

THE STORY OF JOSEPH

We're looking at the life of Joseph this morning. Genesis dedicates 14 chapters, or close to 30% of the book to Joseph's life, so there's no way we can get through it all. We could do a whole series on Joseph!

Today we're going to focus and how God used a season of waiting and testing to reveal his plan in extraordinary ways. This is the story of how God can take any situation and use it for his plan and his glory!

My hope is that it will remind us of God's providence in our lives

And so a little info about Joseph:

- **Joseph was born into a family of 12 boys.** He was the 11th son and the first son born to Jacob and Rachel. You can imagine the rivalry between 12 boys!
- **His father Jacob** loved him more than all of his sons.
- **Jacob makes Joseph a special coat** which could have had many colours, but original texts rather point out that it was a long robe with sleeves. These coats were reserved for foreman, or supervisor, and it's quite likely that Jacob put Joseph in charge of his brothers.

What's interesting is that Genesis paints a perfect picture of Joseph. It mentions no wrong from his side. Perhaps the only thing he did wrong was to share his dreams with his brothers. In fact, Chapter 38 tells of the disturbing story of his brother Judah and Tamar...

For no apparent reason, but to possibly highlight Joseph's spotless character?

⇒ **What strikes me about Joseph** is that we're reminded that God is all about choosing the unlikeliest. Did you know that neither Isaac, Jacob, nor Joseph were the first born, but God had favour on them. **If God's hand is on you, it's on you!**

- **When I was 15,** I was shy, insecure, and yet I was chosen to go on a missions trip. The only one chosen and one of the most unlikely's, but God say something. Since then I have seen time again how God has chosen me.

So Joseph's brothers become jealous, and the nail in the coffin was probably when Joseph shared a dream he had with them about ruling over them all one day.

Gen 37:6-8

⁶He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: ⁷We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it." ⁸His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

- ⇒ **Be careful who you share your dreams with.** Because not everyone is for you.
- ⇒ Not everyone will be excited about the grace or favour that God has on your life.
- ⇒ Sharing a dream with the wrong person might discourage you completely.
- ⇒ Share your dreams with those who love you deeply!

Joseph's brothers want to kill him, but they end up selling him into slavery instead. Fooling Jacob into believing he was killed.

But God used it for his plan. In fact, Joseph spends the next 12 years in slavery before being promoted.

⇒ **Within every promise from God, comes a season of testing. Within every dream that we have, lies a valley which we must walk through. Why, to learn reliance and faithfulness on God.**

Rick Warren says: The times that will stretch your faith the most will be those times when life falls apart and God is no-where to be found.

What's interesting is that God never speaks to Joseph directly, but he speaks to him through his dreams. There must have been times when Joseph wondered where God was. **It's these season's** that force you to seek God with all of your heart. Until we hear from him!

⇒ **The faith journey** is about holding onto the revelation we receive from God, in the midst of the mysteries we can't explain.

God can use anything according to his purpose.

- Joseph's brothers had no idea what they were doing.
- They were oblivious to God's invisible hand in the situation.
- In their attempt to get rid of Joseph they were actually fulfilling his dreams.
- God takes the sinfulness of the brothers and makes it the means to the redemption.

⇒ **When you wonder where you are,** where you find yourself, ask God to show you why you are there.

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Is it just me or do you feel you're in a time of waiting. Waiting sounds restful, but it's hard. **Sometimes I get impatient with our microwave** because it takes too long! Right

GOD IS IN THE WAITING AND GOD IS IN THE TRIAL

- Abraham waited 25 years
- Joseph waited 13 years
- Moses waited 40 years
- Jesus waited 30 years

So Joseph is bought by Potiphar, an officer to Pharaoh. Joseph submits to God's Potiphar and serves him faithfully. The Bible says that God was with him and he prospered.

Gen 39:2 The LORD was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master.

Potiphar's wife tries to seduce Joseph, and he runs. Potiphar's wife is so mad that she lies about Joseph, spinning the story, and he's put in prison. Due to none of his own doing.

Just when things were about to come right, it all falls apart again.

- How many of you felt this way just before lockdown started?
- Perhaps you were just about getting back in your feet, and then the next trial hit!

But God remained faithful!

Gen 39:21 The LORD was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden.

Long story short (Read Gen 40 for more details) The king's butler and baker were also put in the same prison, and Joseph was made their personal attendant.

- Each of them have a dream, and Joseph offers a spot on interpretation

R. T. Kendall writes, "One of the chief things that Joseph had to learn was to wait for God's time to come. Joseph correctly interpreted the butler's dream, and he knew it. And as soon as he interpreted the dream he said, "You are going to be restored to your former position, you are going to get out of this dungeon. Remember me, Joseph – Joseph – you won't forget me, will you?" He couldn't resist getting himself into the act. God looked down from heaven about that time and probably said, "Ahem. My instrument Joseph needs a little more refining."

