

A SLAVE

Genesis 39: 1-20

A slave is someone who is owned by another person. A slave has no freedom to do anything that he wants, but can only do what the master wants him to do. A slave can never go anywhere but where the master sends him. Joseph was a slave. He had been sold to the Ishmeelite traders by his own brothers for twenty pieces of silver.

The Ishmeelites took Joseph far from his home and family to the land of Egypt. There they sold him to a very rich and powerful man named Potiphar. Even though Joseph was a slave, and far from his family, he knew that he was not alone. Joseph knew that wherever he was, the Lord his God was with him.

Because Joseph trusted in the true and living God, he knew that even though he was a slave in Egypt, that the Lord was with him and would take care of him. Joseph wanted to serve the Lord, and he knew that the way to do that was by being content where he was and doing his best to serve in whatever circumstances he found himself in.

Now some people would say that Joseph had a right to be free. They would say that Joseph did not have to please his master who held him against his will. But the Bible teaches otherwise. It says that where ever we are we are to do our best to serve those who have the rule over us. Joseph believed God's word, and he used the commands of God to guide his behavior.

Even though Joseph was a slave, he worked very hard to please his master. It did not take long for Potiphar to recognize the beautiful character and trustworthy behavior of Joseph. He knew it would be to his advantage to make Joseph ruler over all his household and possessions.

From the time that Potiphar made Joseph his overseer, the Lord blessed Potiphar. Potiphar trusted Joseph so completely that he did not pay any attention to what was done in his business. He allowed Joseph to handle all his wealth with no one to check on Joseph or see what he did.

Now Potiphar had a wife that was used to getting whatever she wanted. And what she wanted was Joseph. Day after day she pestered him, trying to get Joseph to sin against God and against his master Potiphar. But each time Joseph told her no. He said, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

But Potiphar's wife did not give up. Finally, one day, Potiphar's wife thought she had Joseph trapped so that he would have to do what she wanted. But she was mistaken. When Joseph realized the trap she had set, he just ran away. Potiphar's wife became so angry that she lied and accused Joseph of great sin against Potiphar. When Potiphar heard the accusations, he lost his temper. He did not even think of all the good that Joseph had done for him. He did not ask Joseph for his defense. After all, Joseph was a slave and he had no rights. Potiphar had Joseph thrown into the king's prison and there he left him to rot.

It is hard for us to understand why God's children are allowed to suffer for doing what is right. Joseph should have been rewarded for protecting Potiphar and his property, but instead he was punished because Potiphar's wife lied about him. We read in the Bible that God shows us the lives of his people and all that they suffered, so that we might learn from their example. Joseph is a wonderful example. He showed us that no matter how bad things are for us, we should always do what is right and obey the laws of God. He shows us that in spite of suffering, we can trust the Lord. We know that God will do what is best for us.

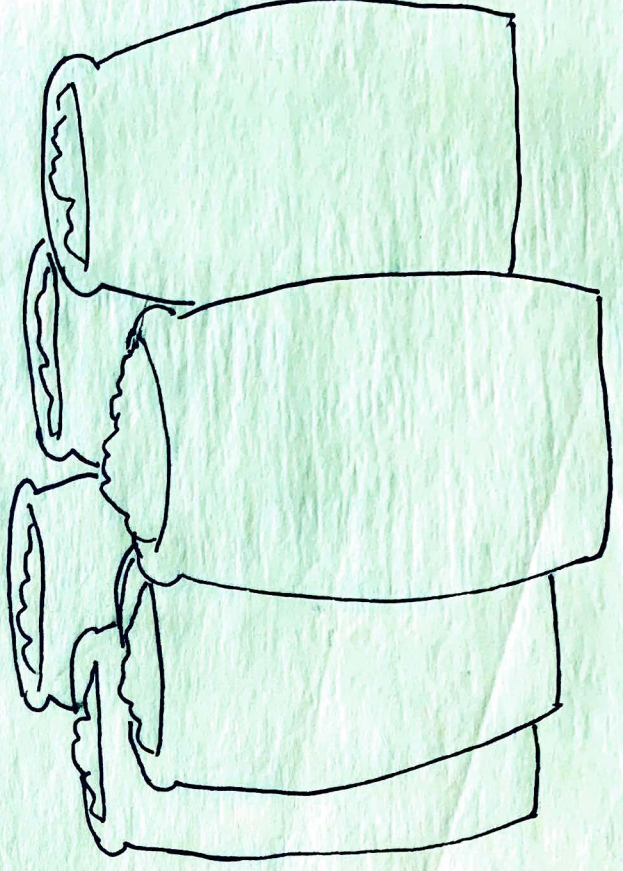
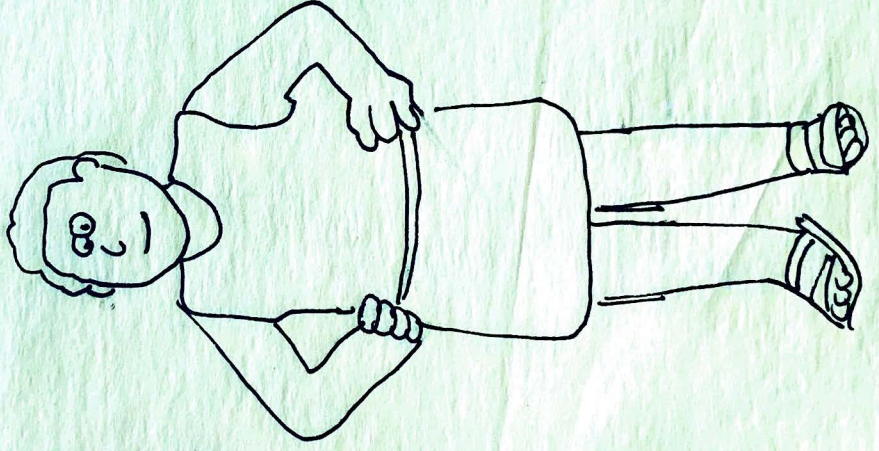
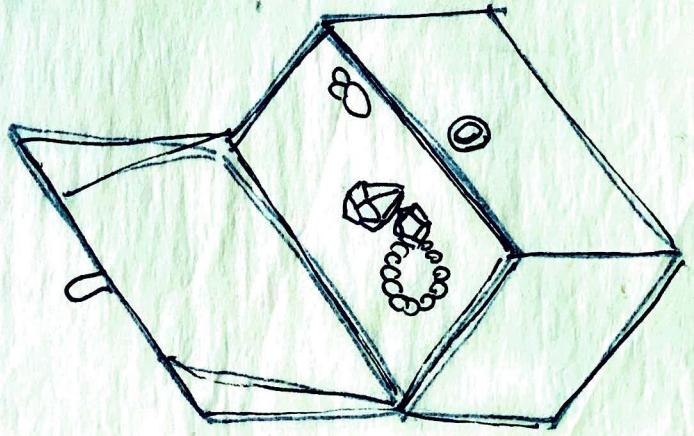
The Lord uses the sufferings in our lives to train us to be like Jesus, for Jesus, the perfect son of God, suffered for us, though he was innocent. When he is through with our training, we will be pure and beautiful as gold.

