

## Surprises Happen.

*WHERE WERE YOU? I WAS IN MIAMI, ALMOST EXACTLY 6 YEARS AGO ON ELECTION DAY.*

**HOW MANY OF YOU WERE GOING THROUGH LIFE JUST ASSUMING YOU WERE GOING TO BE LAID OFF ? For most of us, it is one of many "surprises" in our life.**

**You've heard the phrase \_\_\_\_\_ happens – I'M HERE TO TELL YOU THAT SURPRISES HAPPEN.**

### The Story of Joseph – step father of Jesus.

What do we know about him? A simple carpenter. Not a ruler, not a king, not a prophet, not a priest – a regular guy. They were both probably teenagers.

Imagine the conversation. Here is the Hebrew version: Mary says - hey yo!...we need to talk. She had been on a 3 month journey to see her cousin and probably was sporting a baby bump...

I'm pregnant (Surprise!!!!!!) – what is his reaction? Seriously!!!! He was humiliated! His first thought was to break the engagement. He knows the baby is not his.

Then she says, I'm pregnant by the Holy Spirit (Surprise!!!!!!) You can't be serious!!!!– not only is she unfaithful, she is crazy!

Then what happens:

Matthew 1:19-20 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>19</sup> Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet<sup>[a]</sup> did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

<sup>20</sup> But after he had pondered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

AFTER HE HAD PONDERED THIS..... Just like us – we need to stop, be alone and consider what does this mean?

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What was the first thing the angel said to him?

❖ **DO NOT BE AFRAID - How do you do that?**

Phillipians 4: 6-7 Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

## SUPRISES HAPPEN!

SONY LETTER – SURPRISE!!!!

**My message here today is about lessons I learned while traveling the path of unemployment.**

- ❖ **MY MESSAGE FOR YOU TODAY IS THAT -**  
❖ **UNEMPLOYMENT IS NOT ABOUT FINDING A JOB –**

It's about how God changes your life & your family's life through the process.

**Do you ask yourself - Why Me? Or, has your spouse said: "What did you do?"**

**How many in here have heard that from a loved one since you've been laid off?**

**Remember the story of another Joseph, the guy with the fancy Technicolor coat?** – when he told his brothers that he had dreams of ruling over them? When he was clearly dad's favorite, when he was the young kid, always tattling on his older brothers! When they threw him in the well and sold him to slavery – at just that moment do you think he might have thought, "uh oh, I think I might have caused this – oops, I should have kept my big mouth shut?" Do you lie awake at night thinking that? – scouring your mind to find something that you did to get fired? In the end, what did Joseph learn? When his brothers repented Joseph said "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today."

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**Or how about poor Job: Job 2, 7-10:** So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. **8** And he took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself while he sat in the ashes. In a single day God had allowed Satan to take Job's wealth, his children, all his property – including his camels. **The man was left with only ashes, broken pots and his wife.** We are Farmers! You can't buy enough insurance to cover this situation.

How did his loving and supportive wife react?: Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die." But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

### **Now, What does God say about Surprises or Trials in life?**

John 9: As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.

Can you imagine the "whispers or talk of the neighborhood or Synagogue when the boy was born blind? ***"What did his parents do to deserve this?"***

- ❖ **UNEMPLOYMENT Is a trial that God allows. IS NOT ABOUT FINDING A JOB –** It's about how God changes your life & your family's life through the process **to bring Glory to God.**

God uses the events in our lives to call and change us. Think about the story of Paul on the road to Damascus. God changed Paul. The end result was not Paul forming a committee about Damascus road safety.

Think about the story of the Good Samaritan. The moral of the story wasn't about improved patrols on that section of highway. Consider Job again – His story is not about how poorly he structured his assets and having to file chapter 7 bankruptcy – it is about his faithfulness during a really awful time in his life. ***We need to recognize the turning points where God overrules the details in our lives in conformity to the purpose of His will.*** Have you heard the voice of God since you became unemployed?

## **Surprises Happen.**

How do we survive a surprise - the trial of unemployment? FGB Joseph's story is a good example. Ponder & Pray. The most important use of your time is sitting alone, in quiet, just listening for God's voice on His plan for your future. For me it was sitting late at night in the back yard looking up at the stars. For a Japanese guy I counseled – it was a park bench where his wife could not see him cry. Anyone here have a similar story?

At least once a day go into a private room, get on your face or on your knees and pray. Be transparent - Tell God about your anger, fears, hopelessness.

Then, Take the perspective that your next job will be a gift from God – imagine it like a present wrapped up with a bow.

- ⌘ You have no control over when it comes.
- ⌘ You have no control over what's in the box or what the job title is
- ⌘ You have no control over where the box is located.
- ⌘ Your only responsibility is to look for it, open it when it arrives and be thankful.

Memorize Psalm 31:14-15: "But I trust in you, LORD; I say, "You are my God." My times are in your hands" That's the verse that I have on my business card, given to people I am helping.

### **Now, My Practical Advice – my suggestions based on 14 months of unemployment. This is worth exactly what you are paying:**

1. Put together a support team who will proactively help you, check in with you, network for you and buy you lunch. This should include friends and family, as well as former colleagues.
2. Treat the time like a sabbatical - focus on your health, renewing your mind, and spending time with your loved ones. You now have a huge amount of time on your hands - you will be surprised how much you reflect on what it means to be laid off. For me, one example was that I committed to having lunch with my wife daily. Many look back and regret not spending more of the time with your family.

