Ruled

Genesis 42–50

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question:
When life feels like everything is going wrong, what is your natural response: **worry, withdraw, take control, or trust God?** Why?

Introduction

In this sermon, Pastor Mark looked at Jacob's statement in Genesis 42:

"Everything is against me."

Jacob had experienced significant loss, was facing a problem he couldn't solve, and was afraid of what the future might hold.

Pastor Mark described the feeling of being overwhelmed by life as the combination of:

- **Past Pain**
- **Present Problems**
- **Future Fear**

But the central truth of the sermon was:

"What you feel is real, but it may not be reality."

Jacob felt like everything was against him, but he didn't know everything God was doing behind the scenes.

Discussion Questions

1. When Everything Feels Against You

Read: Genesis 42:36

Jacob had experienced tremendous loss. He was grieving the loss of Joseph, dealing with Simeon's absence, and afraid of losing Benjamin.

- Why do you think past pain can make present problems feel even heavier?
- How can our past experiences shape the way we interpret what is happening today?
- Which of these tends to affect you most: **past pain, present problems, or future fear?**
- Why is it easy to move from "I'm facing something difficult" to **"Everything is against me"**?

Going Deeper

Think about a situation you're facing right now.

Are you responding to what is actually happening, or to what you fear might happen?

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2. What You Feel Is Real, But It May Not Be Reality

Jacob genuinely felt like everything was against him. But he didn't know the whole story.

He didn't know that Joseph was alive. He didn't know Joseph was in a position to help them. And he didn't know that God had already gone ahead of him and was providing for a future need.

- Why is it important to distinguish between **what we feel** and **what is actually true**?
- What are some examples of feelings that can cause us to believe something that isn't actually true?
- Why does fear make us especially vulnerable to believing things that aren't true?
- Have you ever looked back on a situation and realized, **"I didn't know everything that was happening"?**

Key Thought

You may know some things, but you don't know everything.

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3. Fear Can Become a Pattern

Read: Genesis 20:1–2; Genesis 26:6–7; Genesis 42:36

Pastor Mark pointed out a pattern of **fear, impatience, and deception** that appeared across multiple generations of Abraham's family.

Abraham struggled with it. Isaac repeated it. Jacob repeated it.

- What patterns do you see being passed from one generation to another in families?
- Why do you think fear and unhealthy patterns are so easy to repeat?
- What behaviors or attitudes can we unknowingly model for the people closest to us?
- Are there patterns in your life that you recognize as something you don't want to pass on?

Going Deeper

What is something you can say, "This may have been how we did it before, but this is not how we're going to do it anymore"?

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4. One Generation Can Change the Pattern

Read: Genesis 50:19–21

Joseph had every reason to believe that everything was against him. He had been betrayed by his brothers, sold into slavery, falsely accused, and imprisoned.

But Joseph saw his circumstances differently:

"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good."

- What was different about Joseph's perspective?
- How can trusting God's sovereignty change the way we interpret difficult circumstances?
- What does Joseph's response to his brothers teach us about forgiveness?
- Why is it significant that Joseph chose not to repeat the patterns that had been passed down to him?

Key Thought

You can be the person who breaks the pattern.

One person, empowered by God, can decide:

"This is not how we do it anymore."

5. Trust God When You Don't Know Everything

Read: Psalm 56:3
Read: Romans 8:31–39

Pastor Mark's simple response to fear was:

"When I am afraid, I put my trust in you."

Romans 8 reminds us that God is for us, Christ is interceding for us, and nothing can separate us from God's love.

- What does it practically look like to trust God when you don't understand what He's doing?
- Why is remembering God's character more reliable than trusting our circumstances?
- How does knowing that **God is for us** change the way we face fear?
- What would change in your life if you truly believed that God was working even when you couldn't see it?

Personal Reflection

Take a few moments of silence and ask:

Past Pain -- What pain from my past is still influencing how I see my present?

Present Problem -- What situation am I trying to control that I need to trust God with?

Future Fear -- What am I afraid will happen that I need to surrender to God?

Then ask:

"What am I believing that may not actually be reality?"

Finally:

What would it look like for me to say, "When I am afraid, I will trust You"?

Closing Prayer

Pray together:

- Ask God to help us process the pain of our past without allowing it to define our future.
- Ask Him to give us wisdom and faith in the middle of present problems.
- Ask God to replace fear with trust when we don't know what is coming next.
- Pray for the courage to break unhealthy patterns that have been passed down to us.
- Thank God that He is working even when we cannot see what He is doing.
- Thank Him that nothing can separate us from His love.

This Week's Challenge

When You Feel Like Everything Is Against You

Pause and identify:

1. Past Pain
What from my past is affecting how I see this situation?

2. Present Problem
What is actually happening right now?

3. Future Fear
What am I afraid is going to happen?

Then remind yourself:

"What I feel is real, but it may not be reality."

And pray:

"When I am afraid, I put my trust in You."

Remember:

I don't know everything. But God does.
I can't see everything. But God can.
I may feel like everything is against me. But God is for me.
So when I am afraid, I will trust Him.