

Genesis – The Life of Joseph
Gen. 45:1-8

Thesis: To help us understand the providence of God through the life of Joseph.

Introduction:

- A. Throughout the life of Joseph, we see the providence of God.
- B. We can learn great lessons by noticing the faithfulness of Joseph among the persecutions that he faced.

I. Notice the terrible things that happened to Joseph.

A. He was despised by his brothers because he was the favorite son of Jacob (37:1-11).

- 1. We are told exactly why Joseph's brothers hated him (37:3-4).
- 2. Joseph also had two dreams in which his brother's bowed down to him (37:5-11).
 - a. The first is the dream of binding sheaves in the field (37:5-8).
 - b. The second is the dream of the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowing down to him (37:9-10).
- 3. Because of these dreams, his brothers hated him (37:11).

B. Joseph's brothers sold him to the Ishmaelites (or Midianites) who took him down to Egypt (17:12-36).

- 1. Joseph goes to check on his brothers as they are tending to the sheep in Dothan (37:12-17).
- 2. His brothers see him from afar off, and plan to kill him (37:18-22).
- 3. Instead of killing him, Joseph is thrown into a pit and sold to the Ishmaelite traders (37:18-28).
 - a. Ishmaelites refer to the father of their nation, Ishmael.
 - b. Midianites refer to the location of their nation, Midian.
- 4. The brothers of Joseph devise a plan to trick their father into thinking that Joseph is dead (37:29-35).
- 5. The Midianite traders go to Egypt and sell Joseph to Potiphar (37:36).

C. After Joseph found favor in the eyes of Potiphar, he was thrown into prison because of the lie of Potiphar's wife (39:1-23).

- 1. God had blessed Joseph and given him favor among Potiphar (39:1-6).
 - a. Joseph was in charge of everything in Potiphar's house.
 - b. Notice especially 39:6.
- 2. The wife of Potiphar lied about the relationship that she and Joseph had (39:7-20).
 - a. Potiphar's wife said that Joseph tried to have a sexual relationship with her.
 - b. In reality, it was Potiphar's wife that wanted this relationship with Joseph.
 - c. Because of this, Joseph was thrown into prison.

3. Even in prison, God was with Joseph and he prospered (39:21-23).

D. Joseph interpreted the dreams of the butler and the baker, yet the chief butler forgot about him (40:1-23).

1. The butler and the baker both have dreams that Joseph correctly interprets.
2. Notice the dreams (40:9-19).
 - a. Butler
 - 1) A vine grew before him; and he picked the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup.
 - 2) The interpretation was that after three days, he would be restored to his place as his butler.
 - b. Baker
 - 1) Three baskets were on his head; and in the top basked were baked goods for Pharaoh that birds came and ate.
 - 2) The interpretation was that after three days, Pharaoh would remove his head from him.
3. After these things were fulfilled, the butler forgot about Joseph and the interpretation of his dream (40:20-23).

II. Things did not begin going well for Joseph until the dream of Pharaoh (41:1-57).

A. Pharaoh had a dream that no one could interpret (41:1-8).

1. There were seven lean cows that ate seven fat cows, yet they remained lean (41:1-4).
2. There were also seven thin heads of grain that devoured seven plump heads of grain, yet they also remained thin (41:5-7).
3. No one could interpret these dreams for Pharaoh (41:8).

B. The chief butler then remembered Joseph and his ability to interpret dreams (41:9-13).

1. It was not until this dream that the butler remembered Joseph and his ability to interpret dreams (41:9-13).
2. In fact, it had been two full years (41:1).

C. Pharaoh called for Joseph; and Joseph interpreted the dream of Pharaoh (41:14-36).

1. Joseph tells Pharaoh that it is only God who can give the interpretation of the dreams (41:16).
2. Joseph tells Pharaoh that the dreams are one.
3. Notice the interpretation of the dream.
 - a. For seven years, the land will be greatly blessed.
 - b. However, for seven years after this, the land will suffer a great famine.

D. Because of the interpretation of the dream, Pharaoh made Joseph second in command of all of Egypt (41:37-57).

1. Joseph stored food during the seven good years.
2. When the seven years of famine hit the land, they were prepared.
3. People came from all over to purchase grain from Joseph.
4. This is how the brothers of Joseph would bow down to him.

Practical Application:

III. All of these things happened to Joseph because God had a plan for him.

A. Notice that in every situation, the Bible says that the Lord was with Joseph.

1. Joseph was always faithful to God, even when sold as a slave and thrown into prison.
2. **Gen. 45:1-8** – Joseph reveals himself to his brothers and tells them that this was the plan of God.
3. While he did not recognize it at the time, Joseph came to realize that all of this was the plan of God.

B. Today, we must be like Joseph.

1. We cannot be sure (like Joseph was) that all things that happen are from God.
 - a. Sometimes we give too much credit to God when certain things happen to us.
 - b. Instead of looking at the life of Job and considering the fact that Satan may be involved, we look to the life of Joseph and assume that God has done these things.
2. The important lesson is not that we assign blame or credit to either God or Satan, but that we remain faithful to God no matter what circumstance we find ourselves in.
 - a. The things that happened to Joseph work out for good because Joseph was faithful to God at all times.
 - b. **Rom. 8:28** - *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*
 - c. **Ecc. 12:13** (Solomon tells us the purpose of life) - *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all.*

Conclusion:

- A. God took care of Joseph because Joseph was faithful to Him.
- B. If God is going to take care of us, we must be faithful to Him.