

# The Jacob Temperament

Genesis 42:29 - 43:34

## Introduction

Please turn in your Bible to Genesis, chapter 42. Today, the spotlight of this story swings away from Joseph and focuses primarily on Jacob and his ten sons. We studied the life of Jacob in a five-part series and this would be the sixth. Jacob has so much to teach us and once again, he is going to teach us many valuable lessons about God.

Let us pick up our story in verse 29 of Genesis, chapter 42. At this point, Joseph let nine of his brothers go, but kept Simeon. Look at verses 29 through 35.

*When they came to their father in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them, saying,*

*“The man, the lord of the land, spoke harshly with us, and took us for spies of the country.*

*“But we said to him, ‘We are honest men; we are not spies.*

*“‘We are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no longer alive, and the youngest is with our father today in the land of Canaan.’*

*“The man, the lord of the land, said to us, ‘By this I shall know that you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me and take grain for the famine of your households, and go.*

*“‘But bring your youngest brother to me that I may know that you are not spies, but honest men. I will give your brother to you, and you may trade in the land.’”*

*Now it came about as they were emptying their sacks, that behold, every man’s bundle of money was in his sack; and when they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were dismayed.*

## Jacob’s Response to the Report From Egypt

The first thing that I want to relate to you, in this study that I am calling, “The Jacob Temperament,” is Jacob’s four-fold, wrong conclusions in response his son’s report from Egypt.

Look at verse 36.

*Their father Jacob said to them, “You have bereaved me of my children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and you would take Benjamin; all these things are against me.”*

Jacob is jumping to four wrong conclusions. They include:

- Joseph is dead;
- Simeon is dead;
- Benjamin will die;
- All these things are against me.

As I studied this passage of scripture and re-read this chapter, it was interesting to me just how much we can see in the response of Jacob. It is interesting how much we are like this man, in the flesh, when the Spirit of God does not control us. We so often, like Jacob, jump to wrong conclusions based on circumstances. We come to conclusions that are so often wrong, based on the facts that we think we have.

Jacob says, “Joseph is no more,” or “Joseph is dead.” He does not know he is not, of course, and he has not read chapter 43, as we will. However, Jacob is also stating that Simeon is dead, and he is not. He is jumping to the conclusion that the Pharaoh has put him to death. He also says, “Benjamin will die if you take him back there.” Then, he sums it up by saying, “all these things are against me,” or we could rephrase that, “everything’s going wrong.” In other words, “Poor me. Woe is me.”

Understand that by now, Jacob is an old and, I think, bitter man. He has had flashes of faith; he has had moments of true trust in Elohim. But we see him in this chapter, finally exercising, in his flesh, the statement that could characterize his entire life: “God has dealt me a bad hand. He’s fed me sour grapes.”

This kind of attitude crops up, perhaps in your life or in mine, when we make statements like, “Why does God always bless that other person? Why is it that in that other family, it just seems that their kids obey better than mine? Why is it that they make better grades? Why is it that he got promoted and I did not?”

We go on and on and on. Ultimately, we are saying, “God has really messed my life up.”

F. B. Meyer, a tremendous expositor of scripture whom I often quote, wrote, “Why is it that God’s hand is always on the other man?”

I have read that it is clinically proven, and have seen that it is true, not that clinics are that impressive, but it is interesting that secularists now agree that one of the chief causes of depression is self-pity. That is the attitude that Jacob expresses at this point, “Life is terrible. Look at all these things that are happening to me. Woe is me.”

These individuals put a banner out that reads, “Pity party here. Anybody want to join me?” And you will find that they collect together, which only feeds their misery.

Ladies and gentlemen, I really believe that one of the most often repeated mistakes that we see in Jacob, we see in our own lives. It is the mistake of misinterpreting the events in our life apart from the grace of God.

## **Jacob’s Reluctance to Cooperate With Egypt’s Demands**

Now notice what happens in chapter 43 and you will see Jacob’s response.

At the end of chapter 42, after verse 38, you should write in parentheses, “A period of time.” Between that time and the time of verse 1 of chapter 43, their food runs out. Look at verses 1 and 2.

