

信息： 神的意思原是好的 MESSAGE: GOD MEANT IT FOR GOOD

約瑟曾被他的哥哥們當作奴隸賣給一隊商人帶到埃及去。他曾在法老內臣家中作僕人，又因主母的誣告而被囚在監裏。然而，到了時候，神使他高升，作了宰相治理埃及全地。

他在七個豐年裏儲蓄無數的糧食。當七個荒年來到，各地都有饑荒，惟獨埃及全地有糧食。約瑟的哥哥們也到埃及來購買糧食，他向他們表明了自己的身分，「我是約瑟」。哥哥們都驚惶俯伏，但是約瑟說：『現在不要因為把我賣到這裏自憂自恨，這是神差我在你們以先來，為要保全生命。』（創四十五：5）

當雅各去世後，約瑟還安慰哥哥們不要害怕，『從前你們的意思是要害我，但神的意思原是好的，要保全許多人性命，成就今日的光景。』（創五十：20）

神向我們所懷的意念是賜平安的意念，不是降災禍的意念（耶廿九：11）。祂的道路高過我們的道路，祂的意念高過我們的意念（賽五十五：9）。我們若認識「神的意思原是好的」，就能在各種環境中都服在神大能的手下，而以讚美表示我們的信心，如同主在最艱難的路上，忽然歡樂起來說：『父阿，是的，因為 的美意本是如此。』（路十：21）

Joseph was sold by his brothers as a slave to Midianite traders and was brought down to Egypt. He then served in the house of the Pharaoh's officer, yet he was wronged by the officer's wife and put in the Pharaoh's jail. However, when the time came, God exalted him, and he became the prime minister of Egypt overseeing the entire land.

As the prime minister of Egypt, Joseph stored much grain in the seven years of plenty. When seven years of famine began and the famine was spread over all the face of the earth, only Egypt had grain. Therefore, Joseph's brothers went down to Egypt to purchase grain, and he revealed who he was to his brothers by saying: "I am Joseph!" His brothers were dismayed at his presence and bowed down before him. Joseph then comforted them by saying: "...And now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life" (Genesis 45:5),

After their father died, Joseph again assured them by saying: "...And 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 50:20).

The Lord's plan for us is for welfare and not for calamity (Jeremiah 29:11). His ways are higher than ours, and His thoughts than ours (Isaiah 55:9). Only if we know that "The Lord meant it for good", can we submit to His almighty hands in all environments and praise Him in order to show our faith in Him. This will be the same faith showed by the Lord when he encountered difficulties yet still rejoiced and said: "I praise Thee,...Yes, Father, for thus it was well pleasing in Thy sight" (Luke 10:21).

故事： 絆腳石與墊腳石

STORY: STUMBLING BLOCK VS. STEPPING STONE

某日，一個小女孩被允許陪哥哥去爬附近的一處小山丘，那是她哥哥經常去玩的地方。當她來到山腳下，才發現這個山丘如此陡峭，全是石頭路，並且坑窪不平。她覺得十分失望，所以埋怨說：「為甚麼連一個平順的地方也沒有，盡是崎嶇不平的石頭呢？」哥哥對她說：「對啊，若都是平滑而沒有這些坑坑洞洞的條件，我們又怎能爬到山頂呢？」哥哥顯得比妹妹經驗老練多了，因為他知道這些石塊的好處。

同樣的，神允許我們在生活上遭遇困難，因為祂要聖徒把人生中的「絆腳石」變為登上屬靈更高境界的「墊腳石」。

One day a little girl was allowed to climb a nearby hill with her older brother. That hill was her brother's favorite play area. When arriving at the foot of the hill, she noticed that the slope of the hill was very steep and that all the trails were covered with uneven rocks. She was quite disappointed and complained to her brother by saying: "How come there is no smooth surface at all, but rocky trails?" Her brother replied: "Exactly, if the road surface is smooth instead of uneven, we will have a hard time climbing upward and reaching the top of the hill". Apparently, her brother was a more experienced hill climber than she, for he appreciated those rocks.

In the same way, God permits us to encounter difficulties in our daily living, because He wants us to learn to turn the apparent stumbling blocks in our lives into stepping stones onto a spiritual higher ground.