

(Genesis) Genesis 37:12-39:10

by Joe Focht

The sermon explores Joseph's journey from favored son to slave, highlighting themes of envy, family dynamics, and divine purpose.

Duration: 1:10:45

Scripture: Genesis 6:9, Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 37:5-11, John 1:12, Acts 4:13, Hebrews 11:10, 2 Peter 1:9

Topics: "Genesis"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding Joseph's perspective in the story. He highlights Joseph's refusal to engage in wickedness, even though it may not be considered as such in society. The speaker encourages the audience to read ahead in the Bible to learn more about Joseph's story. The sermon also includes an invitation for those who do not know Jesus to accept him as their Lord and Savior.

Transcript

Genesis chapter 37, we are looking at Joseph, the son of Jacob's old age. The son, in one sense, that has the benefit of being raised under Joseph more than being raised under - being raised under Israel more than being raised under Jacob, the conifer. He's raised under the man who's halting on his thigh, who's limping, and I believe has the benefit of the broken heart now of this old saint who loves him and esteems him.

Reuben has forsaken his birthright, going into one of his father's concubines. It seems as we go through this chapter and into the next chapter that some of the other brothers are involved in some of the Canaanite worship. Joseph brings an evil rapport to his father of some of the things they're doing.

It seems like this young man has a heart for God, that he remembers the day they put away their foreign gods, the day that Rachel, his mother, died on the side of the road, the day they returned to the worship of the true and living God. It seems that those things are somehow emblazoned upon his heart, even as a young man. And God gives him two dreams, you remember, one with the shocks of grain and how the other shocks of grain come down and bow down before his shock of grain.

And it says his brothers hated him for telling them that dream. They hated him the more. And then yet Joseph has another dream.

The sun and the moon and the stars came and they made obeisance to his star. And then even Jacob says, shall even your mother and I come and bow down before you? But it says Jacob held those things in his heart. He pondered them.

So we find Joseph now, a young man hated of his ten older brothers, despised by them. And I think part of the blame is Jacob's. No doubt he is favoring Joseph and to favor one of your children over the others is certainly a seedbed for all kinds of problems.

It was between Isaac and Ishmael and it was between Jacob and Esau. And it is now in Jacob's family as he favors Joseph over his other sons. And some say that Joseph was plagued by pride that he should not have shared his dream with his brothers.

And yet the sharing of the dream becomes his ticket to Egypt. Again, we read this morning in Psalm 105 that God knew that he was going to break the staff of bread from the entire sphere of the earth there, that whole Mediterranean region, and that there would be a great famine. And he says there in Psalm 105 that he sent a man before them whose name was Joseph.

You know, as we read the story, it's his brother's envy and jealousy and selling him to the Ishmaelites. But from the divine perspective, God is sending him there to Egypt. And the sharing of the dream with his older brothers stirred their envy and it became the very thing then that caused him to be sent to Egypt.

And it would be important later, the years later, when they would be reunited and Joseph would forgive them for them then to remember this wondrous dream that God had given him and how it had finally reached its fulfillment. But we're seeing Joseph as this young man with vision, a young man with dreams in his heart. And again, how desperately we are in need of young people today in this world with vision that see above the carnal world that we live in, that see the things that God has set before them, that can look and see that holy city on the horizon with the streets of gold and the walls of jewels.

Abraham lived his life looking for that city. Again, Peter writes that if we have left off with brotherly love and kindness and we have left off with charity and we left off with these things, that we have become barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. And it says there that we can no longer see afar off and that we've forgotten that we're cleansed from our old sins, that somewhere along the way we can lose perspective.

And the losing of perspective is no longer being able to see afar off, no longer having vision that goes beyond this world that produces hope and an anchor to our souls that draws above this world and no longer remembering that we're a sinner as anyone else is, cleansed by the wondrous work of Christ. Well, Joseph is a young man with that kind of perspective. He has a vision.

He is looking for something spiritual above and beyond this world. He has taken to his heart the stories of Adam and of Noah that were passed to him and of his grandfather Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob. And he is looking for greater things.

Again, on Sunday morning we shared a man walking through a construction site asking a laborer what he was doing. And the laborer kind of irritated saying, well, I'm laying bricks. What does it look like I'm doing? You know, it doesn't make a scientist to figure this out.

Further on in the same construction site, asking a man what he was doing, same thing. And the man answered, I'm building a cathedral. And just the difference in perspective, you know, one man is laying his

life one brick at a time and the drudgery of life, the endless pile of wash for the moms and the little kids and the driving to work every day and whatever it might be, life becomes one brick at a time.

You know, someone asked Ruth Graham about her marriage with Billy Graham and said, what is the, you know, they've been married for so many years and such an enduring relationship. And they said, what is the hardest thing about marriage? And she said, it's so daily. And I think that when we measure life, that one brick at a time, it is, it becomes such a labor.

We lose perspective. We no longer can see far off, but for a man to be building and saying, I'm building a cathedral, I'm putting things in place that are, that are producing something that are, it's going to affect a future generation. It's going to touch other lives.

It's going to take us along from here. It's going to have an impact. It means something, what I'm doing.

Yes, it's one brick at a time, but it's going somewhere. It's doing something. And Joseph was a young man of vision like that.

We pick them up where his older brothers are probably out tending the flock, griping about his dreams. Verse 12 says his brother and went to feed their father's flock. Chapter 37, verse 12 in Shechem about 50 miles from Hebron where Jacob is dwelling.

