

Lessons from the Life of Joseph

December 2010

Joseph is a beautiful type of our Savior. Joseph is also a wonderful example for us.

- Joseph's life exhibits faith with works/fruit to show.
- Joseph's life gives us lessons on suffering, patience, faith, faithfulness, repentance, and forgiveness.

Born to Jacob & Rachel Genesis 30:25

- Parents who loved them... but were far from perfect. Like many/all of us.
- Joseph is an example for us of how to live in the presence of sin.

Joseph's dream (as a humble shepherd at age 17) (Genesis 37:1-11)

- Joseph accepts the dream as from God.
 - Essentially, his dream is the "word of God". Joseph communicated the dream as such.
- Some (i.e. his brothers) hate him for faithfully speaking the truth... some (i.e. his father) kept the matter *in mind*.
- Joseph shares the dream (speaks/defends the truth) but does not defend *himself*.

Joseph sold into slavery to Midianites... then to Potiphar; Pharaoh's officer (Genesis 37:12-36)

- Joseph is faithful to carry out his "father's" business in every situation of life.
- Joseph "came to his brethren". They conspired against him. Not many/any of us have experienced this level of rejection and hatred.
- Joseph is largely silent about his own suffering. In 42:21 is a brief account of his pleading.
- Joseph's trust in the dream from God gave him strength to trust God when the trials came. Same for us.
 - Events in our lives are often out of our control... but are never out of God's control.
 - Our faith must be in Him, not in easy circumstances or our abilities.
- God is Sovereign: "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).
- God works His purposes: "... also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, ..." (Ephesians 1:11).
- Joseph's trials produced results: "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials; knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:2-4).
- Joseph needed endurance (us too): "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.³ For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls" Hebrews 12:1-3
- Joseph was hated (us too): "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you.¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also." John 15:18-20

Judah & son's sin (Genesis 38:1-30)

- The sin of Judah and his son's brings out the depth of their need of a savior and the depth of Joseph's sacrifice and suffering for them. Did they deserve a savior? Read the next verses:
- "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples;⁸ but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." Deut 7:7-8

Joseph: Prosperity... temptation... false accusation... Prison... prosperity (Genesis 39)

- V2 "The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man;"
- V3 "And his master saw that the LORD *was* with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand." Joseph's faithfulness led to God getting the glory.
- V7 "And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph"

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- Temptation often comes not in moments of trial, but when things are going well.
- Temptations also sneak up on us slowly “day after day”, not in a momentous event.
 - How did Joseph reply and react?
 - Was his response a simple reaction or was it pre-planned?
 - What can we learn from that? What action can we take now?
- V9 “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”
 - Did Joseph think that God had abandoned him in Egypt/prison?
 - Did Joseph give up on God when difficulties came?
- No mention of Joseph’s defense.
- V21 “But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.” V23 “...because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper.” (I believe Joseph very much understood and trusted in the truth in this verse.)
- No matter where we are or how we got there... we must know God is faithful, has not abandoned us, and we can and must serve Him. God was with Joseph just as much in prison as he was in the “palace”.
- Our “prosperity” for God does not depend on our “position”. We must not wait until we reach some level of achievement in order to serve Him... or quit serving Him if we lose that level.
- God is faithful... Joseph is faithful!
- Suffering is “normal” for a Christian (2 Corinthians 4:7-10; Philippians 1:29; I Thessalonians 3:4; I Peter 4:12-16)

Butler & Baker (Genesis 40:1-23)

- V4 “And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them”
 - Joseph was a faithful and trustworthy regardless of his condition.
- V6 “Joseph came in to them in the morning and looked at them, and saw that they *were* sad.”
 - Joseph could have been sulking, but was attentive to others needs.
- V8 “Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell *them* to me, please.”
 - Did Joseph give up on God? Did he quit serving Him? Quite the opposite is true of Joseph.
- Joseph did not shirk from faithfully telling both good & bad news. He did not soften bad news. We must be faithful to God’s word – all of it.
- Joseph handled a “bad” situation faithfully.

