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Well, good morning. It's great to see you. Welcome, those of you who are watching online as well as those who are at *Fry Road [Campus]* and those of you at *Jones Road Campus*. Thank you for being a part of this series. I'm really glad to be a part of this series we're doing called *Resilient*. It's all about being resilient.

When I think of that word, my mind goes way back to a time when I was a kid and a toy that I got when I was about 6 or 7 years old. Now I know that if you're under about 20 or 25, when you think of toys you think of things like *Game Boys* and *Xbox 360* and *iPods* and *Nintendo Wii*. Well, when I was a kid it was a little more low-tech than that. I remember getting this toy that was an inflatable Bozo the Clown.

Are any of you old enough to remember that?—yeah. It was a low-tech punching bag and the base of it was filled with sand. And then you inflated Bozo—(you know) you blew up Bozo—and then you could punch him right in the nose and he would hit the ground and then pop right back into place. It didn't matter whether you hit him with a right cross, a left jab, [or] a right hook. It didn't matter because wherever you hit him he always bounced back in the same place, because his foundation was secure, because his foundation never moved.

That's what I think of when I think of the word resilient.

This morning we're going to look at what I think is the *Old Testament* poster boy for resiliency. No matter what life threw at him he always bounced back and his name is Joseph. In his life he took a lot of big punches. He was thrown around by life like a rag doll and yet his foundation never moved. As a teenager—at the age of 17 with his whole life in front of him—he has this confrontation with his brothers. His brothers throw him in a hole in the ground and are plotting about killing him. One of the brothers talks the others out of taking Joseph's life and they sell him into slavery.

Now think about that:

- 17 years old
- Sold into slavery
- Your whole life has taken a U-turn (and)
- You don't know whether you'll ever see your family ever again in your life

And then you are bought by a man by the name of Potiphar and you do the best you can to be faithful, to be trustworthy. You're put in charge of everything over Potiphar's household. And then his wife comes to you one day and tries to seduce you. You resist. You refuse. Your integrity wouldn't let you compromise and you do the right thing, but you get accused of rape. And now you are in prison.

(I mean) Joseph really was a victim. Now we throw that word around a lot today and it's certainly overused and abused. But there are people like Joseph who are genuine victims of unfair and unjust treatment. We all react against that because we want to think that we live in a world that is fair, where evil gets punished and where righteousness gets rewarded. We like to think that's the world we're in; but the truth is: life isn't fair.

Some of you may be experiencing that kind of season in your life right now; where you find yourself in a situation where it feels like life has dealt you a blow that is just unfair. And we often in church like to quote this passage from *Isaiah, chapter 55*—it helps us to understand that our God is a big God. It says this:

⁸ “My thoughts are completely different from yours,” ... “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. ⁹ For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.

Isaiah 55:8-9 (NLT, 1996 edition)

I really like those verses until it comes to my personal situation—then:

- I want God to give me an explanation
- I want what’s going on in my life to make sense
- I want to understand where this is going
- ...that God has some big plan (and)
- ...that, by the way, the plan ends in a happy ending

I want that in my world. I want God to connect the dots and that’s just not always life.

So when you pick up the story in *Genesis 39* [verse 20], Joseph is in prison. He’s innocent. He’s been falsely accused of seducing Potiphar’s wife. He’s thrown into prison. Literally the phrase is: He’s thrown into a **dungeon**. And I want to use that dungeon as (kind of) a word-picture for maybe where some of you find yourself today.

When I was thinking about a dungeon and maybe how some of us feel today—I was thinking about that and—I want you to see that Joseph bounces back because...

RESILIENT PEOPLE ARE NOT DESTROYED BY DIFFICULTY

Even when he’s in this dungeon, he bounces back. But a dungeon is first a place where you don’t see clearly.

IN A “DUNGEON” SEASON OF LIFE...

WE CAN’T SEE CLEARLY

It’s easy to get disoriented in a dungeon—

- To lose your bearings
- To let your emotions and resentment take over
- To make bad judgments

—because you don’t see clearly. You can’t see where the light is or where you’re supposed to go when you’re in a dungeon season of life. And when you are in a dungeon you don’t have control.