And Israel said unto Joseph, do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem come and I will send thee under them. And he said to him, here am I ready to yield to whatever his father wanted. And he said to him, go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren and well with the flocks and bring me word again.

So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron and he came to Shechem. Now possibly Jacob is worried because it was there where Simeon and Levi had destroyed a whole town and maybe still thinking about that concern. He hasn't heard from them.

I get a feeling that the older brothers are glad to get away from Jacob and away from Joseph, this little sissy brother with a technicolor dream coat, you know, and they're 50 miles away tending the flocks. So Joseph comes to Shechem. Certain man found him and behold, he was wandering in the field.

The man asked him saying, what are you seeking? He said, I seek my brethren. Tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks. The man said they are departed from here for I heard them say, let us go to Dothan.

Now no doubt the sons of Jacob are known. Dothan about 15 miles more towards Megiddo from there. The locals knew who the children of Israel were.

He said, I heard them say they're heading towards Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren and found them in Dothan. Now Dothan means two cisterns and the place of two cisterns and maybe one of those that they rode Joseph in.

And when they saw him afar off, they saw that many colored coat coming over the horizon. Even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. Not too much, no big deal for Simeon and Levi.

And they said one to another, behold, here comes the dreamer. Come now therefore, let us slay him and cast him into some pit. We will say some evil beast has devoured him and we shall see what will become of his dreams then.

Let's kill him and tell dad that a beast ate him and then we'll see what happens to these dreams these guys telling us about. And Reuben heard it, the oldest, and he delivered him out of their hands and said, let us not kill him. Now Reuben may be guilty about the fact that he slept with Bilhah, his father's concubine and forfeited the birthright.

He's the oldest. He says no, he feels the most responsible. He says, no, let's not kill him.

Reuben said unto them, shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness and lay no hand upon him that he might rid him out of their hands. Reuben wanted to rid Joseph out of their hands to deliver him to his father. Again, he has a plan.

He'd like to get Joseph back to Jacob, back to Israel. They came to pass when Joseph was come unto his brethren. It just says that they stripped Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colors that was on him and they took him and threw him into a pit and the pit was empty.

His sister, there was no water in it. So it doesn't tell us they had a conversation or anything. Joseph walks up and just like they took their brother, stripped him out of his coat and threw him into a pit.

Now, when we get to chapter 42, it'll tell us there as, as the sons of Israel come down to Egypt to buy grain and they're going through the trials that Joseph puts them through there. They don't know that Joseph yet is there. Their consciousness bothering them and they're saying, they're saying this is because what we did to our brother.

Did he not plead with us out of the pit? So it doesn't give us that detail here, but evidently as they strip him, he's, he's pleading with them and they throw him into the pit and Joseph evidently is crying unto his older brothers. He is pleading with them. And it says, and they sat down to eat.

So they said, grace is, and they lifted up their eyes and looked and behold, a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh going to carry it down to Egypt. And they thought, oh, this is great. Now it was the Lord.

This was the ticket for Joseph to go ahead of them, as he will say, to preserve life. And Judah said unto his brother, and what profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and let not our hand be on him for he is our brother and our flesh and his brethren were content. They said, that's a great idea.

And then there passed the Midianites, merchant men, and they drew and lifted Joseph out of the pit and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for 20 pieces of silver. And they brought Joseph into Egypt and Reuben returned. Now evidently he wasn't there when they sold Joseph.

Reuben returned under the pit and behold, Joseph was not in the pit and he tore his clothes. And he returned unto his brethren and said, the child is not and I, whither shall I go? I'm the oldest. Now it's going to come on me.

What has happened to him? And they took Joseph's coat then and they killed a kid of the goats and dipped the coat in the blood. And they sent the coat of many colors and they brought it to their father and said, this have we found. Know now whether it be thy son's coat or not.

And he knew it and said, it is my son's coat. An evil beast hath devoured him. Now an evil beast had devoured him.

It's called envy. It's called jealousy. It was an evil beast certainly that had devoured him.

You know, it's interesting as you read in Galatians, the works of the flesh, adultery, fornication, lasciviousness and so forth. When it comes to the next group, it begins with envy and then goes to murder. And it puts envy in the same grouping as murder.

And I think how often envy is, is where murder begins. And it certainly it is an evil beast. The interesting thing, of course, is many years before this Jacob had put the skin of a goat upon his hands and deceived his father Isaac in his old age.

And now the blood of a goat is brought to him upon the coat of Joseph and he is being deceived. It's coming back. He's reaping in a way what he has sown.

The deception is coming his way. All the apples haven't fallen far from the tree. The sons are little chips off the old Jacob.

He said, this is his coat. An evil beast has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces.

And Jacob tore his clothes and put sackcloth upon his loins and he mourned for his son many days. And all of his sons and daughters, now evidently he had more daughters than Dinah, because it's plural here. And she, we had read about her earlier, but it's plural.

All of his sons and his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, for I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept over him.

He lost Deborah, Rachel, whom he loved, now Joseph. And I'm sure the older brothers have many discussions. I can't believe dad's carrying on.

Oh, man, I mean, I feel lousy. I mean, he shouldn't have done this. And Reuben's saying, I told you, I wasn't there.

