

## Where God Wants You

Are you where God wants you? Perhaps that sounds like a strange question. For some, it may not even be a question that we have ever considered. We are where we are and that covers it very well. This morning we will consider several people who were placed in a situation for a specific purpose by God. We will look at one individual in detail and see the hand of God in placing this young man right where God wanted him to be for a very specific purpose.

I made a short list of why God places us in a unique or different situation. This list is not exhaustive and you may be able to add other reasons. As I briefly mention these ideas, I will provide a brief example for consideration. The last reason that I will mention will be in more detail and we will spend more time with our example from the Bible.

First, God may place us in a situation or location to prepare us for another phase of His ultimate plan for us. An example of this is the apostle Paul. We knew him as Saul prior to his conversion. Saul (Paul) was on hand when Stephen was stoned and he was ready to take the persecution of Christians to new levels. In fact, we read in Acts 8:1-3 how Saul was diligent in his attempt to stop the spread of Christianity.

**Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death.**

**And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him. But Saul *began* ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. (Acts 8:1-3 NASB)**

Chapter 9 of Acts starts off with Saul still persecuting the church until that event on the road to Damascus. God stopped Saul and sent him to another place and redirected his life.

God had other plans for Saul (Paul). Saul the persecutor became Paul the apostle sent to the Gentiles. God had plans for Paul so, God placed him where He wanted him.

Second, God may put us in situations to help our faith grow. There are so many examples of this found in the Bible. However, let's look at Job. Job suffered intense pain and sorrow. His wife and friends were of no help. Job even questioned God. In the last chapter of the book of Job, we find Job finally sees God in a new light.

**Then Job answered the LORD and said, "I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore, I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know."**

**'Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.' "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You;**

**Therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:1-6 NASB)**

Job was in a situation that could have broken him and caused him to renounce God. Instead, Job had renewed clarity in his faith.

Third, God may place us where we can meet the needs of someone else. Again, we could come up with many examples. For this morning, we will consider Philip. In Acts the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter beginning with verse 26, we read how Philip was directed to take the gospel message of salvation to the Ethiopian eunuch.

**But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert *road*.) So he got up and went; and there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians,**

**who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship, and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. (Acts 8:26-28 NASB)**

We remember how this led to the baptism of the eunuch.

The final idea is that God places people where they will do the most good. We will spend more time on this example. Our example of this is a young man found in the Bible who went from a favored position to that of slave, then prisoner, and then to a leader.

Some of you may have already guess that we will be looking at Joseph. So, let's turn in our Bibles to the 37<sup>th</sup> chapter of Genesis as we see an example of God putting someone in the right place for the greater good.

**Now Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan. These are *the records of the generations of Jacob*.**

**Joseph, when seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers while he was *still* a youth, along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic. His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and *so*, they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms. (Genesis 37:1-4 NASB)**

We certainly understand from this brief reading that Joseph was a favorite son. One thing not mentioned is that Joseph was the first son born to Rachel. We may remember that Jacob worked seven years to marry Rachel and was tricked into marrying Leah her sister. He worked another seven years before he was allowed to marry Rachel.

We also see that Joseph was not on friendly terms with his brothers. As we read on in this chapter, we learn how unfriendly they were toward Joseph.

**Then his brothers went to pasture their father's flock in Shechem. Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing *the flock* in Shechem? Come, and I will send you to them." And he said to him, "I will go." Then he said to him, "Go now and see about the welfare of your brothers and the welfare of the flock, and bring word back to me." So, he sent him from the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.**

**A man found him, and behold, he was wandering in the field; and the man asked him, "What are you looking for?" He said, "I am looking for my brothers; please tell me where they are pasturing *the flock*." Then the man said, "They have moved from here; for I heard *them* say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So, Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.**

**When they saw him from a distance and before he came close to them, they plotted against him to put him to death. They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer! Now then, come and let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; and we will say, 'A wild beast devoured him.' Then let us see what will become of his dreams!" But Reuben heard *this* and rescued him out of their hands and said, "Let us not take his life." Reuben further said to them, "Shed no blood. Throw him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but do not lay hands on him"—that he might rescue him out of their hands, to restore him to his father. So, it came about, when Joseph reached his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the varicolored tunic that was on him; and they took him and threw him into the pit. Now the pit was empty, without any water in it.**

**Then they sat down to eat a meal. And as they raised their eyes and looked, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing aromatic gum and balm and myrrh, on their way to bring *them* down to Egypt. Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is it for us to kill our brother and cover up his blood? Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our *own* flesh.” And his brothers listened *to him*. Then some Midianite traders passed by, so they pulled *him* up and lifted Joseph out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty *shekels* of silver. Thus, they brought Joseph into Egypt. (Genesis 37:12-28 NASB)**

Not only did Joseph get sold into slavery, he was thrown in jail after being falsely accused of a crime with Potiphar’s wife. Joseph gives a capsulated history of his life in Genesis 40:15 when he said: **“For I was in fact kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing that they should have put me into the dungeon.” (Genesis 40:14-15 NASB)** We remember how Joseph helped Egypt prepare for the coming famine. God allowed Joseph to be moved from the jail to a leadership position in the land.

**Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.” Then Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put the gold necklace around his neck. (Genesis 41:41-42 NASB)**

The story continues and Joseph sees his brothers again. Here is a chance to exact revenge for many years of suffering that he had endured because of their mistreatment of him.

Joseph is in the position of power and could easily and perhaps justifiably punished his brothers. Yet, in the 50<sup>th</sup> chapter he tells them **“Do not be afraid, for am I in God’s place? As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. (Genesis 50:19-20 NASB)**

Are we in the place that God wants us to be today? Are we ready for the next phase of our life as God plans it? Are we in a place that will help our faith to grow and strengthen? Are we in a place to help someone else? Are we in a place where we may help God reach more people?