*Now the famine was severe in the land. So it came about when they had finished eating the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, “Go back, buy us a little food.”*

### **Initial denial**

1. Now the first response of Jacob is initial denial.

Jacob has been told, “Dad, we cannot go back to Egypt unless we bring Benjamin with us.”

Jacob refuses to respond. He clams up; he goes into hiding. Finally, the food is gone and they get hungry.

Jacob comes back to his sons, denying what he knows to be true, and says,

*. . . Go back [to Egypt], buy us a little food.*

His sons will now council him. Look at verses 3 through 5.

*Judah spoke to him, however, saying, “The man solemnly warned us, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.’ If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. But if you do not send him, we will not go down; for the man said to us, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.’”*

Isn’t this interesting that the son is counseling Dad. The son is pulling the patriarch aside and saying, “Dad, did you forget that we can’t go back until we have Benjamin with us? Open your ears. Listen to me.”

### **Suggestive deceit**

2. The second phase of Jacob’s response we could call, suggestive deceit.

Look at verse 6.

*Then Israel said, “Why did you treat me so badly by telling the man whether you still had another brother?”*

In other words, here is the great man of God, the patriarch, the man of faith, saying to his boy, “It

would have been better to have lied. Why didn't you lie? Why'd you tell him you had a brother?"

They answer that question in verses 7 through 9a.

***But they said, "The man questioned particularly about us and our relatives, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?' So we answered his question [truthfully]. Could we possibly know that he would say, 'Bring your brother down'?" Judah said to his father Israel, "Send the lad with me and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, we as well as you and our little ones. I myself will be surety for him [Benjamin]; . . ."***

In other words, "If Joseph does something to Benjamin, it'll be guilt on my life. I'll take the responsibility."

We are really not going to focus too much on this, but do not overlook, as we go through this chapter, the development in the lives of the brothers. They have already admitted guilt, and confession is most of the cure. Now, we see Judah taking this responsibility, where earlier, twenty-five years before, he, and the other nine brothers, would have thrown their brother away. Now, it is a different story.

Continue to verse 10.

***For if we had not delayed, surely by now we could have returned twice.***

### **Attempted manipulation**

3. Jacob still, is not broken. The next thing that Jacob says we could call, attempted manipulation.

Notice verse 11. This is classic Jacob stuff.

***Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this: take some of the best products of the land in your bags, and carry down to the man as a present, a little balm and a little honey, aromatic gum and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds."***

"You know, just like I did to Egypt. Let's butter him up. Let's manipulate him. Let's get on his good side. Let's take some things that they don't have much of in Egypt."

Jacob continues with the plan in verse 12.

***Take double the money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was***

***returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was a mistake.***

In other words, "Let's not trust God yet. Let's come up with our own plan. I've got a good one because, as far as I can remember, half a century ago, I think it worked on my brother Esau."

You may remember that Jacob took ewes, rams, and camels, and sent them ahead to Esau before Esau could come to him. Jacob was hoping to butter him up and get him mellowed down. So here is old Jacob; old, manipulative, deceptive Jacob, greasing the skids; trying to take the place of God.

### **Final trust**

4. Imagine Jacob's sons at this moment, and what they see in him. There still does not appear to be much of a change, but I think there is. I really believe that in the process of these verses, there is time involved because of the great change. I think the change occurs in verse 14, which we could call, final trust.

Note verse 14a.

***and may God Almighty [El Shaddai, the great Provider] grant you compassion in the sight of the man, that he may release to you your other brother and Benjamin. . . .***

In other words, it is ultimately up to God.

Continue to verse 14b and note this last phrase.

***. . . And as for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.***

Trust. In other words, when all of the smoke settled and, I think, Jacob was reminded of the sovereign God that had, in fact, been part of his life, he finally came to the conclusion that allowed him to say, "If my children die, then they die."

In other words, Jacob finally said, "El Shaddai is the One I will trust."

Most of us cannot understand Jacob's heart because we have never been in that situation. Some of you have perhaps, faced great trial. Some of you have lost loved ones to death, and you can better understand the anguish of Jacob's heart. Jacob thought that when he said, "Goodbye," to his sons, he was saying, "Goodbye," forever. What a difficult place in which to trust God.

