharaoh raised his hand in authority over the enslaved Israelites, God raised His hand higher. When His people were weakened by the weight of physical labor, God became their strength and protection. God reminded them that they were still heirs to an inheritance from Him.

Despite any weight on your shoulders today, understand that God is able to help and protect you by His uplifting hand. He has the ability to ease your struggles and increase your blessings. He may not erase every problem you have, but He will help and strengthen you.

Father, thank You for the power You have over our adversaries and struggles. In Jesus’ name, amen.

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September 26–October 2. **Zach Schaar** lives in Ohio and enjoys loving others and serving the Lord.

Sustained by God's Goodness

Joseph . . . provided his father and his brothers and all his father's household with food, according to the number of their children (Genesis 47:12).

Scripture: Genesis 47:1-12

Song: "Trust and Obey"

In rural Ohio, farming is a way of life. Ask any farmer how the upcoming harvest season will be, and you will get the same answer: "It depends on the weather." For decades, Ohio's farmers have developed the knowledge and expertise needed to succeed. However, farmers not only rely on their experience to earn a living; they also must hope for favorable weather conditions.

Like a farmer relies on weather for growing a desirable crop, so we rely on God's goodness to sustain and help us. Scripture records the testimonies of many men and women who were uplifted as God's goodness was shown to them. Joseph rose from a prison to the palace and later became a life preserver to his family—and all Egypt—when he delivered food to them in a severe famine. It was not just Joseph's knowledge and faith in the living God that led to their deliverance; it was ultimately God's gracious favor working to bring deliverance.

God delights in producing a harvest in our lives. By His goodness we are upheld and made able to survive in difficult times and ultimately to thrive. Remaining faithful to Him, knowing God's hand is upon our lives for good, will give us the strength we need to persevere when we are uncertain of the future.

Father, thank You for Your kind favor in the trying moments of our lives. In Jesus' name, amen.

Plans for Deliverance

A new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. “Look,” he said to his people, “the Israelites have become far too numerous for us” (Exodus 1:8-9).

Scripture: Exodus 1:8-22

Song: “Go Down, Moses”

In my late 20s, I enrolled in Bible college. Anticipating a pastoral position at the completion of my studies, I found myself working, instead, in the finance industry. While my desired timeline is turning out to be much different from what I thought was God’s plan, it doesn’t mean He is absent. I hope for an eventual entry into ministry—where I still believe God has called me—but during this season, God is teaching me perseverance and developing my faith.

In Egypt, the Israelites seemed to be building Pharaoh’s kingdom, not God’s. But with every year that passed and every structure that was erected for Pharaoh, God was also building something for His glory—a great and mighty nation. The waters Pharaoh used to take the lives of Israel’s baby boys were the same waters God used to preserve baby Moses (Exodus 2:1-10). When Israel’s future seemed hopeless, God was still working.

God uses our current uncertainties as growth opportunities. If Israel had attempted to escape Egypt before God’s appointed time, the result would have been catastrophic. They were too weak and too few in number. In moments of trial, God still has our best interests at heart. He delivered His children out of bondage and into freedom, but it happened according to His knowledge, understanding, and might—and His timeline.

Father, help us to trust You in the present as You prepare our future. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Memories

“As the time drew near for God to fulfill his promise to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt had greatly increased” (Acts 7:17).

Scripture: Acts 7:17-29

Song: “In Christ Alone”

Buried beneath the ground in Egypt lies the possible archaeological evidence for the biblical accounts of Israel’s time in bondage there. One buried village that has undergone excavation is thought to be where Joseph’s family settled and where, later, many Hebrew infant boys were slaughtered. Multiple grave sites have been found there, two-thirds of which were presumably for infants. While not conclusive, it is certainly possible that this finding is a grim reminder of historical events we read about in Scripture. And as we ponder these scenes from Israel’s history, we are reminded that, against all human odds, God did something amazing.

Attempting to stunt Israel’s growth by eliminating its baby boys, Pharaoh was unknowingly fighting against much more than the flesh and blood of his captives; he was fighting against the living God. The Lord protected Moses from Pharaoh’s edict and orchestrated events so that Moses was raised in Pharaoh’s palace, perfectly positioning him to be trained with the knowledge and skill to one day deliver God’s people from their slavery (Exodus 1–2). Once powerless under his circumstances, Moses became powerful with God.