IN A “DUNGEON” SEASON OF LIFE... WE DON’T HAVE CONTROL

For some of us who are here today that’s where we find ourselves. It’s an uncomfortable place where:

- A health issue has come up and the truth is: you don’t have any control over it (or)
- You lost a job over which you had no control (or)
- You had a spouse walk out on you and it feels like life is out of control

And so life has happened to us. We didn’t ask for it. We didn’t cause it. We didn’t deserve it. But the one thing that we know for sure is: we don’t have control.

I have a friend. He went to college with me. We were dorm-mates. His name is David Edwards. David has been for many years the pastor at First Baptist Church of Corsicana, Texas. A week ago Friday at 4:20 in the afternoon, David was driving his pickup truck north of Corsicana on the highway. A guy in a truck coming the other direction fell asleep in his truck, came across the road, and head-on collided into my friend David and he was killed. His wife Lyndy, their kids, and the two kids they were just adopting from Taiwan had their entire world changed in one moment. They thought life was going along this way and then something happened where they lost control. She has no control over what happened and now the season of life that she finds herself in.

Your situation may not be that dramatic—it may not be a car accident—but you still have that same feeling, that what you’re in right now is a hopeless feeling; because it feels like you have no control over where it’s going. And then when you are in a dungeon, you feel trapped.

IN A “DUNGEON” SEASON OF LIFE... WE ARE TRAPPED

I mean Joseph had to feel this way.

- He’s thrown into prison
- There was no Appeals Court
- No letter-writing campaign
- No recourse for getting him out of prison

All he could do is just be faithful where he was right now and wait. That’s not a comfortable place to be. And then when you’re in a dungeon season of life, you often feel abandoned—alone.

IN A “DUNGEON” SEASON OF LIFE... YOU FEEL ABANDONED

Joseph was there—no family, no friendships, [and] no relationships. And I am sure that Joseph being human—even though he was so resilient—there had to be times in his life when his eyes would look up toward the sky and think:

- God, where are You?

- Why are You not doing something?
- You know I am in here unjustly, You know my situation; if You can fix this, why don't You?

Those are questions that people ask when you're in the dungeon.

Maybe you find yourself, like Job, kind of having these thoughts. Maybe you would resonate with Job's words in *chapter 23* when Job says (you know):

³ If I only knew where to find God, I would go to his throne and {I would} talk with him there. ⁴ I would lay out my case and present my arguments. ⁵ Then I would listen to his reply and understand what he says to me. ⁶ Would he merely argue with me in his greatness? No, he would give me a fair hearing. ⁷ Fair and honest people can reason with him, so I would be acquitted by my Judge. {But then he says,} ⁸ "I go east, but he is not there. I go west, but I cannot find him. ⁹ I do not see him in the north, for he is hidden. I turn to the south, but I cannot find him.

Job 23:3-9 (NLT, 1996 edition)

(I mean) notice those phrases. He says (you know): I look, but He's not there. I search this direction, but I can't find Him. I look for Him, but I don't see Him and He's hidden from me. But God was there. But like Job, maybe you feel the same way, that—

- When you pray nothing happens (and)
- When you search you can't find any answers

But I want us to remember that the last words that Jesus gave the disciples when He gave the Great Commission, and He said: Here's the assignment I have for you, to go into all the world and make disciples. And he said: Oh by the way, don't forget this one truth. "I am with you always, to the very end of the age." [*Matthew 28:20b (NIV)*] That's God's promise to you. Whether it feels like He's there or not, He is.

It's interesting to me that in *Genesis 39:21* you read these words: "The LORD was with" Joseph. In spite of maybe those feelings of feeling abandoned, God was with him. And in fact, God was very much at work in his life.

Well, when you go to *chapter 40* and *chapter 40* opens with the introduction of two new characters: one is a cup-bearer and one is a baker, both of whom had served in the court of the pharaoh. But the Bible says that these two guys—we're not told how but—they offended the pharaoh and ended up in prison. Well, by this time Joseph has (in prison) raised his level of responsibility and trustworthiness to the point that other prisoners were put under his charge. And these two guys are put under Joseph's care.

The Bible says that one night these two men—the cup-bearer and the baker—have dreams. The next morning, they wake up, they talk about it; but what they discover is they don't know what

the dreams mean and there's no one to interpret [them]. And so as Joseph is walking by he can tell that these guys are depressed, discouraged, frustrated and he says: What's up? And they say: Well, we've had these dreams. We're sure they mean something, but we don't know what they mean. And Joseph says: Well, tell me and let's see if God would interpret the dream.

