

Lessons from the Life of Joseph

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[0:00] One of God's heroes in the book of Genesis.

! We're going to look at one of God's heroes, Joseph.

Joseph. And God wants to teach us through Joseph's trials. That's why there's so much of Joseph's story in the word of God in the book of Genesis. And we'll just touch on a few of those verses together.

And Joseph's background was one of bitterness and hatred. He lived a life of adversity and trial and testing. Rejected by his very own brothers.

Almost killed and sold as a slave. And yet God used him mightily. Despite all of those testings that he went through. In Genesis 37 verse 4. The context there is that Joseph is just 17 years old.

[1:12] He's there with 11 brothers. And his father gave him a special coat. A special colourful coat. And verse 4 of Genesis 37.

And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren. They hated him. And they could not speak peaceably unto him. I've heard it said that it's even like the Jewish greeting of Shalom.

They couldn't say Shalom to him. They couldn't say peace to him. They hated his guts. They hated him. He was favoured. He was the favourite of the father.

And Joseph lived in that context of a family like that. What a life he had. Even from a young age. Joseph was a man of vision.

He dreamt some big dreams. It says here how he had some dreams. And he told it to his brethren. His dreaming got him into trouble though. Here he was.

[2:12] He was telling the story. How one day he saw 11 sheaves of grain bowing down to the 12th one. And that signified that his brothers, the 11 brothers, would all bow down to him someday.

And then he told another story where the father too was to bow down to him. And his own brothers got really angry when they heard this dream. They felt angry.

And they threw this 17 year old Joseph into a pit. As we move on to Genesis 37 verse 20. It tells us there as the brothers of Joseph plotted together.

They conspired against him. And in verse 20 it says they talked about the dreamer coming about Joseph. And they said in verse 20. Come now therefore and let us slay him.

Let's kill him. Let's kill Joseph. And cast him into some pit. And we will say some evil beast hath devoured him. And we shall see what will become of his dream.

[3:12] Reuben talked them into putting him in the pit. Hoping that he could come back later to save him. And as the brothers sat down to eat lunch. Some traders came along on their way to Egypt.

Taking some goods to Egypt. And in Genesis 37 verse 28. They lifted up Joseph out of the pit. And they sold him for 20 pieces of silver.

They traded him in. They made him a slave. For 20 pieces of silver. Their own brother was taken as a slave to Egypt. And one characteristic of Joseph.

Of three that we are going to look at. Was that he was steadfast. He was steadfast despite all of these pains. And sufferings. And testings. Joseph was steadfast. He had a long training in being faithful.

As we will see through his life. As we will take some snapshots. Through the life of Joseph. He was steadfast. He was reliable. He was trustworthy. He was a hard worker. Even as a slave to his master.

[4:09] From Genesis 39. You can read there from verse 2 onwards. How it says. And the Lord was with Joseph. The Lord was with him. And he was a prosperous man.

And he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the Lord was with him. And that the Lord made all that he did. To prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight.

And he served him. And he made him overseer. Over his house. And all that he had. He put into his hand. Notice there it says. Verse 2.

And verse 3. The Lord was with him. The Lord was with him. That's what made a difference for Joseph. And he laboured as a faithful servant. And the master recognised.

How hard he worked. His trustworthiness. And gave him great responsibility. And then we see. Even in that place of service.

[5:08] Temptation was to come against him. Testing was to come his way again. And Joseph was steadfast again. While facing temptation. In the house of the master. When tempted by the man's wife.

Joseph resisted her. He resisted lustful desires. He acted honourably. And sensibly. And he said to her. In verse 9. How then can I do this great wickedness.

And sin against God. We can learn from Joseph. Of his steadfastness. In temptation. And of our need to protect ourselves. From getting close to a situation.

Of temptation. And when she was rejected. She had him framed. And accused. And thrown into jail. So here he was. A slave. Serving faithfully.

And still faithfully. Whilst tempted. And yet falsely accused. Turned into a jail. In Genesis 39. Verse 20. But then verse 21. We have those words again.

[6:06] But the Lord was with Joseph. And showed him mercy. And gave him favour. In the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison.

Committed to Joseph's hand. All the prisoners that were in the prison. So here he was. He was recognised again. For his faithfulness. For his trustworthiness. For his steadfastness.

This innocent prisoner. Accused of rape. Steadfast. Joseph. Just carried on being faithful. Carried on being steadfast. Despite being the victim of lies. And his experience of injustice.

And what would have made many people so bitter. As he was hated by his brethren. As he was accused falsely. Some people had got churned up. And eaten up inside. And made to be very bitter and twisted.