If I had been there, what would have happened? And Joseph's saying, well, I'm glad I told you guys not to kill him. At least he's alive somewhere. You know, you can imagine what they're doing.

And verse 36 says, the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's and captain of the guard. It seems that he was the head of the executioners. Now, chapter 38 is a strange chapter.

We'll go through it. It is stuck in here. Chapter 37 at the end of the book really gives us the history of Joseph and brings us down to Egypt.

And we see God preparing the way to bring Jacob and his sons down there. Seventy-five souls, I think it will say, and then turned them into a great nation. But the camera flips back to the brothers up in Canaan, and we have this one snapshot of what's going on there.

And I believe it's because it is a picture of Judah and the Messianic line. And then we will go in the next chapter back down to Egypt. We'll be there for many chapters with Joseph.

So this is kind of a strange chapter just slipped in here. It's the only insight we have into what's happening back at home base really. And it says, it came to pass at that time that Judah went down from his brethren and turned in to a certain Adulamite whose name was Hira.

And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua. And he took her and he went into her and she conceived and bear a son. And he called his name Ur.

And she conceived again and bear a son. And now she's the one naming the second time. She called his name Onan.

And she yet again conceived and bear a son and called his name Shala. And he was a Chezeb when she bore him. Now, it just gives the, here's Judah separating himself from his brethren.

Maybe he is convicted. You know, he is the one who said, let's sell him to these Midianites. Let's do this.

And Judah gets away from dad who's mourning and broken hearted from his brethren. And he heads down to one of his Canaanite friends. And no doubt as he takes this Canaanite woman, he's also taking her way of life.

He's taking her gods along with her. There are things here that do not lend themselves to the kind of separation we'll see in the next chapter. Here it says Judah himself went down into the Canaanite territory.

The next chapter says Joseph, against his will, was brought down to Egypt. And there's a contrast certainly between these two men. It says Judah took a wife for Ur, his first born son, verse six, whose name was Tamar.

Now she shows up in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew chapter one. She's a Canaanite. And Ur, Judah's first born, was wicked in the sight of the Lord.

So the Lord slew him. And he handles that problem. We're not sure what's going on.

He evidently has learned some of the attitudes of his uncles who seem to be scoundrels. His mother is a Canaanite. It seems by the harshness of the verse, it doesn't say just the Lord slew him.

It seems the Lord is passive, it seems, allows him to die. You know, God sustains our lives. As Daniel is brought into the feast in the southern palace in Babylon as an old man, and Belshazzar is there and the handwriting is on the wall.

As Daniel interprets that, he said, you have not given glory to the God in whose hand your breath is. And Daniel says, our very next breath is in the hand of God. He keeps our heart beating.

He keeps our breath going. He has taken those, again, bodily functions. Those are involuntary muscles.

You know, certain muscles are voluntary. You can put your hands in your mouth. Certain things you can do.

Thank God we don't have to remember to breathe. Thank God we don't have to remember for our heart to beat. As soon as we turn on our favorite TV show, we die.

You know, or get caught in traffic and forget about your heart and yelling at the guy. You know, I mean, thank God they're involuntary muscles. And it says our very next breath is in his hand.

So what it says here is the Lord allowed him to die. Just simply allowed her to die. No doubt he was involved with idolatrous practice and he was wicked in the sight of the Lord.

And Judah then says to Onan, his second son, go in unto thy brother's wife and marry her and raise up seed unto thy brother. Now, this is the first mention of this practice. It is recorded in ancient inscriptions from her of the Chaldees and different parts of the world.

We call it from the book of Leviticus, the Levirate marriage, where if a brother would die without having children, the next brother-in-law would bear the responsibility to go into his wife so that she would conceive and then bear seed, which would be considered his older brother that had died. We call it the lever, which is from the Latin, which means a husband. It's a Latin word for husband's brother.

That's why we call it a levirate marriage. Now, evidently, before it's written in the law, it's known and it has particular meaning here because God had made the promises to Abraham that through his seed, all of the nations of the world would be blessed, that there was a Messianic promise made. And though now this is mingled with the Canaanites, still there is some sense in Judah that your brother has died.

Our family has this legacy. Go into your brother's wife and raise up seed to thy brother. And Onan knew that the seed should not be his.

And it came to pass when he went in unto his brother's wife that he spilled it on the ground, his seed, lest that he should give seed to his brother. And the thing which he did displeased the Lord, wherefore he slew him also. So as he went into his brother's wife, he gave he allowed his seed to spill on the ground and instead of allowing his brother's wife to conceive.

And God saw that as an evil thing and he slew him. Now, it's not talking about masturbation. Oftentimes that is pointed out here and this chapter is here and we'll deal with this.

He was the tenses here is whenever he went into his brother's wife. So there's a continual process here that's implicated in the grammar. And evidently what was happening is he was going into this woman for pleasure, for sexual pleasure, but he was despising this idea of the birthright because he knew that if she conceived that the son would not be his and the inheritance would go to his brother's older brother's wife's children that though they were his, it wouldn't be his inheritance.

And there's also part of their spiritual legacy attached to this. So he's despising the birthright as he saw. He is going into his brother's wife for pleasure on a continual basis.

We don't know how long it went on. And every time he spills his seat on the ground instead of allowing her to conceive. And in that God again saw the wickedness in his heart and considered it evil and again allowed him to die.