Buried beneath memories of past hardship are important reminders for us. Throughout our trials, God has never left us. He is continuously working in our behalf and will do so until He calls us home.

Father, thank You for protecting and preserving us, Your people, despite those who oppose us. In Jesus’ name, amen.

The Lord, Our Lifeline

“He was in the assembly in the wilderness, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our ancestors; and he received living words to pass on to us” (Acts 7:38).

Scripture: Acts 7:30-41

Song: “Desert Song”

Years ago in the Sahara Desert, a lone acacia tree stood out against the barren landscape. Where there was once a bountiful forest, the changing climate had slowly choked the life out of the greenery, and it became the desert it is today. Over time, however, the tree would continue to live, despite the harsh environment that surrounded it. This tree—known as the Tree of Tenere—retained life day after day, even when everything else around it had perished. The tree stood as a landmark for travelers and as a visible reminder for all that strength and beauty are possible even in the harshest conditions.

Moses and the Israelites spent nearly 40 years in the wilderness. During this time God provided for His people and sustained Moses as their leader. Thousands of years later, Moses’ story stands as a reminder that, similar to what is seen with the Tree of Tenere, God can provide all that we need to live and grow—wherever we may find ourselves planted.

In our wilderness moments, it’s important to nurture our faith while we wait for deliverance. Rather than focus on the drought, we can choose to focus on the testimony that is being built during the dry spell. When the wilderness seems too difficult to bear, remember that even in the desert God still gives life.

Father, thank You for faithfully sustaining me, especially when I am weak. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Focused Faith

By faith [Moses] left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible (Hebrews 11:27).

Scripture: Hebrews 11:23-29

Song: “Be Thou My Vision”

While I was visiting a local business, the owner and I began talking about faith. She mentioned Moses and the parting of the Red Sea and shared her perspective. She observed that while God parted the Red Sea as Moses acted in faith, there was still the opportunity for the people to be fearful of drowning. We agreed that keeping our focus on God keeps us from getting derailed by the fear of potential problems.

Without faith, Moses' life would have been very different. With every resource available to him to live in earthly comfort, he chose instead to exchange these for a life of faith—to live by God's provision and not the world's. Moses had insight to trust God for what he could not yet see, and his faith led him to and through the Red Sea. When many saw the waters as a roadblock, Moses trusted that God would make a way.

In our own lives there are times when we see God work in our circumstances, but then we lapse into fear that something still might go wrong. Our opportunity to leave worry behind lies in keeping our trust focused on God. We not only need to trust in God for our salvation; we also can choose to trust Him day to day when life's obstacles loom.

Father, thank You for giving us the life-changing gift of faith in You. In Jesus' name, amen.

The Depth of God's Favor

When the child grew older, [his mother] took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water" (Exodus 2:10).

Scripture: Exodus 2:1-15

Song: "At the Cross"

A sailor once spent his Thanksgiving weekend adrift on the Atlantic Ocean, clinging to life. His yacht had become disabled on Saturday, leaving him adrift many miles off the Florida coast. At midnight, water rushed into the cabin and the vessel began to sink. For nearly 12 hours he held tightly to the bow, the only part of his boat that remained above water. He was finally lifted to safety by a passing cargo ship, a merciful end to his perilous adventure.

When Pharaoh's daughter lifted Moses out of the water, she rescued him from death and gave him an opportunity for life. Moses would grow up to make serious mistakes—as we all do!—but he was still on the path for what God had in store. When Moses experienced trouble and ran, God brought him back (Exodus 4:20). By overcoming obstacles and enduring many hardships, Moses came to understand the depth of God's favor and grace.

As Pharaoh's daughter rescued Moses, God has similarly rescued us. He has pulled us from the deadly waters of sin into His arms of saving grace. Our shame and sorrow may have seemed too deep to ever expect rescue, but God's love is deeper still. And despite our imperfections, God does not disqualify us from serving in His kingdom. In fact, His Word tells us that "his favor lasts a lifetime" (Psalm 30:5).

Father, thank You for Your beautiful rescue. In Jesus' name, amen.