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3. Develop a communication strategy with your wife/kids.

*Do you remember the old hymn – My hope is built..... My wife had a version of the song - My hope is built on nothing less than Tim's career and his paychecks*

I didn't feel like reporting every day to my wife what was happening, but she was fearful and needed to talk. I bought a white board where I would list which companies I was pursuing and next steps. When she was scared, she could look at the board to see the latest without bugging me. Another idea is a blog.

4. Don't be surprised if your career takes an unexpected right turn - consider that your life story is not centered upon your current responsibilities or industry. I went from a career in electronics to a career in commercial real estate.

### **Tips that Bill Simon at Korn Ferry provided:**

1. Many senior execs believe that they can make 6 phone calls and have a new job. That is not the case anymore. Expect and plan to be out of work for at least 6 months.
2. Do not panic. Do not call your professional network for 2 weeks. You need to think through how you want to tell your story. The first communication to the network needs to be very different than you would think.
3. You will find the right job, but it will take several months - even a year for some.
4. Your next job will come from a friend of a friend. (Everyone repeat this) Spend 90% of your time networking 10% looking at on-line ads.
5. Don't be surprised when people who you thought were GOOD friends won't even call you back or connect with you on LinkedIn. Has this happened to any of you?
6. You will come out of the process with a new network of friends, and a new professional network. Tim Podraza (NFL), Ken Wheatley (FBI)
7. You will be surprised about a small group of people who will bend over backwards to help you - and will proactively engage to see how you are doing.
8. Most people want to help – you need to be clear on how they can help you. Asking if they know of any jobs is a waste of time. They would have already told you. Use my advice - 5 names, invite a pier group (maybe from here) to a table at Panera – everyone lists 5 names.
9. Unemployment is 100% rejection until you find a job. Be prepared
10. It's OK to be angry - just channel it through conversations where you can yell at a friend. Please don't kick the dog.

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11. Realize that much has changed since you last looked for work - you should get advice from a dozen people who have been through the process in the last couple of years.
12. You need a minimum of 500 contacts on LinkedIn to have an effective network.
13. Resumes have changed in recent years. Realize that you are competing with guys 10 years your junior for the same slot. Create 3 versions of your resume for each type of job you are seeking, one that is colorful and stands out for interviews. Include links to your LI profile and Google docs that provide examples of your work/portfolio. The second is more traditional with strategic key words that can be machine read. The third is the one that you email to the hiring manager. THE FACTS MUST REMAIN CONSISTENT ON ALL 3.
14. Have at least 3 HR execs review and comment on your resume - at least 2 should be under the age of 30.
15. Have at least 10 people review your resume and LI profile - with 4 or 5 who speak English! - have excellent writing/editing skills.

Giving Thanks: After you land, create an artifact Set up a monument. Joshua 4:5-7

And Joshua said to them, "Pass on before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of the Jordan, and take up each of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, °that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, 'What do those stones mean to you?' 7 then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial forever."

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You have a choice: **Live by fear or live by faith.**

Do you really believe that God is all powerful? Do you really believe that God cares for you? Do you really believe that God is all knowing? I found that my decision to live by faith had to be a daily choice.

1 Peter 5: 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

Example – are you an anxious flyer? If so, you are assuming that the pilot doesn't know what he is doing, or that the 12 year old maintenance guys you see out the window don't know what they are doing, or that Boeing doesn't know what they are doing on this 25 year old 757. Your anxiety is a sign that you are not willing to submit to the pilot when he says "sit back, relax, and enjoy the flight".

But what are your options? Are you going to fly the plane yourself from seat 37b – or are you going to humble yourself under the pilot's instructions?

This is an illustration of what God is saying to us about having Faith! as we live our lives!

He says "Humble yourselves – He cares about you! You are His personal concern

He is saying:

- I am the one who cares about you.
- I know who you are, better than you do
- I know about your unemployment
- I know about your fears

Our unwillingness to humble ourselves means that we seek to take matters into our own hands and we consume ourselves with worry – we reveal that we are focused on ourselves and not our Lord.

The presence of anxiety is directly related to the absence of humility.

Notice that he says to cast the anxiety, not the trouble that causes the anxiety. We are not in control of our troubles, but we are in control of the worry/anxiety Cast means to throw hard.

What is the promise of God? He cares for you.

Read Psalm 121

## **Surprises Happen.**

How do we deal with this where we live?

Hold hands with your wife when either of you has fear, and tell each other that today you choose to live by faith, not fear.

If you want to feel better. 5 words – How can I help you? Be aware of the people God puts in your path.

Surprises Happen and Being Unemployed is not about looking for work – It's about how God changes you and your family through the process.

- ❖ If you are scared – and you need a friend to walk with you down this path, please come see me.
- ❖ If you want to know more about how to establish your team, please come see me
- ❖ If you want to know more about what it means/what it looks like to live by faith, please come see me
- ❖ If you want to have God as *Your* Father, and feel like God is calling you – here today at this meeting, please come see me.

Nobody gets talked into becoming a Christian. This is how it works – God opens your eyes, and you know that you need Him.