Then said Judah to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, remain a widow at thy father's house till Shala, my son, be grown. Evidently he is a good bit younger. For he said lest peradventure he die also.

Now Judah's suspicious. I don't know. Every time one of my sons marries this woman, they end up dead.

And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house. So that but now she is still promised now that Shala, the last son. And in the process of time, the daughter of Shua, Judah's wife, died.

And Judah was comforted and went up unto his sheep shearers in Timnath. He and his friend Hira, the Adullamite. And it was told Tamar saying, behold, thy father in law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep.

And she put off her widow's garments from off her and covered her with a veil and wrapped herself and sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnath. For she saw that Shala was grown and she was not given. She was not given unto him to wife.

So time goes by. Judah is not keeping his word to give this last son to her. He now has gone up to Timnath.

The years have gone by. It's told her what's happened. And she's realizing, well, Shala's grown and Judah's not even, you know, he's leaving the area.

Here I am waiting. He hasn't kept his word. So she goes and she puts on the clothing of a harlot.

She puts on the veil that the temple prostitute would wear, the Canaanite temple prostitute. She disguises herself as a prostitute and she sits by the side of the road. She's a Canaanite.

It's what she understands. And she sits by the side of the road in an open place on the way to Timnath. For she saw that Shala was grown and she was not given to him to be her wife.

When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a harlot because she had covered her face. And he turned in under her, by the way, and said, go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee. For he knew not that she was his daughter-in-law.

And she said, well, what will you give me that thou mayest come into me? Now there's no coinage in that day. So she's playing the role of the prostitute. He says, are you open for business? She says, yes.

He says, what's your price? And she said, well, what will you give me? He said, well, I will send thee a kid for my flock. And she said, well, what will you give me as a pledge? And he said, what do you give me in the meantime so that I know I'm not going to get ripped off? And he said, what pledge shall I give thee? And she said, well, give me your signet, which is the seal of the family. Give me your bracelets and thy staff that is in thy hand.

And he gave it to her and came in under her and she conceived by him. Now you can see there's a lot of swindlers in this family. There's a lot of, this is some family.

And she arose and went away and laid by her veil from her and put on the garments of her widowhood again. And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend, the Adullamite. He said, hey, Hira, do me a favor, go find this prostitute, give her this kid from the flock and get back my signet ring and my bracelets, my staff.

So he sent by the friend of the, his friend, the Adullamite to receive his pledge from the woman's hand, but Hira found her not. Then he asked the men of that place saying, where is the harlot that was openly by the wayside? And they said, there's no harlot in this place. We know the harlots in there.

There is no harlot that sits in this place. And he returned to Judah and said, I cannot find her. And also the men of that place said that there was no harlot in this place.

And Judah said, well, let her take it to her then, lest we be ashamed. Behold, I sent this kid. You haven't found her.

He said, okay, let it die. She's got my signet. She's got my bracelets and she has my staff.

She's, we can't find her. I don't want to make a big deal out of it. I want a disgrace to come on the family.

Let's just let it quietly slip away. God never lets his kids get away with that kind of thing. And it came to pass about three months after that, that it was told Judah saying, you know, Tamar, your daughter-in-law hath played the harlot.

And also behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, bring her forth and let her be burned. You know, this is ultimate male chauvinism.

You know, he's out running around, but his daughter-in-law is pregnant, set her on fire. You know, our sins look so much worse on someone else, don't they? Because we understand why we do them and we have all our excuses. But when someone else does them, they just look terrible.

You know, it reminds me, of course, of the story of David, how David had taken Bathsheba and gotten her pregnant and tried to cover it up in the same way. We never, God's kids never get away with that kind of thing. And about a year later, Nathan the prophet comes and says, David, let me tell you a story.

There was a man here at Jerusalem, had one little lamb that he loved. Like his own children, he loved this lamb. It was a wealthy man in the area, had many lambs and a traveler came.

Now we know who the traveler is. This is by Nathan the prophet. God says to Satan in the beginning of Job, have you seen my servant Job as you're traveling to and fro throughout the earth? Nathan says, the traveler came and David was tempted and sinned and took Bathsheba.

Nathan says to David, and when the traveler came, he sent and fetched that one lamb that this poor man had to himself and slaughtered it and offered it up and broke the heart of this man. And David says, where is that guy? Let him be killed. Put that guy to death, you know.

And Nathan pointed his finger and said, David, you're the man. And now here, Judah, you know, same family, same lineage. My daughter-in-law is pregnant.

Bring her out and burn her. And when she was brought forth, she sent to her father-in-law saying, by the man who these are, am I with child? And she said, discern or see if you can figure out whose are these, this signet and this bracelet and this staff. Judah, see if you can put the pieces together.

And Judah acknowledged them and he said, she hath been more righteous than I, because that I gave her not to Sheila, my son. And he knew her again no more. Now, we're tracing here the Messianic line.

It is remarkable in Matthew chapter one, as we're given the genealogy of Jesus Christ. First of all, normally a woman was never included in the genealogy. There are four women there.

Tamar, who is a Canaanite and gets pregnant by her father-in-law. Rahab, who was a harlot. Ruth, who was a Moabite.

And Bathsheba, who evidently was a Hittite from the Hittite family. All of them through circumstances that you would not want on your record if you were going to be the Messiah. But he came to be amongst sinners and take his place with us and to save us.