But Joseph. Just carried on being. A faithful servant. His faith overcame the temptation. He earned the respect. And the trust. Of even the jailer. Of the prison.

[7:04] Who gave him. Many responsibilities. And another characteristic. That we could note. About Joseph. Was. Not only was he steadfast. But he was spiritual.

He was spiritual. About what came his way in life. And you can see that. Spirit. That shone through. Through all the. Situations. That he had to overcome. His faith was evident.

Through all those trials. And tests. That he faced. And Joseph. And Joseph was used by God. He was greatly used by the Lord. And filled with God's spirit. And gifted by the Lord. As we know that. Spiritual quality of his dreams. It was evident. How God used him. As he was gifted. To interpret dreams. And as he was in that prison cell. We know the story.

About how. In that place. There was. Some high profile prisoners. There was the king's butler. And the king's baker. They were in prison with him too. And they dreamt to dream.

[8:01] The two of them. And Joseph interpreted. The dreams correctly. The butler promised to help Joseph. When he was released. But he forgot to do so. He promptly forgot to do anything.

To help Joseph. Once he was back in his royal palace. In his job at the royal palace. And so. Here's another test for Joseph. He discovered that people. Can let you down.

People can let you down. And the sometimes trials. Can just go on. And on. And on. But he kept faith. With God. He kept faithful. He kept steadfast. He kept spiritual.

And then two years later. The king had a dream. He was standing by the river Nile. And saw these seven plump cows. And. They came out of the river. To graze. And then seven thin cows.

Came out of the river. And ate the fat cows. And Pharaoh wondered. What does this dream mean? What does it signify? And he went to sleep. And he dreamt again. And there was another dream.

[8:59] Where he dreamt of seven thin ears of wheat. That ate up. Some. Seven fat. Ears of wheat. And in the morning. He sent for the wise men. And the magicians. He wanted to know.

What does it mean? What does it signify? But nobody could tell him. And then. The king's butler. Remembered Joseph. He remembered how. Joseph had interpreted his dream. And how he was released. And how the baker. Was executed. And this is what Joseph had interpreted their dreams to mean. And Pharaoh. Promptly brought Joseph. Out of the prison. And Joseph explained what the dream. Of the king. Meant. He interpreted the dreams. And it saved him. He interpreted the Pharaoh's dream. As we know how. It meant that Egypt was to have seven years. Of good harvest. And then seven years. Of famine. And God's spirit. Used Joseph. To interpret the dream.

[9:55] That God was sending a message to Pharaoh. That there would be seven years of plenty. With abundant crops. Followed then. By seven years. Of drought. God had warned Pharaoh through Joseph.

So that his kingdom might prepare. In the good years. So look at how Joseph. Went from. Being thrown in the pit. To ending up in the prison. And then to be taken to the very palace. God. Elevated him. Through all those testings. And trials. God was working out. His perfect plan. And at 30 years of age. Joseph became. Effectively. The prime minister of Egypt. He became the ruler. Of the land of Egypt. He was put in charge. Of the preparation. Of this time of. Storage. And of preparation. For the famine ahead. He built the storehouses. And he stored the corn. For the future of the nation. And the spiritual qualities.

[10:53] Of Joseph. Shone through. And Pharaoh himself. Recognized the spiritual quality. Of Joseph. We see that. In Genesis 41. If you want to turn there.

To Genesis 41. Verse 38. And Pharaoh said unto. His servants. Can we find. Such a one as this. Is. A man. In whom. The spirit of God is.

He could recognize. The spirit of God. Was at work in Joseph. And Pharaoh said unto. Joseph. For as much as God. Has showed thee all this. There is none so discreet. And wise as thou art. Thou shalt be over my house. And according unto thy word. Shall all my people be ruled. Only in the throne. Will I be greater than thou.

And Pharaoh said unto Joseph. See I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ringer. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand.

[11:49] And put it upon Joseph's hand. And arrayed him in vestures of fine linen. In royal clothing. And he put a gold chain about his neck. And he made him ride in the second chariot.

Which he had. And they cried before him. Bowed the knee. And he made him ruler. Over all the land of Egypt. Joseph rose to such a place of prominence.

As the ruler of all Egypt. At the helm of the empire. A mighty worldwide famine arose. And by this time. Joseph's brothers. And Israel was getting hungry.

They showed up to buy some grain from him. Joseph had become the overseer. Of all the land of Egypt. And God had prepared Joseph. To rescue God's chosen people.

From starvation. So Joseph's trials and testings. Ended up that. It meant that Joseph was to become a deliverer.