Pharaoh’s Dreams and Joseph’s Rise to Power (Genesis 41)

- 41:46 age 30
- V15 Pharaoh praises Joseph, but Joseph does not accept the glory.
- V16 “So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, “*It is* not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace.””
- V25 “Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh *are* one; God has shown Pharaoh what He *is* about to do.”
 - Joseph does an excellent job in communicating God’s (not Joseph’s) message to Pharaoh; Brings Pharaoh face-to-face with God (get’s himself out of the way).
 - Same thing we need to do when communicating God’s word to others.
- V38 “Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find *such a one* as this, a man in whom *is* the Spirit of God?””
 - If we honor the Lord, others will see our good works and glorify the father.
- V52 “For God has caused me [Joseph] to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.”
 - Joseph was truly afflicted – but it did not shake his faith or faithfulness. He worked for his Lord wherever he was.

Joseph’s Brothers Go to Egypt (Genesis 42)

- V8 “So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. ⁹ Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them”
 - Joseph loved his brothers. He sought to draw out their confession and repentance.
- V21 “We *are* truly guilty concerning our brother”

Joseph’s Brothers Return with Benjamin (Genesis 43)

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- V16 - When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, “Take *these* men to my home, and slaughter an animal and make ready; for *these* men will dine with me at noon.”

Joseph’s Cup / Judah Intercedes for Benjamin (Genesis 44)

- V16 - Then Judah said, “What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; here we are, my lord’s slaves, both we and *he* also with whom the cup was found.”
 - They are finally standing before him with no defense; sin is confessed.
 - Just as all men need to come to the Lord with no excuses.

Joseph Revealed to His Brothers (Genesis 45)

- Joseph made himself known to his brothers...And he wept aloud, 3 Then Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph; does my father still live?” But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. 4 And Joseph said to his brothers, “Please come near to me.” So they came near. Then he said: “I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. 5 But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life...and to save your lives by a great deliverance.
- V16 Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh’s house, saying, “Joseph’s brothers have come.” So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well.
- The fact that Pharaoh was pleased implies to me that Joseph did not share with him (or anyone?) what his brothers had done. This is a beautiful example to us of how to practice Matt 18:15-17.
 - Keep sin scoped to as small a group as scriptures tells us.
 - Others

Joseph’s provision for his brethren (Genesis 50:15-21)

- After Jacob’s death, Joseph’s brothers fear he will now repay evil.
- Joseph again brings God to the front and center.
- Joseph not only shows mercy, he shows grace. He provides for them and comforts them.

Review:

- How can we apply these examples and lessons to our lives?
- Is it good enough to be saved and know the truth?
- Should we walk in the truth?
 - Why?
 - How?
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Parallels between Joseph and Jesus (Genesis 37-50)

I don't expect to go over this in the class, but include it for reference.

Joseph	Parallels	Jesus
37:3	Their fathers loved them dearly.	Matthew 3:17
37:2	Shepherds of their father's sheep	John 10:11, 27
37:13,14	Sent by father to brothers	Hebrews 2:11
37:4	Hated by brothers	John 7:5
37:20	Others plotted to harm them	John 11:53
39:7	Tempted	Matthew 4:1
37:25	Taken to Egypt	Matthew 2:14,15
37:23	Robes taken from them	John 19:23
37:28	Sold for the price of a slave	Matthew 26:15
39:20	Bound in chains	Matthew 27:2
39:16-18	Falsely accused	Matthew 26:59,60
40:2,3	Placed with two other prisoners, one who was saved and the other lost	Luke 23:32
41:46	Both 30 years old at the beginning of public recognition	Luke 3:23
41:41	Exalted after suffering	Philippians 2:9-11
45:1-15	Forgave those who wronged them	Luke 23:34
45:7	Saved their nation	Matthew 1:21
50:20	What men did to hurt them God turned to good	1 Corinthians 2:7,8