And his grace was there all along. And here in this strange chapter, plugged in here in the story of this remarkable man, Joseph, with a very sterling character, one of the most remarkable men in all of Scripture. We take this side trip to look at Judah, who is troubled and compromising, and yet the father of the Messiah.

And how remarkable that God never, he doesn't hide the sins of his people. He's not ashamed. Tamar now bears these children.

Came to pass in the time of her travail, that behold, twins were in her womb. And it came to pass that she travailed, that the one put out his hand, and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, this one came out first. Now, you know, this is hard labor.

You have twins and the first one sticks his arm out first. You're in hard labor because that's worse than breach. You know, the first one's reaching out this way, and there's another one behind him pushing.

So the midwife sees the arm come out, ties the thread on his finger, and evidently he pulls back in then. Came to pass as he drew back his hand, that behold, his brother came out. So his brother knocked him out of the way.

And she said, the midwife, she laughed, said, how has thou broken forth you? I can't believe you, little guy, that you did this. You've broken forth this breach. Be upon thee.

Therefore, his name is called Perez, and he is the one through whom the lineage of the Messiah comes. Perez, which means breach, because he kicked his brother out of the way and got out before he did. And afterward came out his brother that had the scarlet thread upon his hand, and his name is called Zerah.

Now, it's interesting because the very thing that Judah hoped to avoid was this younger brother, Joseph, becoming the heir, the inheritor of the family rights. And they sold him. They were envious of him.

And yet here in his own lineage, the very same thing happens. The older one, you know, the one that's coming out first, puts his hand out, draws it back in. The younger one then is born first, and the elder ends up serving the younger, and the younger ends up being the one through whom the Messianic line comes.

So God kind of giving us this strange picture of things back on the home front. Now we come back to Egypt here in chapter 39. Joseph was brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmaelites, which had brought him down there.

Now, we're not given the details. Evidently, Joseph is put on the auction block. What a humiliating circumstance, if you can try to imagine that.

And people are bidding on him. Strong legs, let's see his teeth, you know. They're bidding on him on the auction block, and he's bought as a slave by Potiphar, the captain of the guard and an officer of Pharaoh, and brought then back to Potiphar's house.

Now, verses 2 through 6 kind of set Joseph up in Egypt and give us a picture of God's faithfulness and his faithfulness in the house of Potiphar. That then brings us around to his temptation and then his imprisonment. We're following him on the way to the throne next to Pharaoh.

So it says, the Lord was with him, and he was a prosperous man. This is Joseph, and he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian. And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand.

And Joseph found grace in the sight of Potiphar, and he served him, and he made him overseer of his house, and of all that he had, he put into his hand. It came to pass from that time that he had made him overseer of his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake. And the blessing of the Lord, notice, was upon all that he had in his house, and also in the field.

So it's interesting. Here is Joseph brought down to Egypt. Evidently, he takes inventory.

He looks around. He says, all right, Lord, you gave me this dream. It's all that I have.

I didn't have a copy of the New Testament. I have a copy of the Old Testament. Didn't have church to go to.

Didn't have the fellowship of the saints. Seventeen years old, alone in Egypt. What an important role you as grandparents and parents play in the lives of your children.

And Jacob had been a scoundrel for so much of his life, and yet even in his old age as Israel, when his spirit was finally broken before God, he had such a powerful influence in the life of this young man. Here he now comes down to Egypt. He is sold on the auction block.

He is brought into the house of Potiphar. You know, the Bible says, whatsoever thou doest, do it unto the Lord with all of your might, wherever you are to serve the Lord. And we're going to see as we follow Joseph along, he's not the servant of Potiphar.

He's the servant of the Lord. He's not the prisoner or the slave of Potiphar. He's the slave of the Lord.

You know, Paul says, as he writes some of his epistles, Paul and Timothy bond slaves of Jesus Christ, *doulos*, which is not a servant. It's a slave. It's someone who has no rights.

And Paul viewed himself that way, as bought with a price. His life was not his own. And somehow, remarkably, this young man has that perspective.

And by the way, most of the time when we hear Joseph talk about the Lord, he uses the title God. He knows the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He knows about him.

God never appears to Joseph. God doesn't appear that we have record of from Jacob. He appeared to Jacob.

We don't have God appearing to someone again until he appears to Moses at the burning bush. So here is Joseph, a young man without some of the advantages that we have. He doesn't have an Old Testament.

He doesn't have a New Testament. He doesn't have the fellowship of the saints. He has a dream.

He has something that God has placed within his heart, a heavenly vision. And he's there in Egypt. And God gives him no supernatural appearance.

And yet he's committed his life to the Lord. And yet in the middle of those circumstances, he gives himself to the Lord in such a way as he decides, I'm going to be a good steward over the things that belong to part of her, because what God would want me to do. And it's the same thing God wants us to do where we work, no matter what our boss is like, even though he treats us like a slave, because you know what they'll see about you.

They take note that the Lord is with you. You know, it says of the apostles in the book of Acts that they were simple and unlearned men, but the priests and the Pharisees took note that they had been with Jesus. And that makes all the difference in the world.

Because they may mock you where you work and they may hassle you if they see you reading your Bible at lunch break or listening to Christian tapes or music or something. But I guarantee you the first time your boss's mother-in-law or his wife or somebody or his kid has cancer, you're the first one they come to and say, do me a favor, would you say a I know I've been a dog all this time, but reality is breaking upon my heart. Would you do me a favor? Remember to pray for my mom or remember to pray for my wife or my child.