A man that I respect highly, who used to pastor a hundred or so years ago, is George Matheson. His

hymns are rather antiquated and we do not sing them much anymore. George Matheson was a blind man and he lived with his two sisters. His two sisters learned Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and would study for him. They would give him the results, they would look up words, and they would read the text. Then, George would, in his blind state, formulate all of the facts and would come up with the sermon and preach. He was known as “the beloved pastor,” and pastored, interestingly enough for that day, a rather large church of two thousand people.

One by one, George Matheson’s two sisters eventually married. With their marriages came great loss because they moved away. George was finally, completely alone. He was able to care for himself, but now struggled with all that he had learned. He was older; in fact, his sisters had married at an older age. In his struggle to trust a God who seemingly no longer would provide, George Matheson wrote a hymn. It is not even in our hymnal, I had to search to find it.

He wrote the following words after his second sister left. Note that he refers to his eyesight in references to light.

*O love that wilt not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in thee;  
I give thee back the life I owe,  
That in thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be.*

*O light that followest all my way,  
I yield my flickering torch to thee;  
My heart restores its borrowed ray,  
That in thy sunshine’s blaze its day  
May brighter, fairer be.*

*O joy that seekest me through pain,  
I cannot close my heart to thee;  
I trace the rainbow through the rain,  
And feel the promise is not vain,  
That morn shall tearless be.*

That is tremendous! I cannot understand what George Matheson went through, but I stand in awe. I stand in awe of you for what God is doing in your life through difficulty. He is making you, and through this situation with Jacob, He is making him.

So, in verse 15, the brothers return to Egypt.

***So the men took this present, and they took double the money in their hand, and Benjamin; then they arose and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph.***

## **Joseph’s Brothers Return to Egypt**

Now our story swings back to Egypt. Joseph will finally bring his brothers to the end of their test. I think he gives them a three-fold test.

### **A test of honor**

1. The first test is a test of honor.

We studied this in our previous discussion. This is the test in which Joseph is wondering in his mind, “Do my brothers really care about one another? Will they let Simeon rot in this prison and never come back?”

I would imagine that Joseph had his doubts. I wonder, if they had not gotten hungry, if they would have come back. But, they did.

I would imagine that Joseph is watching and wondering, “How do they treat one another? How do they speak?”

He is constantly asking about their father, “How is your father?”

He is wondering if they would respond, “Oh, that old man? Why, we leave him alone. He’s so wrapped up in Benjamin, we never see him.”

That would have been the response of these brothers twenty-five years before. But now, every time they respond, they respond with politeness and respect. I think that was the test of honor, and they passed. It was a test of family identity.

### **A test of honesty**

2. The second test that Joseph gives his brothers is the test of honesty.

I think this had to do with the money. These men were very dishonest, at least when Joseph remembered living with them.

Look at verse 16.

***When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to his house steward, “Bring the men into the house, and slay an animal and make***

*ready; for the men are to dine with me at noon."*

Now Hebrew people did not dine with Egyptians. Later that almost comical statement is even made. It has never changed – Egyptians still do not eat meals of peace with the Jews. Even back then, it was a loathsome thing. So this steward probably scratched his head and thought, "Uh, wonder why the prime minister is having dinner with ten Jews?" But, he obeyed.

The brothers were not overjoyed when they received the invitation. Look at verses 18 through 19a.

*Now the men were afraid, because they were brought to Joseph's house; and they said, "It is because of the money that was returned in our sacks the first time that we are being brought in, that he may seek occasion against us and fall upon us, and take us for slaves with our donkeys." So they came near to Joseph's house steward,*

This is hilarious. They are not talking to Joseph, they are talking to his servant, who knows very little. Look at verses 20 through 21a and note the title they use for this servant.

*. . . Oh, my lord, we indeed came down the first time to buy food, and it came about when we came to the lodging place, that we opened our sacks, and behold, each man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full. So we have brought it back . .*

Notice that they are walking into Joseph's house and are giving the money to this poor slave. They say, "We, indeed, intended to buy food."

Look at the last part of verse 21 through verse 22.

*. . . So we have brought it back in our hand. We have also brought down other money in our hand to buy food; we do not know who put our money in our sacks.*

They are really nervous. They are thinking that Joseph has called them into the house to call them into account. So they are explaining the situation to the steward, who has nothing to do with the solution or the problem.