[12:45] To save millions of people. The chosen people. God's chosen people. Were saved. In Genesis 41. 56. It says. The famine was all over the earth.

The face of the earth. It was all over the face of the earth. And 42. Genesis 42. It says there how. The sons of Israel came. The sons of Jacob. Joseph's brothers came to buy corn.

For the famine was in the land of Canaan. And verse 6 of Genesis 42. And Joseph was the governor over the land. And here it was that sold to all the people of the land.

And Joseph's brethren came. And bowed themselves before him. With their faces to the earth. So his dream was fulfilled. And Joseph saw his brethren. And he knew them.

But made himself strange unto them. And spoke roughly unto them. And he said unto them.

Whence come ye? And they said from the land of Canaan. To buy food. He disguised himself.

[13:48] He was speaking in the Egyptian language. And they interpreted into Hebrew. And he obviously looked quite different. As dressed as an Egyptian. They didn't recognise him.

But when after those 20 years of suffering. He saw his brothers. When he met them again. Those brothers who had caused all of his pain. And suffering. And trial.

He had no bitterness in his heart. Against them. He forgave them freely. Even before they asked forgiveness. And we see again that spiritual quality. That spiritual maturity of Joseph.

Here again. He didn't act carnally. And hatefully. And resentfully. God's spirit was evident at work. Even in his relationships also.

And on their second trip. They went back and came again. Joseph revealed his identity. He was gracious to his brothers. He displayed the power of forgiveness. He showed great grace.

[14:46] Despite being wronged. And we can learn that too. Brothers and sisters. Maybe you've had experiences. In your life. Where there's people who've hurt you. They've wronged you. They've slighted you.

They've wounded you. You can learn from Joseph. To have that gracious spirit. That power of forgiveness. And in verse 4 of Genesis 45.

It says. He said. I am Joseph your brother. Whom you sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved. Nor angry with yourselves. That you sold me hither.

For God did send me before you. To preserve life. And verse 15. It says. He kissed all his brethren. And wept upon them. And he says. Verse 20.

The good of all the land of Egypt. Is yours. What grace. What grace. And some have said how Joseph. You could see. In a sense. He's like a type.

[15:41] Of Christ. Just the gracious spirit. The grace that he showed. To those. Who. Did him harm. And wanted to kill him. Joseph recognized.

That their evil deeds. Were actually used by God. For God's almighty purpose. That was beyond. What they could imagine. Or understand. And verse 29.

Of chapter 46. And Joseph made ready his chariot. And went up to meet Israel. His father to Goshen. And presented himself unto him. And he fell on his neck.

And wept on his neck. A good while. He had great love for his father. He was full of love. After those 20 years. Of separation. And of hurt.

We see another feature. That showed through. That shone through. In Joseph's life. That great love. That great. Quality. Of faith. That he had. Alongside.

[16:37] All of these things. Alongside his being steadfast. Alongside of his being spiritual. Another thing that. Strikes you about Joseph. Was that he was a servant.

He was a servant. Wherever he was. He was serving. And like that too. Wherever you are.

Wherever life takes you. Learn to be a servant. Learn to be. Steadfast.

Spiritual. And to be a servant. Wherever he was. He served. In the sheepfold. Before. He was even. Thrown in the pit. He was a shepherd boy.

He was serving. He was working. He was being. Useful. In the servants post. Or the slave pen. In the prison dungeon. In the high office.

Of governor of the land. He was serving. Wherever he was. And friends. You too. As God's people. As his disciples. As his. Followers.

[17:33] Shouldn't you be his servant. Shouldn't you be the servant of God. Every one of us should be. Having that servant characteristic. As we see in Joseph's life. The spiritual maturity.

The endurance. The diligence. The industry. The foresight. As it was his plan. To store food for seven years. We see all those. Wonderful characteristics. As he served so.

Faithfully. And wisely. In whatever responsibility. That he had. And lessons that we can learn. That you can learn. From Joseph's life. Take it. Home with you today.

In your kit bag today. To think about. How you can be like Joseph. How you can be faithful. In the day of testing. How you can be faithful. No matter what comes your way.

No matter what comes against you. But you can recognize. Like Joseph did. That God is with you. Every step of the way. Wherever lives. Twists and turns. Take you. God can turn evil.

[18:28] Into good. That his ultimate purpose. Will be worked out. And for Joseph. We see. His life was such a testimony. He was such a witness.

It says. It's been said of Joseph. Which is unusual. Because the Bible. Paints people. Warts and all. And he shows us. In all our faults and failings. As we often see.