And they notice they may want to be accepted amongst their peers and take part in whatever mockery there may be of your life. But they notice and you'll be the first one they come to for prayer. Potiphar noticed Joseph and his walk with the Lord, his attitude, and began to trust him.

And I think that employers are looking for righteous people. I think that in government, I think that someone who can be trusted is esteemed. If you have a business or you have something you're running and you know that someone has moral standards and you don't have to worry about them balancing the books in a crooked way, I think that is a consolation to an employer.

And he took note of Joseph. He trusted him and he saw the blessing of God was with Joseph. Moses says the Lord here, but Moses knew him as Yahweh, the covenant-keeping God.

Joseph knew him as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And Joseph now has put over everything that is in Potiphar's house and God is blessing the house and the field, even his crops, everything that Potiphar has because of Joseph. Now, Joseph being set up.

It says he left all that he had in Joseph's hand and he knew not anything that he had except the bread, the food that he did eat. That's all he really took note of. And Joseph was a goodly person and well favored.

Now, goodly and well favored is handsome in form and appearance. He was a handsome face and a great body. That's really just what it says.

Only two other men in the Bible that says that about. One is David and one is Absalom. They're the only two other men in the Bible that says these two words applied to them.

They were handsome physically in their face, in their form, and they were built well. Joseph was a man of great stature, it says here, physically in appearance. And he's being set up now.

He's being set up in the house with Potiphar's wife, who's now going to try to seduce him. Now, this is the perfect setup and the ingredients are all here. And you know in your own life, look out when things are going well, because that's when we let down our guard.

When things are desperate in our lives, we're saying desperate prayers. Desperate men pray desperate prayers. And when we're struggling, we're going, oh God, oh God, oh God, oh God, oh God, oh God.

But when things are going wonderful in our life, we're relaxed. And you know that in traffic. Again, I'm always amazed when you're driving in dense fog or in rain, you watch the road like this.

And you know, you don't get in an accident in the fog because you're watching everything. When you get in an accident is when it's a sunny day and it's beautiful, you have the radio on and you're driving around spaced out and you crash into somebody. Well, Joseph being set up, everything's going his way.

He's prospering in the house of Potiphar. God is blessing. He's a man of great authority at this point in time.

And all the ingredients are here. Now, James says, blessed is the man that endureth temptation, because after he has tried, he will receive the crown of life that God gives to all of those that love him that have endured trial. But let no man say when he is tempted that he is tempted of God, because God tempteth no man, neither can he himself be tempted with evil.

But every man is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. And then when his his desire is is given forth, it conceives and it brings forth sin and then sin brings forth death. So we have the ingredients.

It says desire conceives. And again, you have to understand something about your heart, your inner being. You know, we say the heart.

I talked to someone this morning. You know, there's there's different cultures in the world where they consider the inmost part of man, your bowels. And in that country, they might ask Jesus to come into their bowels.

We ask Jesus to come into our heart because we consider our most inmost being. You have to understand there's a difference between the spirit of man, the heart, as it were, and the mind. In your mind, you can determine what is right, what is wrong.

You can study the scripture. Intellectually, you can acquiesce. You can say, yes, this is right.

I agree. Yes, this is wrong. I agree.

But the Bible says guard your heart with all diligence because from it come forth the issues of life. In other words, the desire will be there. Your mind is saying right or wrong.

Oh, I shouldn't do this. Oh, I shouldn't do this while you're doing it, because the intellect will be driven by desire and the heart is to be guarded because it says when desire is conceived, when there's conception, what is brought forth in birth is sin. The same way in human life, when the sperm, the word conceived there in the Greek means to put two things together.

When the sperm and the egg come together, there's conception, there's life, it's birth. What it says is there's two things necessary for sin. One is desire and the other one's the opportunity, the circumstances

and the desire.

When those two things are put together and you allow them to come together, the conception of what happens then brings forth sin. All of us are tempted. All of us struggle in that area.

You know, David was over 50 years old when he fell into sin with Bathsheba. And the Bible, again, not only condemns those who are in sexual sin, and I think it's important for us to understand, but it condemns those who would watch pornography and watch sexually explicit things. And it says they don't do the sin, but they take pleasure in those that do them.

So you can, you can be a dirty old man and not be involved, but be as guilty because it's an issue of the heart. And we all have a traitor within us, the fallen nature. And if you allow that desire to be coupled with the proper opportunity and sin then conceives and is brought forth, and then finally issues forth, it says in death.

Well, Joseph is set up. He's young. He's veral.

He's 17 years old. He's handsome. He's good looking.

He's working in Potiphar's house. He's trusted. It says it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph.

And she said, Hey, big boy. Lie with me. And that doesn't mean let's go out and tell some lies.

Come to bed with me. But he refused and said unto his master's wife, behold, my master doesn't even know what is with me in the house. And he hath committed all that he hath to my hand.

There is none greater in this house than I. Neither hath he kept anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? And it came to pass, notice this, as she spoke to Joseph day by day. This was a trial.

Day by day that he hearkened not unto her to lie with her or even to be with her. He was trying not to be alone with her. So, you know, you have to understand here are the circumstances.

Joseph young, he's in the place he's trusted. Now Potiphar's wife is chasing him down. Potiphar's wife is beautiful.