And so the cup-bearer says: Well, I had this dream about a vine. Out of the vine grew these three branches and on the branches were some grapes. And so in one hand I had this cup, and in the other hand I was taking the grapes and squeezing the juice into the cup—it was the pharaoh's cup—but I don't know what it means.

Joseph said: Well, let me tell you. The three branches represent three days and in three days you're going to be released from prison and you're going to be restored right back to your place of being the cup-bearer to the pharaoh.

Well, the baker hears Joseph's amazing ability to interpret the dream and the good outcome. And so he says to Joseph: Hey, how about my dream, can you tell me what it means? He said: In my dream on top of my head were three different baskets and in those baskets were different breads and baked goods for the pharaoh. But he said: The birds were eating the bread out of the baskets. I don't understand.

Joseph said: Your dream has a different ending. He said: You're also going to be released in three days but when you're released you're going to be killed by Pharaoh—beheaded—and your body hung in a tree.

And so he interprets both of these dreams. And sure enough, just as he predicted, three days later these guys were let out. But before they were released, Joseph says to the cup-bearer: Hey, when you're let out and you go back to Pharaoh, could you do me a favor? Would you just mention my situation—my name—to him? I mean I am in here unjustly. I'm innocent of what I've been accused of. And maybe if you would just do that, the wheels of justice would start turning and I could be let out of prison.

Now we don't know whether or not Joseph was really aware of what happened to these men after they were released. But he does know that just as he predicted in three days, they were both let go (or taken out of prison). And I just wonder again—if I put myself in Joseph's shoes—if I would have all this hope and anticipation thinking that finally maybe life is turning around for me.

- First, I was sold into slavery by my own brothers
- I was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife
- I've been sitting in this dark, dank dungeon for all these days (and)
- Now maybe there's this glimmer of hope that I could be getting out

And so he waits. And a day goes by and another day. A week goes by and a few weeks go by. Months go by and no word—no communication from the outside—not anything comes back to Joseph at all. In fact when you open *chapter 41, verse 1*, there's one word there that kind of stands out. It says: "When two full years had passed..." [*Genesis 41:1 (NIV)*] Two *full* years! I mean here's a guy who had done what is right. He was innocent, he had been following God,

and all he gets is silence—I mean nothing—not one single word. Instead of being remembered and rewarded, he is forgotten.

When I think about Joseph, at this point of the story, there are three practical takeaways I want to give you. The first one is this:

DON'T MISTAKE “UNSEEN” AS “UNFRUITFUL”

Sometimes we think that when we're in that hard place and it feels like Heaven is silent that God has forgotten us. But God was at work. In fact in this unseen time of Joseph's life, God was refining his character, God was reshaping his priorities, and building into his life what he would need for a day in the future. But God was at work.

(You know) I don't know if you've ever thought about this but 90 percent of Jesus' earthly life is unseen and unrecorded. Of the gospels' 89 chapters, only 4 chapters offer any information about Jesus' life before beginning His public ministry. (I mean) think about this:

- Jesus is born one day in Bethlehem; then He is hidden for a week
- He's circumcised on the eighth day; but then He's hidden for a few months until just prior to Him being 2 [years old] He is visited by wise men and kings from the east
- After that (the Bible says) He is really hidden for an entire decade until He is 12 years old and we get one glimpse of Him in the temple
- After that He is hidden then for almost two decades until He is 30 years of age and begins His public ministry

Most of the life of Jesus is submerged in anonymity and God was still at work in Him.

(You know) often we need to realize that those anonymous seasons are sacred seasons in our life. Even when it feels like you are in a prison—unnoticed, alone, isolated—God is still at work. Now here's the choice that you and I have—a lot of people when they find themselves in that situation—

- Choose resentment, bitterness, they become angry
- Or you can choose to trust God, to choose contentment, and a life of gratitude

Interestingly if you studied the life of Joseph from this point forward—from the age of 30 until he dies at 110—you will not read one word or hear one thought of resentment come out of his life. God was definitely at work.