The steward, however, had evidently been instructed by Joseph. I love his response. He is an unbelieving Egyptian who has been trained how to

respond. Joseph said, "By the way, if they say this, you say this." In verse 23a, we are told,

*He said, "Be at ease, do not be afraid. . . ."*

In other words, he says, in modern day vernacular, something like, "Take it easy, guys. And get off my arm. It's okay. I know what happened and it wasn't your money, it was our money."

Then, notice what he says in verse 23b,

*Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks . . .*

In other words, "I've been told that your God is Elohim."

Elohim is the name used in this verse.

So he says, "Elohim has done this for you."

I cannot help but put myself in the place of these brothers. Have you ever been taken into account by an unbeliever? Have you ever been pulled in on the carpet? Someone says something about trusting God, "Well, we'll just have to trust God." – and you have been biting your nails.

You are on an airplane and it is going down. You are hanging on and the guy next to you says, "It's no problem here. You know, I trust God."

Well, the steward does not even know God. Yet he says, "But you've got a God don't you? Elohim. He's doing this all for you."

I don't want to belabor the point but it brought to my mind an illustration of a time in my own life when an unbeliever made an impact on me. I was working between college years – I think it was between my freshman and sophomore years. I worked on a construction site. I worked in a group and our small group was called "gophers". If you have worked on a construction site, you know what a gopher is. A gopher just does anything someone tells them to. They go and get windows, clean out a house, help the carpenters, or whatever.

There were four of us gophers, and we had a dump truck that we would drive around this huge site and pick up trash and do all kinds of interesting work. I had great, great motivation to continue college because I knew what would happen if I ever quit.

The three guys that I worked with worked hard at not working. They really were clever. One of the guys had been doing this for at least two years. I came in and was going to be there three months, and they knew it. I was ready to work. Many times I

would be loading that dump truck all by myself. I determined, if this was a testimony to them, it would be a testimony to them, and continued to do the work.

On the site, there was a refreshment van that would pull in. I am sure you have seen the type – they open the sides and sell all kinds of stuff. We were allowed a lunch hour, but that was all we got. One morning, I can still remember, the van pulled in at 10 o'clock. The other three guys made a bee-line for that thing. We were on a cul-de-sac cleaning out some homes that morning. They got all these refreshments and I was left out there picking up cinder blocks. It was hot, so I decided, "Hey, why not," and I got something to drink too. I took my drink and found the others in a house that had been finished and was waiting for the carpet. I came in with my coke and they kind of looked at me. I ignored it, sat down, popped the lid, and started to have my refreshment.

Now I probably saw our boss two times that whole summer. Well, no sooner had I sat down than the boss walked in the back door and saw the four of us. He had no idea that I did not do that every day like the other guys. I will never forget the look in his eye as he swept the room. He said, "Hey guys, I pay you for eight hours. Get out and go to work."

Oh! I was in that group! And the thing that hurt was, I knew God! I knew better.

Have you ever had an unbeliever confront you? And before those three guys – my testimony? Forget it! Down the tubes!

That is what is happening with Joseph's brothers. They come before a slave who does not care about their God, and they are frantic. They are explaining, "Look, we're not dishonest. And here's the plan; this is what we did."

The steward says, "Relax, you've got a God. He must be in control."

So what happens next? Verses 24 through 27a.

***Then the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys fodder. So they prepared the present for Joseph's coming at noon; for they had heard that they were to eat a meal there. When Joseph came home, they brought into the house to him the present which was in their hand and bowed to the ground before him. Then he asked them about their welfare, . . .***

This is really interesting because they know he is the prime minister, yet he says, "How was your trip, men? How are you feeling?"

They probably wondered, "Is he setting us up for the ax?"

He asked them how they were doing and they said, "Well, we're fine."

Then Joseph, in verse 27b,

***. . . said, "Is your old father well, of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?"***

They said, "Yes, he is. We'd love to see him again."

They are probably so confused at what he is doing. Look at verse 28.

***They said, "Your servant our father is well; he is still alive." They bowed down in homage.***

These guys just keep bowing down – bowing down to the carpet.