If she was ugly, it wouldn't be a trial. It's just self-explanatory. Well, there are no ugly women now, but there used to be in ancient Egypt.

That's why I mentioned you probably don't understand what I'm saying. I'm bailing myself out of this. Powerful men don't marry ugly women.

You look at some of these guys on TV, these old Hollywood producers that have a cigar and a nose like a B-52 bomber and coke bottle glasses. They have some lovely thing hanging on their arm all the time. You know, you see, you just see politicians, you see powerful, wealthy men.

They always have beautiful women. Potiphar's wife is a beautiful woman. That's why it was a trial.

And she's coming after him day by day. And Egyptian women were notorious for liberality. Egyptian women enjoyed the first use of cosmetics.

It was the Egyptian women that had that eye makeup. It was the Egyptian women that had those permanents. You know how they did that in hair, the Egyptian women? It was the Egyptian women that wear these fragrances.

Again, we have them today. Poison, seduction. Listen to the names of these things.

Passion. Again, I think, why don't they call one, as an ox is led to the slaughter? That's what it says in the book of Proverbs, that when a young man is led to the bed by an adulteress, he's like an ox being led to the slaughter. All of the ingredients are there.

And I wish we had another half hour. You have to understand Joseph's perspective, and I think it's extremely important, because he says, how can I do this great wickedness? In our society, it is no longer considered a great wickedness. And yet the statistics are there screaming at us.

We just ordered a book last week, and I have it in my office this thick, and all it is from across the country, and not from Christian sources, from the Journal of the American Medical Association, for the Center of Disease Control, for valid secular organizations. It is the statistics for AIDS, for sexually transmitted diseases, for divorce, for depression amongst teenagers, for family, for anything you can imagine. Hours watched on television.

Statistically, our nation is crumbling, because the home is crumbling. Because men are not being what they should be in the home. Because sexual liaisons and affairs are being portrayed as the norm on television.

They're being glamorized. The Bible says that it's great wickedness. In America, 12 million Americans each year get sexually transmitted diseases.

Two-thirds of them are under 25. Three million of the cases are teenagers under 18. Three million a year.

That's, if you figure out, it's over 30,000 per day, sexually transmitted diseases. One girl, young girl, a child, one young girl in four, and one boy in ten will be sexually abused this year. It's great wickedness.

In the last 20 years, 34 million abortions. This year, over 2 million babies will be put to death, while 2.1 million requests for adoption will be submitted. One marriage will dissolve every 27 seconds.

How many times since we've been sitting here this evening? 43% of 18-year-olds who claim to be church members have had sexual intercourse. 43% of 18-year-olds who claim to be an active part of a church. 65% of church members high school seniors report having been involved in some act of sexual intimacy.

65%. 23% of church members 12 and 13-year-olds believe that sexual intercourse between unmarried individuals is acceptable. 12 and 13-year-olds.

No wonder we need young men, 17, 18, 15, 16, and young women like Joseph, who have a heavenly vision and understand what's happening around us in this world. In the next 30 minutes, now we've been here for an hour in the study, a half hour of worship, hour and a half. Every 30 minutes, 23 girls in 30 minutes.

This is, we've been here, this is 69 girls since we've been here this evening under the age of 19 have had an abortion since we've been here. 285 children every half hour. Figure three times that since we've been here.

285 children every half hour become the victims of a broken home. 285 children and many of those because of infidelity. Adult bookstores in the United States outnumber McDonald's restaurants at a margin of three to one.

Adult bookstores outnumber McDonald's at a ratio of three to one. 70% of pornography ends up in the hands of children. It's great wickedness.

It's destroying our nation. And Satan is wise to it. The government is lending itself to it.

The only hope for our nation is a God-given revival where marriage is again esteemed and children are loved and families are kept together and they worship together and seek God together and they live according to his standards. Every home in America needs a father who is a spiritual force, who is faithful, who raises his kids the right way. And how many of us, even in Christian homes, are left to do our best as single moms.

And what a job it is. Now we should pray for the single moms here in church. Not that it can't be done.

Jesus was raised by a single mom at some point in his life. Turned out pretty good. Joseph said it's great wickedness.

He knew it. And for two reasons, he said, first of all, how can I sin against Potiphar? He's put everything in his house under my control. You know, he realized you never sin to yourself.

Whenever you sin, you influence the lives of other people. You never sin just against yourself. Psychoanalyst Judith Wallenstein, author of *Second Chances, Men and Women and Children*, a decade after divorce, that's the name of her book, has conducted the first long-term study on the effects of divorce.

Now, I always hear this, oh, the kids will get over. It doesn't really affect the kids. She contends that a lot of professional advice to parents has been based on a false assumption that divorce is a short-term crisis, that the effects of divorce in children last maybe two or three years.

Her study tracked 60 families, most of them white and middle class, for 10 to 15 years after divorce. From 12 to 18 months after the divorce, she and her fellow researchers were stunned to find that an unexpectedly large number of children, 37 percent, were in a downward psychological spiral. The symptoms were worse than those recorded immediately after the divorce.

In the 10-year follow-up, 41 percent were doing poorly, entering adulthood as worried, underachieving, and often angry young men and women. Now, I'm not condemning anyone here who's divorced, anybody who's been through that horrendous circumstance. What I am saying is I constantly have people sit in my office saying if I could only go back one day or one month, if I could turn back the hands of time, I would give my right arm.

