

- ***Read Genesis 35:22-26*** From our Daily Bible Reading last week, we read of Jacob and the many sons that were born to him. The most famous of these sons far and away is the son of Rachel, Joseph. Later on in **Genesis 37:1-4**, we come to learn a lot more about this son of Jacob. We learn that he took his job seriously and that he was not going to put up with foolishness. It might have been for this reason that Jacob came to love Joseph more than any of his other sons. This love of Joseph led Jacob to give Joseph a coat of many colors. The favoritism of Jacob was not lost on his sons and they resented and hated Joseph.
 - To make matters even worse, Joseph was also a dreamer of dreams, and he shared those with his family. **(Genesis 37:5-11)** The first was of sheaves that bowed down to the sheaf that Joseph had put together. This infuriated his brothers. He then had a second dream and this one involved the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowing down to Joseph. This dream seemed to represent his dad, mom, and brothers bowing down before him. Again, his brothers did not take this well, and his dad wasn't necessarily thrilled with it either, but the text tells us that he kept this in his mind.
 - It is obvious from the text that Joseph's brothers, for the most part, really hated him and wanted to get rid of him. They had an opportunity to do this at Dothan, but Reuben stepped in and saved Joseph's life. **(Gen. 37:12-22)** Instead of killing him, they kidnap him, strip him of his coat, and they throw him in a pit. Eventually, he is sold to some foreigners and he makes his way down to Egypt. The brothers have to figure out something to tell their father, so they tear up his coat and put some animal blood on it to make it seem as if Joseph had been killed while out in the field. Jacob is completely distraught and mourns in sackcloth and ashes.
 - When things pick back up with Joseph in **Genesis 39**, we find him in what could have been a much worse situation. Joseph finds himself in Potiphar's house where he eventually is found as the head person in Potiphar's house because of God's blessings being upon him. But the eyes of Potiphar's wife were also on Joseph because he was a good looking guy. She tried to seduce him multiple times, but Joseph always refused because Joseph was a man of integrity, of character and moral principle. One particular day, she tries to come onto him, but he runs away and leaves his garment in her hands. Mrs. Potiphar was not fond of being rejected and she creates this false story about what happened. Potiphar is incensed against Joseph and he throws him in prison, but God is still with Joseph and he excels during his time in prison.
 - I think there are a ton of things that are worthy of our attention from this story of Joseph's life. Let's spend the rest of our time this morning considering some things that I think are important to note.
- I. Joseph's character remained intact even after he had suffered great wrongs from others.**
- A. Two times in the text we read Joseph was done wrong by others, yet we don't see him allowing that to push him towards a spiteful spirit.
 - B. Later on in the story of Joseph, we find him having the opportunity to really punish his brothers for what they had done to him, but he doesn't do that and he shows love towards them.
 - C. Even after his run in with Mrs. Potiphar. Joseph could've just thrown in the towel in prison because he doesn't think he can catch a break. But instead, he keeps on keeping on and he interprets the dreams for the cupbearer and the baker, and he makes his way out of prison. He didn't let these wrongs done to him define him.
 - D. It can be so easy for us to allow ourselves to change as people based upon the bad things people have done to us. We can allow our hearts to become vindictive and calloused because we've suffered bad things at the hands of others.
 - E. But God calls us to be better than that. He first says that we should allow Him to render vengeance for us. **(Rom. 12:19)** Satan is constantly trying to do what he can to cause us to compromise our character, but like Joseph we must not allow the troubles of this world to do so.

II. Joseph denied temptation day after day.

- A. You might have caught what was said in **39:10**, where Mrs. Potiphar continually tried to seduce Joseph to have her unlawfully. But Joseph's integrity was strong and pure and he refused her day after day.
- B. How was Joseph able to do this? I would suggest it was because he constantly stayed on top of his spiritual health and strength. I don't know exactly what all the patriarchal covenant between God and Jacob's family involved, but I am convinced that Joseph didn't leave his comment to God back in Canaan. His faith was strong and he wouldn't sin against God in that way. **(39:9)**

- C. I am convinced of this because Joseph was able to refuse Mrs. Potiphar day after day. A person who does not constantly strengthen and maintain their faith isn't able to do this. The person who neglects their faith doesn't have the ability to turn those things away every single day like Joseph did.
- D. Satan will use spiritual exhaustion as a means to cause us to fall. He will hound us day after day after day and tempt us with the hopes that we will eventually grown tired and give in.
- E. The only way we will overcome is if we continually spend time in God's word & pray continually. With that spiritual exercise, we will overcome the constant temptations of Satan in the same way Joseph did.

III. Joseph didn't use the actions of others as an excuse to sin.

- A. From everything we are told...it doesn't seem as if Joseph in any way was the instigator in these dealings with Mrs. Potiphar. She constantly came onto him, but he continually pushed her away.
- B. How easy would it have been for Joseph to use the fact that he didn't instigate as an excuse to allow himself to get carried away with Mrs. Potiphar? Many a person has tried to use others as excuses to explain away their bad actions.
- C. One we have already talked about is Adam. In **Genesis 3:12**, we find Adam trying to blame Eve and God for his mistake of eating the forbidden fruit. God wasn't having it, thought, and He held Adam accountable for his actions.
- D. We ought not get caught up in the trap of trying to do the same thing. It is easy for us to blame others for our bad decisions, but God isn't going to accept that. We will give and account for our deeds done in this body because we are ultimately responsible for everything that we do.

IV. Joseph didn't use secrecy as an avenue for sin.

- A. You might have noticed that Mrs. Potiphar last tried to seduce Joseph when no one else was present in the house. No one else was there and Mrs. Potiphar took that opportunity to come onto Joseph once more.
- B. If there was ever a time for Joseph to give in and accept Mrs. Potiphar's advances then this was it. He could've given into her and no one would've ever found out. Yet, Joseph doesn't do this because he possessed extremely strong integrity and he knew that God would know.
- C. He knew that he every watchful God would know of his actions even if no one else would, and he wouldn't sin against God. He literally ran from this place of temptation.
- D. We must recognize and remember that God is always watching, and there is nothing that is hidden that will stay hidden forever. **(Eccl. 12:14)**
- E. We will all give an account to everything that is done in this body. Nothing will be hidden from the eyes of God and we must guard against those times when we think no one else watching. **(Heb. 4:13)** It is in those times of anonymity that our integrity is truly tested.

V. Joseph was brought through his trials by the protection and provisions of God.

- A. Through all of these trials, the text makes it abundantly clear that God was with Joseph. 5 times in this text, the inspired writer makes mention of Joseph being blessed because God was with him. **(39:2, 3, 5, 21, & 23)**
- B. Why was it that God was with Joseph during all of this? Again, I believe it was because Joseph was a man of integrity, faith, and character. He was committed to his God, even in a strange land where he did not belong.
- C. Because of his commitment to God, God was committed to Joseph. God will always be with those who seek to love and serve Him rightly.
- D. I can't think of a text that speaks more to this than that of **Romans 8:28ff**. If our commitment is to the Lord and His Will, then our Lord will be with us and He will strengthen us through the most difficult of trials and temptations.

The integrity of Joseph is a big reason for his coming through of the many different things that he endured in his early life. It should be abundantly obvious that leaning on God for strength in times of temptation and trial is the best way to go. Joseph is certainly just one of many examples of a person who leaned on God and survived this life. May God help us to development a personal integrity like Joseph and be able to overcome as he did with the help of our God.