Continue to verse 29a, as Joseph sees his little brother for the first time in twenty-five years.

***As he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, . . . he said, "Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me?" . . .***

He still has to act ignorant.

They probably said, "Yes."

What a sight this was to Joseph. I can just imagine him going over to him and saying what's written, in the last part of verse 29.

***. . . May God [Elohim] be gracious to you, my son.***

About that time, I think I would have "lost it" if I had been a bug on the wall watching this whole thing. Joseph did exactly that. In the next phrase, he literally ran out of the room. He said, "Oh, God bless you, my son. Elohim bless you." And his brothers are really looking at him now. Then, he takes off and runs out. What is he looking for? Look at verse 30.

***Joseph hurried out . . . to weep; and he entered his chamber and wept there.***

He was looking for a place to weep. He threw himself across the bed and wept there.

I think a great point to bring out of this is the way this man, who was a great leader, could share and show emotion. We get the idea that if you are prime

minister, you have got it together all the time and you never have emotions. Yet Joseph had to leave, grab a towel, lay across his bed, and just weep.

Why was Joseph weeping? We are not told why, but I would assume that when he saw his brother, he was overwhelmed with twenty-five years of loss.

Joseph had not chosen Egypt. He had stayed there because somewhere between the prison cell and the office of prime minister, God had made it very clear, “Joseph, I brought you here. Eventually, you will bring this little nomadic tribe into the land of Goshen and you will help them become a great nation.”

Joseph did not choose Egypt. As soon as he was promoted, he could have asked leave and gone back to his home. He had stayed because God had wanted him to.

Twenty-five years of loss, however, overwhelmed him. This is his little brother, his real brother, who he had not seen for so many years. Now Benjamin is a grown man, and Joseph just had to weep.

Continue to verse 31.

***Then he washed his face and came out; and he controlled himself and said, “Serve the meal.”***

Verse 32 is kind of funny. Joseph has a little table over here and his brothers have a little table over there.

***So they served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians could not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is loathsome to the Egyptians.***

Note verse 33.

***Now they were seated before him, the first-born according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth, and the men looked at one another in astonishment.***

In other words, they did not say anything, but Joseph comes along and says, “Okay, you sit right here. And Simeon, you sit right here. And Judah, you sit right here.” He seats them all according to their age. “And Benjamin, you’re right here, at the head.”

These brothers, now, have “lost it”. I am sure they are nudging each other thinking, “How’d he figure this out?”

## **A test of humility**

3. Joseph is not finished, and I think this is the third test. It is the test of humility.

Look at verse 34.

***He took portions to them from his own table, but Benjamin’s portion was five times as much as any of theirs. . . .***

Now if you had come to my house last night, and you were Benjamin, you would have gotten five portions of a great meal. My wife is a great cook. Do you want to know what I had for supper? Sure you do. You would have had five plates of tuna casserole. You would have had five rolls. You would have had five glasses of sweetened iced tea. If you come to our house, the tea is sweet. We do not put sweetener in it because it is already sweetened. You would have gotten, literally, five portions, but it would not have been for you to eat. Five portions is what they would give the Pharaoh, every time he sat down to eat. It was a symbol of honor; it was a symbol of great respect.

Now catch this, before Joseph was the favored son, he was the one who wore the tunic to his wrists and to his ankles. And what did the brothers do? They hated him. Now he puts before Benjamin, his only blood brother, five portions. Then, he probably watched. How do the other brothers respond? “Hey, did you see what Benjamin got? I knew it! He’s not only favored back home but he’s going to get the best deal here.”

I think that there was not even a sliver of jealousy. I think this because we are told in the last part of verse 34,

***. . . So they feasted and drank freely with him.***

## **Application**

Let me try to tie this up by giving a couple of applications. We are really dealing with two different people, so let me give a couple of thoughts.

### **Recognize “the Jacob temperament” in you!**

The first application deals with Jacob and involves what we are calling, “the Jacob temperament”. Let me characterize that for you with two thoughts. And we all need to look in the mirror of scripture today.

### **Seen in a person who constantly re-iterates life's disappointments**

1. First, "the Jacob temperament" is seen in a person who constantly reiterates life's disappointments.

Now do not misunderstand this. It is not wrong to share your pain and trial with your brothers and sisters in Christ. That is what we are here for.