It's what C. S. Lewis calls “God's megaphone.” In his book, *The Problem of Pain*, C. S. Lewis makes this profound statement, he says:

God whispers to us in our pleasures, {He} speaks {to us} in our conscience, but {He} shouts {to us} in our pain.

C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (1940)

For some of you, you could give testimony to that; that God has spoken to you, has done more dramatic work in that season of pain—being in the dungeon, if you will—than any other time in your life. The second takeaway is this:

DON'T BE SO DISTRACTED BY THE FUTURE THAT YOU MISS THE PRESENT BECAUSE... TODAY ALWAYS COUNTS

It would have been easy for Joseph, at this point, to just sit around, complain, whine, and agonize over the fact that he is being mistreated. But it's interesting if you study Joseph's life, he always shines wherever he is planted.

- When he goes to Potiphar's house, he is trustworthy, he works hard, [and] he gets elevated in his position.
- When he goes to prison, the Bible says that the warden didn't worry about anything that he placed under Joseph's care. [*Genesis 39:23* (paraphrased)]

Was he a victim? Yes! Was he mistreated? Yes! Did he suffer unjustly? Absolutely! But he still trusted God—that He was in control—and he recognized that each day was a gift.

Too many of us have what I like to call the “chips and salsa” philosophy of life. Now you know that when you go to a Mexican food restaurant:

- You take out the menu (and)
- They bring you water (and)
- The waitress comes by (and)
- They usually plop down on your table chips and salsa

Right?—the chips and salsa are (sort of) the filler, the warm-up. But what you're really looking toward is the main course that's coming later.

There are some people who it seems as though they always live their life just looking for the main course and they don't enjoy what's in front of them today, right now. We always live with this attitude—

- If I can just get through this season
- If the kids could just get grown up
- If I could get that different job
- If we could be in a different place
- If I can make a little more money

If...if...if...and with our eyes always out there we miss what's right here. Today counts. Enjoy the chips and salsa today. Who knows what the main course will be? Who knows when it's coming? But what you do have is: you have right now. So today always counts.

Joseph seemed to shine where he was right now, today. Then thirdly...

WAIT ON GOD AND KEEP YOUR SPIRIT SWEET

(You know) dreams—delayed dreams—always ask this question: Who holds the clock of your life? It's really an issue of trust. Will I trust God even when I don't understand?

A few years ago, a guy by the name of John Kavanaugh traveled to Calcutta to work with Mother Teresa in her ministry. On the first day he was there, he went over to find Mother Teresa, and he asked her if she would pray for him—he had been thinking about this a long time.

So she said: Sure I'll pray for you. What would you like for me to pray for on your behalf?

He had been thinking about that one thing and he knew what he wanted to request, so he said to her: I want you to pray that God will give me clarity in my life.

She had an unusual response. She said: I won't pray for that.

He said: What do you mean?

She said: Clarity is the one thing you're clinging to that you need to let go of.

He said: I don't understand because it seems to me like the thing I most admire in your life is that you always seem to have clarity from God.

She chuckled and said: I've never had clarity. But what I have had is a willingness to trust God no matter what and that's what I'm going to pray for on your behalf.

For some of us we need to accept the fact that in this life you may never get the answer. You may never know all the reasons why. You may never get the clarity about why you ended up in the dungeon. The question is: Will you trust God anyway and do it with a great and gracious spirit? That's hard to do, isn't it?

(You know) when we talk about this series, *Resilient*, I think we expect to talk about people in difficulties bouncing back. But as we follow the story of Joseph, there's another temptation that comes into his life that's just as real and could put him down as well. It's the temptation of success. So I also want you to see this morning that...

RESILIENT PEOPLE... ARE NOT RUINED BY THEIR SUCCESS

So let's play this out—see how it plays out in Joseph's life. In *Genesis 41:1* it says Pharaoh had a dream just like the two guys, the cup-bearer and the baker. And just like them no one was able to interpret the dream. So Pharaoh is trying to find somebody who can interpret the dream. Well the cup-bearer goes way back in his mind, two years earlier, and he says: I remember a guy who interpreted a dream for me.