I don't know how it happened. I sinned, and now I'm reaping the consequences, and I would give my right arm to make it right. Joseph said, how can I do this great wickedness and sin against Potiphar and ultimately this and sin against God? And it's so important for us to understand that God's word is God's word.

He means what he says. He says what he means. And again, we have people come here who are in compromise, and you see what happens is this, and I want you to listen to me if you're a Christian.

We come to Christ, and inside of us there are spiritual perceptions that are awakened that we never had when we were in darkness. We come to the Lord, and all of a sudden we're illuminated inwardly. We have other senses, and the Bible says to us, taste and see that the Lord is good.

Now, that's not with the palate. It's not with the tongue. It means with our heart, with our inner man.

We taste of his presence. We discern. It tells us that we should take hold of the promises of God, not with our physical hand, with our heart.

It tells us that we should look to the Lord, and not with our physical eye, but with the heart, the idea is. And we are heightened in our communion with him because we're awakened spiritually. Then what happens when someone's heart begins to be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin? There's an atrophy, and they begin to lose their spiritual sight.

They begin to lose their taste for God. They begin to lose their ability to hear God, and it's a scary thing because like Samson, it says, he wist not that the spirit had departed from him. They don't realize until they're deadened what's going on, and then they say, how can I get back to God? I don't hear him anymore.

I don't taste him anymore. I don't sense his presence anymore. I don't hear him speaking to my heart anymore, and they find themselves in a backslide, and it comes from playing with sin in the first place.

It comes from disassociating ourselves with God, and as people come to us and we say to them again, are you reading? Are you praying? Are you spending time with the Lord? They say, you always make things so simplistic. Are you reading? I went to Pastor Joe and Pastor Jerry, Pastor Frank, and they said, well, are you reading your Bible? That's what they always say. Everything's ABC to them.

One, two, three. My psychoanalyst told me that I had this, and it's because of my father, and they don't have any understanding. They're not sensitive.

Are you reading your Bible? Are you praying? Let me tell you something. As we question them, you know what they say? Not really. Well, no, not really.

Are you praying? Well, once a month. You know, the questions we ask, they don't like to answer because they are not current in the relationship with Christ, and you have to understand this. His Word is powerful.

His Word is powerful. It divides down into us between that which is soulish and spiritual, and if you are staying current with Christ and you're keeping your face in His Word, you do not go from a spiritually healthy condition immediately into sin. You begin to play, and you begin to harden, and there's a process, and you have to understand this.

God will never give Himself aside from His Word or give His Word aside from Himself. You know, people think, well, I can sin, but I'm doing fine with the Lord. That is a lie, and you are self-deceived, and you have scales on your eyes, because God's Word will abide forever.

Heaven and earth will pass away. He will not give Himself into our lives to fellowship with us apart from His Word. So take heed, the Bible says, while we stand.

This is an exhortation for all of us, because there's a traitor that lives within me. God's Word means what it says. It is a safety for us.

It is a refuge for us, and it is a place where we gain perspective. God says that's wickedness, and because He says wickedness is wickedness, and Joseph said, how can I do this great wickedness? It's a sin against humanity, and it's a sin against God, and he turned away and he fled. What an example, 17 years old.

Read ahead. We have to pick up there. It's an important place.

We'll pick up right in the middle, you know, and this is a good place. If this was on TV, this is where they would cut it off. To be continued.

Right as Potiphar's wife is chasing him through the house, and then it would say, to be continued next week, and you'd all go, oh man, I can't believe they do this. So this is a good place to cut it off. It just happened to fall out that way.

Keep that picture in your mind. Joey, you know, she's chasing him through the house. We pick up there next week.

Very important. Read ahead. I'm sure you will.

Let's stand and let's pray. Now look, I always like to give the invitation. If you're here tonight, you don't know Christ personally as your Lord and Savior.

That's what we're doing here. We can laugh and we can sing His praises and we enjoy this time together because we love Him, because He's touched our lives and He's changed us. If you are still in darkness, if you don't know Jesus personally, you need to be saved.

If you don't know that if you died tonight, you'd go to heaven. If you're not sure where you'd end up if you died today, you need to get saved. You need to ask Jesus to forgive your sins once and for all.

You need to believe that He died for your sins and that God raised Him from the dead. And you need to ask Him for that work to be effective in your life. The Bible says as many of us as receive Him to us, He's given the power to become the children of God.

So this evening at the end of the service, we're going to sing a song and I'll pray and we'll be down here in the front. What I want you to do is come down and pray with us. Give us the great, great privilege of giving you a Bible and leading you in a prayer and seeing you accept Christ so wonderful.

We love to do it. It's a great time for us and a life-changing time for you. Father, we set our hearts before you.

I know you've overheard. Thank you for this instruction, Father. What a wonderful record you've given to us.

We love your word. Father, we ask that as we go on and study through these pages, Father, that you would speak to us and grow us, Lord. Cause us to flourish.

Lord, we look forward to meeting Joseph and Judah and Reuben, Jacob, Simeon and Levi, and Abraham and Isaac, Noah. And Lord, you, so many. What a wonder heaven is to us, Lord, how we look forward to life beyond the grave.

We pray for anyone here this evening who is not sure of that, Lord, that before they leave, they come to ask Christ into their heart to be saved. We put these things before you, Father, and we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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