



THE BEGINNINGS!

The Book of Genesis

Faith and Favor!

Genesis 39:1-23

Message #40 of 50 – S944

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Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Faith and Favor!

Genesis 39:1-23

Opening Comments

- Good morning – we will be in **Genesis 39**
- Today we continue our journey through **Genesis: THE BEGINNINGS!**
- One of the things that I struggled with in the early part of my walk with Christ is why bad things happen to God's people
- After all, if God is all-powerful and sovereign can't He do something to prevent bad things from happening to His people?
- It took me a while to realize that He can and does do that – He takes them to be with Him in heaven
- No where does the Bible promise that life in this world will be easy or free from difficulties
- It says quite the opposite **John 16:33**

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

- That doesn't mean that life has to be some dark, dismal, depressing trudge through pain and suffering
- Genesis 39 brings us back to the life of Joseph
- At the beginning of chapter 37 Joseph is living the dream
- He is wearing the coat of many colors that symbolizes his father's special affection for him over his other eleven brother's
- He has even heard from God in the form of dreams that suggest he is going to be a person of great importance
- Then his brothers conspire to kill him and throw him into a pit
- They strip of his coat and then his brother Judah suggests they sell him to some Ishmaelite traders rather than kill him
- By the end of chapter 37 Joseph is being dragged away to Egypt
- Try to imagine what that would have felt like
- Maybe asked the questions: Where are you God? Why is this happening to me, God?
- If Joseph was feeling that way and asking those questions - it is not obvious in chapter 39
- Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to minister to us this morning

- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Faith and Favor!**

- There are only a couple of weeks between the end of chapter 37 and the beginning of chapter 39 – 38 is parenthetical
- The Ishmaelites seem to waste no time unloading their cargo
- **Genesis 39:1**
- It is highly unlikely that Joseph looked at his circumstances and could see that God was working to bring his small family to Egypt where they will grow into a great nation
- Egypt had a very active slave trade – many ended up in the mines and quarries to build the temples and tombs of the Pharaoh – hard, short life
- All Joseph could see is one person after another set up on a platform where they would be examined and then auctioned off to the highest bidder
- God providentially arranged that Joseph did not end up in the mines or quarries, but in the house of one of Egypt's highest officials – Potiphar
- **Genesis 39:2**
- Joseph is about eighteen years old at this point
- Verse 5 says that he is handsome – probably why he ended up in the house
- Notice what verse two says about Joseph – 'he was a successful man'
- Turn to **Matthew 25**
- He was a slave in a foreign land – owned nothing – God's description
- How humans define success is often radically different from how God defines success
- In Matthew 24, Jesus describes the times right before He comes back
- He follows that with a series of parables about being ready and then one about being busy while we wait
- **Matthew 25:14-29**
- These servants only had what was given to them
- But they had the liberty to use it according to their individual ability

- They used what the master provided them – where they were – for the master’s benefit
 - Based on that we can define success
- Success: Being faithful to use what God has provided wherever God has placed you for God’s benefit and glory!**
- That is not how the world defines or measures success
 - From a worldly perspective Joseph was far from successful
 - Which one is better – God saying you are successful or the world saying it?
 - Even though Joseph was serving in Potiphar’s house – he knew he was serving God
 - **Genesis 39:3-6a**
 - We are not told how Potiphar knew the Lord was with Joseph, but we can assume that Joseph’s diligent faithfulness led to questions being asked – opened the door for him to talk about his God Jehovah
 - Joseph faithfully served Potiphar as his master and earned his trust and experienced God’s favor through Potiphar
 - Notice that it says God blessed Potiphar’s house
 - Potiphar was an idol-worshipping pagan
 - But God blessed him for Joseph’s sake
 - Joseph’s faithfulness to God and Potiphar led to God’s favor upon Potiphar which then blessed Joseph
 - It looks like things are getting better for Joseph
 - And then in comes the spider
 - **Genesis 39:6b-7**
 - While this is not unusual in a slave culture – it was still immoral
 - What is young, handsome, lonely Joseph going to do?
 - **Genesis 39:8-9**
 - Joseph gives three reasons why he is refusing her advances
 - First, it is a violation of the trust Potiphar placed in him
 - Second, she is Potiphar’s wife – violation of her vows
 - Third, it is wicked and a sin against God
 - Joseph is a man of character – even as a young man – integrity
 - Unfortunately, Mrs. Potiphar isn’t used to not getting her way
 - **Genesis 39:10-12**