Don't try to plead your cause and move the hand of God. Remain faithful to him, be obedient, and his purpose in your life will come to pass. God's desire is for us to be refined, Because then we're made more like him!

2 full years would pass before God's time would come for Joseph.

It's important to get this:

- ⇒ **With God, Silence in not absence. (Silence teaches us to seek and to listen)**
- ⇒ Yet, it is often in our lowest moments, when God seems silent that He is quietly doing the deepest work of transformation in us.
- ⇒ **After the longest gap of silence of 400** years before the new Testamant merged, came the biggest gift we've ever received. Jesus

Story: God has taught me so much in lockdown about his plans and purposes.

- It's been a silent season from God up until recently.
- For many days over the past few months, its felt as though God has been silent.
- Yet in that time he was doing a deep work in my heart.

Maybe you're waiting on a job or you're battling to find purpose in your life. Can I say this:
"There is no such thing as secular employment for us as believers. Once we are born again, everything about us is mandated for Kingdom purposes. Everything is spiritual and it's for his Kingdom.

Joseph is eventually brought out of prison to interpret one of Pharaoh's dreams. His interpretation is spot on and within one moment, Pharaoh put's him as second-in-command and in charge of Egypt.

Gen 41:40 You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you."

- ⇒ **God can change everything in a moment.**
 - **In seasons of waiting,** don't be surprised when he acts in a moment.

- **It's not always through a miracle**, it's not always spectacular, but it's often through providential circumstances.

As the story continues, Egypt goes into a time of famine, and Joseph makes sure there are enough reserves. Eventually, Joseph's brothers hear that there is grain in Egypt, and they go for help. They don't recognize their brother at first, but as Joseph recognises them, the Bible says that Joseph had to remove himself to go and weep. He felt pain, he felt remorse, but he realised what God was doing! 22 years later!

- **Have you ever been faced** someone who pops up years later and it sparks something in your heart, **It's never too late to forgive.**

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A few chapters on this is what Joseph says to his brothers: Perhaps the most importance verse which explains Gods purpose in Joseph's life:

Gen 45:7-8 *But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. ⁸“So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt.*

⇒ **Who does this remind you of? Jesus**

When we read of the suffering and upliftment of Joseph, we're reading about what happened to Jesus. Joseph was blameless, we hear of his father's love for him, we see that he lost everything and became a slave, and we see Gods favour upon his life. To the point where he is able to redeem his brothers lives.

Tim Keller says it like this: *Jesus is the true and better Joseph who, at the right hand of the king, forgives those who betrayed him and uses his new power to save them.*

Phil 2:6-11 TPT

⁶He existed in the form of God, yet he gave no thought to seizing equality with God as his supreme prize. ⁷Instead he emptied himself of his outward glory by reducing himself to the form of a lowly servant. He became human! ⁸He humbled himself and became vulnerable, choosing to be revealed as a man and was obedient. He was a perfect example, even in his death—a criminal's death by crucifixion! ⁹Because of that obedience, God exalted him and multiplied his greatness! He has now been given the greatest of all names

Isn't it beautiful how the Old Testament point to Jesus!

In this story, it's as though we are one of the brothers. And in desperate need of help.

What's hard to understand is that after the era of Joseph, The Israelites spent 400 years in slavery in Egypt where not much is recorded, Why?

Until the wickedness of the Amorites was complete (Gen 15).

In other words, God would not let them take the promised land from those living in it, until those living in it had become so sinful and depraved that they forfeited their right to their lives and their land. God is a moral God.

They had reached a point of no return and God said now you can have their land. But he had to keep them out of the land until.

Sometimes we can see Gods actions in the OT as brutal, but God was a moral God, and he still extended grace. Yet how much more grace does Jesus extend to us!

He doesn't give us a 3-month extension or break on our home loan during COVID, He doesn't reduce the interest rate owing to him. He takes the interest upon himself and he pays it

Jesus empowers us to say no to sin. Grace is the power to say no to sin.

- **Story of taking the rubbish out.**

I thought, this is what the enemy does, he comes to remind us of what has already been dealt with. I won't tell you what I did with that rubbish bag, but I didn't take it back.

The enemy's only intention is to harm us and destroy us. He comes to remind us of our sin, to remind us of our fault and he pours shame on us.

I'd like to wrap up with Gen 50:19-21

¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? ²⁰ You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. ²¹ So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

God works all things for the good of those who trust him

- Jesus is the kindest and most thoughtful God. And he's using your situation for His glory even if you can't see it. Hold onto Him!
- It's so often in hindsight that we see the hand of God in our life. Give it a while and you will look back and see the hand of God in your life. If you build a history with God, he will make history with you.

Let's pray

CLOSE

Well thanks for watching today's service. It's been such a good time together. We trust that you'll have good week ahead filled with the presence of God. We'll see you next week, God Bless