I am talking about an individual who is like a broken record. You bump them and they spill it all. They constantly do it. They are not looking for a solution. They are not asking for prayer. They are not even seeking encouragement. They just want to dump.

I think we all do that from time to time, don't we? The next time your spouse or child does that, call them Jacob. That little exercise will be convicting.

### **Seen in a person who stubbornly refuses divine perspective**

2. Secondly, the Jacob temperament is seen in a person who stubbornly refuses divine perspective.

Chuck Swindoll preaches a message from this text and he basically preaches it around that thought. He talks about an individual who refuses until the last moment, to finally look up. That is what Jacob did. He tried everything possible and never caught on until the very end.

This is like times that you and I struggle and do not think God is involved; that God is putting this together. Jacob says, in chapter 42, verse 36,

*... all these things are against me.*

If he had only had chapter 43, he would know that God was designing all along. It had to be this way to get them all back to Egypt. Just hang on!

### **Recognize the hand of God upon you!**

I also think of the brothers and the way in which God worked in their lives. Let me give two ways to recognize the hand of God upon you.

### **Repentance is often brought about by God's goodness**

1. First, repentance is often brought about by God's goodness.

The goodness of God leads to repentance. We have the idea that the only way He will ever get us to repent is to hit us over the head. We think He needs to send Gabriel or someone to just whack us good. That is not necessarily the case all of the time.

There are times when God just overloads us with goodness. In fact, in chapter 43, the last part, these brothers have been brought to repentance, as we will discover even more specifically in the next chapter. This did not occur by Joseph throwing them in prison, and not just for three days, but for the rest of their lives, and then sending a note to them saying, "By the way, I happen to be Joseph, your brother. As soon as you repent, I'll let you out." It happened because like Christ, he sets a table and offers fellowship. God does the same in our lives.

### **Behind the harshness of discipline is God's heart of love**

2. Secondly, behind the harshness of discipline is God's heart of love.

The brothers did not know that Joseph was running to his bedroom to weep. They did not know that earlier, he could not control himself and had to turn away and weep. Everything that he was doing was literally tearing him up. I believe, as one man suggested, that Joseph was on the verge of breaking down the moment he saw his brothers. It was the wisdom of God through him that kept him from breaking until they had repented. In his heart, he was weeping. I think he wanted to embrace them.

That is the way that God so often deals with us. In fact, I think it is obvious that He always does. Even though discipline may be harsh, behind it is a heart of incredible love.

The question is, "Will we throw in the towel?" Will we say, "I'm starving in Canaan and I'll starve and die?" Or, do we persist and ultimately trust?

I heard a great story of an older couple. For decades, they ran a small store located in the inner city on the East coast. Finally, urban renewal came. All the old, dilapidated buildings were torn down and were replaced by beautiful new buildings to revitalize the city. Somehow, however, this older couple's general store was overlooked.

So after awhile, after all the building had stopped, their store was between two new buildings. To their left, with the wall just touching their little store, was a two-story department store. To their right was a huge



grocery store. It covered half of a block, with an additional half block for parking. So now, this little general store was surrounded by and literally in the shadows of, two huge stores that were selling what they had sold for years.

What would you and I have done? Well, needless to say, this couple had some spitfire. They, determined not to quit, took all the money they had and went to a sign painter. Using every penny they could spare, they bought the biggest sign they could. It stretched across the roof of their little store from one end to the other. It contained three words, "Main Entrance Here."

When I look at Jacob, I see him in the shadow of tremendous difficulty. But what I learn from him is that ultimately, he writes a sign in his life that

basically says, "God, You can still work here. I am still available."

George Matheson, who I referred to earlier, wrote these words, and with these, I will close,

*My God, I have never thanked Thee for my thorns. I have thanked Thee a thousand time for my roses, but not once for my thorns. I have been looking forward to a world where I shall get compensation for my cross, but I've never thought of my cross as itself, a present glory. Teach me the glory of my cross. Teach me the value of my thorn. Show me that I have climbed to Thee by the path of pain. Show me that my tears have made a rainbow.*

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