- Day after day Joseph refuses her advances
- She finally decides she is not waiting another minute
- She grabs him by the garment and isn't letting go until she gets what she wants
- Temptation has a firm grip on Joseph – his choices are give in or get away – he chooses to flee
- The Bible teaches that God always gives a way to get away from temptation **1 Corinthians 10:13**

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

- Sometimes the best way to deal with temptations to sin is to flee from them **2 Timothy 2:22**

Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

- Being a man of integrity Joseph did what was right – he left
- Unfortunately, just because someone does the right thing doesn't mean others will
- Mrs. Potiphar is angry that Joseph has rejected her again
- And she decides to get revenge

- **Genesis 39:13-18**

- It was her word against his – if he was even allowed to speak in his defense
- She was the master's wife, and he was a slave
- It was a false accusation, and the verdict came quickly

- **Genesis 39:19-20**

- Joseph had been faithfully serving his master
- And in the face of great temptation maintained his integrity
- And now, here he is in prison based on a false accusation
- Joseph wouldn't be the first person in prison to claim to be innocent, but he was one of the few that it would be true
- What's he going to do?

- **Genesis 39:21-23**

- Let's look at our definition of success again

Success: Being faithful to use what God has provided wherever God has placed you for God's benefit and glory!

- Joseph had every human reason to be angry, frustrated, resentful, and bitter
- But that is not the kind of man that he is
- Instead, Joseph gets to work being faithful to use what God has provided wherever God has placed him for God's benefit and glory!
- Joseph's life has been filled with ups and down
- First, lifted up by his father as his favorite
- Then, thrown down into a pit where he thought he was going to die
- Then lifted up, may have hoped for a moment that his brothers had come to their senses
- Only to be crushed under the weight of being sold into slavery
- Then a time of experiencing the favor of God in Potiphar's house
- And then thrown into the king's prison where his future was uncertain
- But then, even there he is faithful, and God shows him favor with the keeper of the prison
- Joseph has gone from patriarch to pit to Potiphar to prison
- There is one more stop on Joseph's journey, but that is for later
- Joseph is an example to us of how we should face the ups and downs of life
- And it models how we can experience God's favor in our lives
- God's favor is the divine good that He brings into our lives
- We will close with three things about Joseph that can help us to experience God's favor
- First – **Influence**
- Joseph was not influenced by his circumstances or by the world around him
- God was his source of strength and truth **Psalms 119:160**
The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.
- Examine who or what is influencing you – move God to the top
- Second – **Industrious**
- Wherever Joseph was, he was faithful to serve God by serving those God placed over him – first his father in Canaan, then Potiphar, then the keeper of the prison

- Wherever life takes you, whether good or bad – work hard **Colossians 2:23-24**

And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

- Don't work hard for what you might get out of your labor
- Don't work hard for your boss – work hard for Jesus
- Third – **Integrity**
- Joseph probably suspected that rejecting Potiphar's wife's advances was going to cost him something
- He did it anyway – he did what was right – without being influenced by the potential risk
- Doing the right thing in the right way at the right time is always the right thing to do
- One of the things that makes Joseph so remarkable was that he was doing these things in the up times and in the down times
- God did not deliver Joseph from his circumstances because those circumstances would providentially lead to God's will
- But in the midst of those circumstances God showed Joseph mercy and he experienced the favor of God
- Joseph trusted only in God, he worked hard wherever he was, and always tried to do what was right
- God's favor is intangible, unquantifiable
- Want to experience more of God's favor? Be faithful to use what God has provided wherever God has placed you for God's benefit and glory!
- **Prayer!**