- He was a Hebrew (and)
- He was in prison (and)
- He interpreted our dreams (and)
- It came about just as he said

Then come those words we've been looking for for several chapters—*verse 14*, "Pharaoh sent for Joseph..." [*Genesis 41:14 (NLT, 1996 edition)*]

He's been in the dungeon. He's dirty. He's not clean-shaven. So he gets cleaned up and he is finally presented in front of Pharaoh and, think about it, here is his moment:

- This moment in the spotlight
- To finally plead his case (and)
- To finally do something about his plight

But what's interesting is to notice how Joseph responds to Pharaoh. Here's the point: he is humble and gives credit where credit is due.

RESILIENT PEOPLE...

ARE HUMBLE AND GIVE CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

Listen to what happens. Pharaoh says to him, when Joseph comes: I hear that you can interpret dreams. That's not quite right, but it's close; isn't it?

How easy would it have been for Joseph to say (you know): You're right? I mean, I interpreted the dreams for two of the guys in your cabinet and I was right on. And in fact, Pharaoh, if you would invite me onto the team here, I could really contribute. Because I've got this gift that could really help you out.

Very different than Joseph's response—in fact in *verse 16 of chapter 41*, here's what Joseph said—[paraphrased] Joseph says: I can't do it. I don't interpret dreams, but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires.

You know what question I ask—knowing my own heart—when I read that? How could a guy who's been where he has been, who's been treated so unjustly, respond with such humility and focus on God and not on his own injustice? How could he do that? Because of what God had been doing in his life while he was in the dungeon.

I thought about—in my own ministry—a time when it felt like I was in a dungeon. It was my first pastorate. I pastored in a small place in west-central Arkansas. I am not saying that Arkansas is a dungeon—although you could make a case for that—but it was my first church and (you know) the people were great to us. But for whatever reason, we didn't feel like we fit real well in the community. It was a very different culture for us. After about three years of being there, the truth is:

- I just wanted to leave (and)
- I began to ask God to give me another church to pastor (and)
- I began to put out the word (and)

- Churches began to contact us (and)

We were pretty regularly contacted but I often got the same message: Man, you're awfully young and we don't know that you've got the experience to step into a church this size or in this situation.

I remember flying to Dallas to meet with a church committee. I walked out of that meeting and I went to the hotel lobby, called my wife, and I said: If I was them, I wouldn't hire me. And so I went back and on Tuesday afternoon, the chairman of this church committee called me and—sure enough, as I fully expected—he said (you know): We decided not to pursue hiring you as our pastor. I was so disappointed—even though I knew it was right, even though I knew that is what they were going to do—I just sat there and cried like a baby because:

- I felt like I was trapped
- I didn't have any control
- I felt like (you know) I had been abandoned (and)
- I wanted out of my situation (and)
- There were no answers coming

What God did a lot in my life in those days was break my self-confidence and deal with some of the pride in my life. Because what God needed to do in my life was to get me in a place so that I would understand:

- That whatever He would choose to do in and through me later on in life, I would always remember I'm the same person (and)
- That whatever He chose to do in my life was because of Him, not because of me.

I think part of what God is doing in Joseph's life in those dungeon days was to say: Joseph, don't forget where you've come from. And, Joseph, don't forget Who it is now that's going to put you back into the spotlight; and that when the success comes, don't forget. What I love about Joseph is that he doesn't grab the spotlight and try to shine it on himself, he shines it on God. He stands in this moment of potential huge success and still, he doesn't forget God; because his foundation was secure.

I am sure there are some of us here today that in the tough times in the dungeon, you are closer to God than you have ever been. But those days have passed and prosperity has come and affluence has come and with that, the temptation to just kind of forget God, [and] to sort of say: God, I've got it handled now and I can handle the success. When in reality, the success may be the bigger temptation for some of us.

And so Joseph interprets the dream. The dream was a warning from God and He would say: In the next seven years, you're going to have bumper crops. But the following seven years are going to be extreme famine and you'd better be wise to save enough so that you and the people can survive famine.

Now, think about this again. Put yourself in Joseph's spot. This is a golden opportunity to lobby for a position. But in *verse 33*, Joseph doesn't manipulate. He doesn't self-promote.

RESILIENT PEOPLE... DON'T MANIPULATE OR SELF-PROMOTE

In *verse 33*, he simply says this:

“My suggestion is that you find the wisest man in Egypt and put him in charge of a nationwide program.