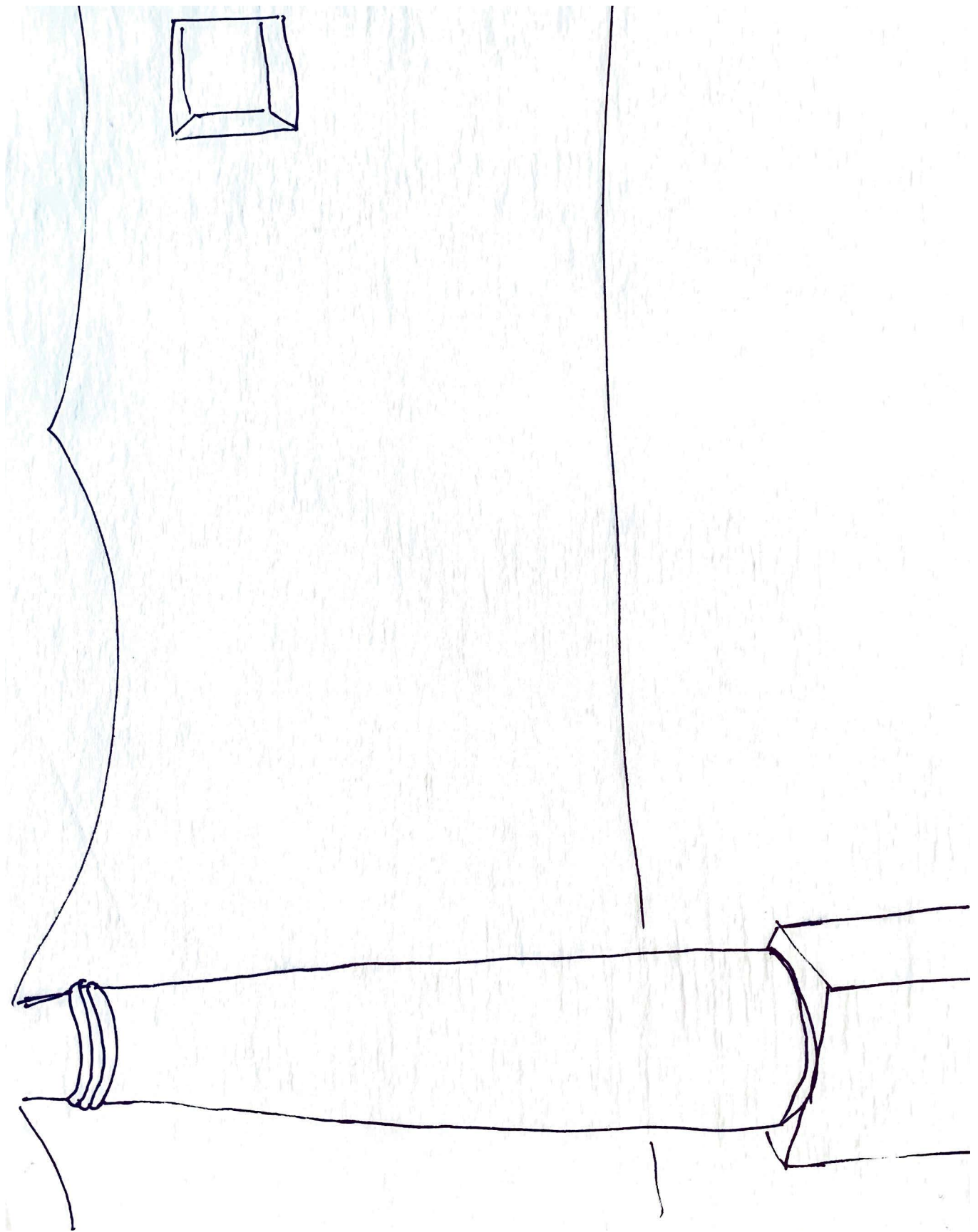
PRINCIPLE: God uses suffering in the lives of his children to mold them into godly people.

LEARN: But he knoweth that way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

Job 23:10

1. Color the storeroom.
2. Color Joseph, storage jars + treasure box - Cut them out.
3. Paste pieces on scene.
4. Draw gold and jewels into box.
5. Glitter jewels or paste jewels on picture.





But he knoweth the way that
I take: when he hath tried me,
I shall come forth as gold.

Job 23:10

