

## The Power of Dirt

by Mike Tucker \*

One day a farmer's old mule fell into an empty well. The farmer was disappointed to lose his good mule, but he concluded that the mule couldn't be rescued, because the well was too narrow and too deep to retrieve the animal. He decided that neither the mule nor the well was worth saving, and his only option was to fill the well with dirt.

The farmer grabbed a shovel and began to fill the well with dirt, one shovel full at a time. It turns out that the animal wasn't as close to dead as the farmer had guessed. When he felt that first pile of dirt hit his back, he instinctively shook it off and trampled on it. Another pile landed on him and he shook it off and trampled it. This went on all afternoon: shake the dirt off, trample it, and step a little higher, shake the dirt off, trample it, and step a little higher. Finally, after a few hours of this, that mule had risen to a new height; he was able to step triumphantly out of the well.

The dirt that was meant to bury the mule actually saved his life!

This illustration reminds me of the biblical story of Joseph. His brothers had the idea of throwing him in a well. They were tempted to kill him, but they ultimately decided to sell him into slavery, settling on destroying his life rather than ending it.

God, however, had a different plan for Joseph -- a plan that would make him the second most powerful man in all of Egypt. Instead of dying in a well or living as a slave, God destined him for wealth and power and prestige. And God eventually gave him the opportunity to save his brothers from starvation.

Years later, long after Joseph had reconciled with his brothers, they were still afraid he would seek revenge; but Joseph had a different perspective on his life. He said, "*You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good.*" (Genesis 50:20)

When you're down, you can be sure that there will always be someone willing to throw a little dirt on you. Remember that mule: shake it off and trample it; it will help you step up. This difficult situation may appear to have the power to destroy you, but by God's grace, it will actually serve the purpose of taking you to the next level.

With Love,  
Mike

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Faith Moment April 21, 2014