

# The Life of Joseph:

God Delivers Us *In* Our Difficult Situations Not *From* Them.

## SERMON NOTES

### I. Family Favoritism: a contentious relationship between brothers.

#### a. Jacob favors Joseph over his brothers

*Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him.* Genesis 37:3

#### b. Joseph had a dream

*"... Listen to this dream I had: We 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."*

*His 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.* Genesis 37:6-8

#### c. The wrath of Joseph's brothers

*"Here comes that dreamer!" they said to each other. "Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams."* Genesis 37:19-20

#### d. The consequences: guilt and grief

*Do not repay anyone evil for evil. ...Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge. I will repay." says the LORD. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by the evil, but overcome evil with good.* Romans 12:18-21

## SERMON NOTES - cont.

### II. God is with Joseph and blesses him in the midst of trials.

#### a. Joseph is blessed in Potiphar's House

*The LORD was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned.* Genesis 39:2-4

#### b. Joseph's temptation and focus on God

*But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house: everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"* Genesis 39:8-9

#### c. Joseph is blessed in prison.

*The LORD was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there.* Genesis 39:21-22

### III. Joseph is exalted to governor.

#### a. Pharaoh's dreams and Joseph's exoneration and exaltation. Genesis 41

#### b. Joseph's brothers show up in Egypt:

*Now Joseph was the governor of the land, the person who sold grain to all its people. So when Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground. [fulfilling his dream he had years ago] As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them.* Genesis 43:6-7

## SERMON NOTES - cont.

### IV. God's Sovereignty in Joseph's life

#### a. The Big Reveal

*Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So, then, it was not you who sent me here, but God." Genesis 45:4-8*

#### b. Joseph saw the bigger picture and forgave.

*God's Deliverance in Joseph's life was in the difficulties not from his difficulties, and God will work in ours:*

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his great purpose.*

Romans 8:28-30

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is one of your favorite promises of God that you especially appreciate?
2. Jacob's family seems to have an issue with favoritism. Can we blame Jacob for favoring Joseph, as we read in Genesis 37:3? Why or why not?
3. His brothers end up hating Joseph, and plot to kill him. Read Romans 12:19-21, and explain how we can avoid repaying evil with evil. What can help us overcome festering emotions, like jealousy, resentment and hatred that can lead us to do evil?
4. One of the challenging parts of Joseph's life is when the wife of his master Potiphar propositions him. According to Genesis 39:8-9, how was Joseph able to do the right thing in the face of this temptation? What factors might have been tempting, or pressuring, Joseph to sin?
5. God was with Joseph through the trials he endured (see Genesis 39:2). Read Hebrews 13:5-6: *...God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"* Share about a time when you recognized (either at the time or in retrospect) that God was with you in a special way.
6. In Genesis 45, Joseph finally reveals himself to his brothers, with many tears. What factors make it possible for Joseph to forgive his brothers for selling him into slavery?
7. In Genesis 45:7-8, what is the main reason that Joseph gives that helps him forgive his brothers?
8. Read Romans 8:28-30: *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him and who have been called according to His purposes.* Try restating that promise in your own words. How does that bring us comfort today?