Recorded of men and women. Of God. In the Bible. We see their failings too. But of Joseph. Nothing is really recorded. Against him. There's no fault. Apart from perhaps. His foolishness. In talking of the dream. Which made his brothers. Jealous of him. But there's no real fault. There's no real sin. Recorded of him. Even though as a teenager. He faced many temptations. As young people do. He lived a righteous life. He chose to serve God. To live steadfastly. To live spiritually. To do what was right. In the face of all those testings.

[19:23] This man. Who rose from a lowly shepherd. To be the ruler. Of the mightiest empire. Of the ancient world. Egypt. And despite being in heathen Egypt.

Which you could say. As. Alight to our heathen. Australia. Or probably worse. That we can find no trace. No blemish. No. Mark.

Of laziness. Of dishonesty. Of foolishness. Of pride. Of malice. Of sexual sin. Of lack of love. In Joseph's life. He could have become. As I say.

Vitter and twisted. And tense. And frustrated. And angry. And hateful. And vengeful. Of his brothers. And yet. We see. He was marked by.

Such love. Such grace. Such honour. With all of those that. He dealt with in his life. And you too. Can be true to the Lord. You can be. One of whom.

[20:16] Some of the likes of Pharaoh. Can say. Wow. God's spirit. Is in you. There's something about you. The spirit of God. Is in you. There's a spiritual quality. To your life. And God's spirit.

Can be with you. And in you. Whatever your circumstances. And as I said. Joseph's real secret. Of success. Was that. The Lord. Was with him.

God was with him. As we've seen. Those verses. It's repeated. A number of times. In the record of his life. That God. Was with him. The Lord. Was with him. And friends today.

If you're a safe person today. If you're a Christian. If you're a born again believer. In the Lord Jesus Christ today. God. Is with you. He is with you.

It says. The Lord Jesus. He says. I shall never leave you. Nor forsake you. I am with you. Wherever you go. Every step. Of your life. And the power of God's presence.

[21:12] Can guide your life. God sees the beyond. He sees the ultimate. He sees the end. He sees what will happen. At the end. That. Whatever. Testings. Have gone behind.

He's got something. That his. In his perfect will. Has designed for you. That is. Going to be. For your ultimate good. As we know. The word tells us that.

All things work together. For them. That love the Lord. That are called. According to his purpose. And. Joseph says that. Right at the end of Genesis. In chapter 50.

Verse 20. We see the grace. And the mercy of God. That took Joseph. Right through. That presence of the Lord. That was with him. Through his life. And how.

Joseph recognized that. God takes all of these things. Of life. All the mixture. Of good and bad. As we would see it. All the testings. And trials. And the.

[22:07] Difficult times. As well as the good. God mixes it all together. And. He's got a recipe. That is going to produce. Something good. As we see in Genesis 50.

Verse 20. As Joseph spoke to his brothers. He said. But as for you. You thought evil against me. But God meant it unto good. To bring to pass. As it is this day.

To save much people alive. What they thought of evil. God meant it unto good. And that can be. Something that you can take heart in. Today. That the.

The clouds have got a silver lining. That. The blessings will. Ultimately result. For the testings of life. You'll be stronger for it. You'll be more faithful. You'll be more spiritual.

And God will bless you. And use you as he did. Of Joseph. And others will be blessed too. Through your witness. And testimony. So. Friends. Be encouraged. To be steadfast.

[23:02] Be spiritual. And to be. Going with God. Through. Whatever test might. Strike your path. That. That you can be. Seen to be that servant. To be that one. That is going to hang in there. And. God will bless you for it. And give you the grace. That you need. To. To deal with those. That. Have wronged you. Along the way. We're going to just. Prayerfully close there. Lord. We thank you today. For Joseph. For the. Life that he lived. And. Lord. The test that he. Encountered. Help us Lord. When life brings tests. Our way. That. We might. Not shy away. But we might be steadfast. That we might be. Strong. In that faith. That we might be filled. With your spirit. That we might know that presence. Of you. Lord God. Walking by us. And with us. Help us Lord. To serve. To. Be spiritual.

[23:57] No matter what. Might test us. And tempt us. Dear Lord. Help us when we fail. To repent. To. Pick ourselves up. Off the floor. And. To get back on that path again.

Lord. That we might be. Walking. Walking in your spirit. And walking in your truth. Lord. We pray for anyone here today. Who's. Feeling like they're burdened down. Heavy laden. Lord. That they might come unto you. And find that rest. For their souls today. Lord. That they might find that grace. To help. In time of need. We thank you for that. In Jesus name. Amen.