Genesis 41:33 (NLT, 1996 edition)

[In other words:] Pharaoh, you're going to need some help. Get some of your best people and make sure that you have a plan and a program in place to survive the famine that is eventually going to come.

Now, we know later in the story, Joseph is going to end up being that guy, but when I realize how often I am tempted in conversation and in life to posture and position and self-promote; I have tremendous respect for Joseph's integrity and self-control. For all he knows, he's going right back to prison the next day. He's not pleading his case and even in this moment, he doesn't grab for anything, he just trusts God with his future.

That is why I love this quote from J. Oswald Sanders, “The most exacting test of all to survive is prosperity.” And for some of us, that's the truth. The biggest temptation thrown at us is not the dungeon, but it's success; and success has ruined some of us.

I love what Paul says in *Philippians 4* when he says:

¹¹ Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to get along happily whether I have much or little. ¹² I know how to live on almost nothing or everything....

Philippians 4:11-12a (NLT, 1996 edition)

In another words, in times when I'm in the dungeon—or when I am second-in-command of Pharaoh—I'm okay because—

¹² ...[I have learned the secret of living in every situation,] whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. ¹³ For I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need.

Philippians 4:12b-13 (NLT, 1996 edition)

So resilient people don't let the dungeon put them down and they don't let success get them off track.

Christian Reger is a guy who was in a church. He was a believer during the early days of World War II in Nazi Germany. In those days it was a precarious thing to be involved in the church.

And Christian Reger—the organist, the church organist in his local congregation, actually betrayed him and turned him in to the Nazis and he was arrested. He was sent to Dachau, one of the concentration camps, where he would spend four years. Reflecting on that whole experience, Christian Reger would say (you know): The philosopher Nietzsche said a man can undergo torture if he knows the why of his life. But he said: Being here at Dachau, I have learned something far greater—I’ve learned to know the Who of my life; and that He was enough to sustain me then, and is enough to sustain me still.

I think that is the message from Joseph. It’s not always about knowing the why and having the answers, but it’s more about just knowing Who. It is your relationship with God and the depth of that relationship and the depth of your trust that will carry you through the dungeon and will help you survive the success. That is my prayer for all of us.

Let’s pray together. Will you bow with me as we pray? I don’t know where you are or what season of life you might be in, whether it’s in the dungeon or whether it is a time of prosperity and affluence. My question is: Are you walking in such a way that you’re trusting God?

Lord, I thank you for every person who’s here. We all have such unique journeys. We find ourselves in different stages of life. Things that maybe were true of us a year ago, life has just changed and we feel trapped. We feel out of control. Sometimes we feel abandoned and it just feels hard. I pray that we would learn from Joseph how to shine right where we are today [and] to trust You in the middle of hard times.

Maybe for some, lots of success has come. We’ve got more influence and affluence than we’ve ever had before, more stuff than we’ve ever had before; and it has become a temptation to us. Help us to respond—like Joseph—with humility, to give credit where credit is due, to not manipulate or self-promote; but to trust You even in our success.

Lord, I pray that You’d help us to take away really practical stuff from today. That it would influence how I live my Monday and Tuesday and how I treat the people in my family and at the office; it would change how I think about my relationship with You. Lord, I know I can’t change anybody, but You can. I pray that You would answer the prayers of the people today...in Jesus’ name. Amen.

I’m going to ask our ushers to come as we get ready to take the offering. But after the service today, if you’d like to pray with someone or just talk with somebody about just where you are in life, about some situation in your world, back to my left at the back of the auditorium there is an *Encouragement Room*. Someone will be back there to pray with you and help you out in any way they can. That will be available to you after the service. Let’s pray together and receive our offering.

Lord, thanks for this day [and] for the chance to give back to You, Lord. We do it out of gratitude because of all that You've done in our life. You are a good Father, You are worthy of our trust, and we give these gifts to You to say thank You...in Jesus' name. Amen.

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**So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed,
you will be strong in character and ready for anything.**

James 1:4

(New Living Translation, 1996 edition)

Legend:

(words in parentheses) = spoken by the preacher *but unnecessary* to the core sentence idea

[words in square brackets] = additional explanation for clarity *not spoken* by the preacher

{words in curly brackets within indented quote} = spoken explanation *not part of the quote*