

Joseph

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[0:00] Even looking at the life of Joseph, Joseph teaches us that even when everything looks like it's going wrong, God is at work.

! Joseph was born a beloved son with eleven brothers. To his father Jacob, he was the favourite. Now we know we shouldn't play favourites but Jacob did.

Jacob loved Joseph and he didn't hide the fact. He gave Joseph a coat of many colours and his brothers resented that.

God gave Joseph dreams and he did to interpret dreams. And Joseph shared a dream one day of people bowing to him.

And it spoke of really his brothers and father. And this offended his brothers and they got it in for him.

[1:05] They wanted to do him wrong. And one day Jacob sent Joseph to go and see how his brothers were going. He was 60 miles away pasturing the flock.

Looking up some 60 miles distant. And Jacob sent Joseph to run an errand and take some.

And his brothers saw him coming. And we take up the story in verse 19 of Genesis 37. His brothers looked out and they saw him coming.

In his multicoloured coat. Oh, Joseph. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer come. John. Verse 20 they said, Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit.

[2:10] And we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him. And we shall see what will become of his dreams. He was forsaken by his brother.

He was just 17 here. Just 17 years old. And his brothers had it in for him such that they wanted to kill their very brother.

They cast him into the grave. They were heartless, cruel. They wanted to do him anything. And then they happened to see some slave traders going past.

And they sold their brother into slavery for just a few dollars. Joseph's life was changed at that moment. From being the beloved to being a slave in an unknown land, Egypt.

Joseph's life was struck with disappointment. It can happen to all of us. Disappointments. Yet we know that our disappointment can be a divine appointment.

[3:17] That's what it was with Joseph. His disappointments were a divine appointment. Because God was working even in all of that. All of his trouble.

He was alone now. He could have felt overwhelmed by bitterness, by grief, by unforgiveness. Hurt by his own flesh and blood.

His spirit crushed. Imagine how he might have felt of that rejection, that hurt, that loss, that separation from his family.

It says of Joseph that his soul was in anguish. We see that where later they talked about what had happened in Genesis 42 verse 21.

And they said one to another, We are thoroughly guilty concerning the brother. In that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besoiled us and we were not here.

[4:25] Imagine as he was there in that very deep pit, crying out, Help! Don't leave me here! Don't leave me here! I'm going to die!

They heard his cry, but they would not listen to her. They saw the anguish of his soul.

We would not hear. Therefore is this distress come upon them. Just looking back. And at this moment here now we can see Joseph in the pit and then a slave.

And Joseph learned through all of this to trust God at every turn. Joseph was learning here that we can trust God in disappointing times.

We can trust him. Trust him still when it seems like our world is turned upside down. When it seems like everything is going wrong. What matters is God is with us.

[5:39] The Lord was with Joseph. He was close to God. This is a recurring theme that the Lord was with Joseph.

We will see that referred to later. So we see that Joseph now, he was called to this high ranking Egyptian called Potiphar. Potiphar was high up in the hierarchy of the day.

And Joseph was now in his employ as a slave. Joseph put his heart into what he did.

He showed integrity in the workplace. He showed integrity in the tasks that he was given. Menial though they were. He did the small things well.

And God blessed him for it. God blessed him for what he did. Eventually we see that Joseph was elevated within the household, within the servants, to be the supervisor of the other servants.

[6:47] He became the supervisor of Potiphar's household. We see that in verse 2 of Genesis 39. And it says, And the Lord was with Joseph.

That's what made the difference. The Lord was with Joseph. Genesis 39 verse 2. He was a prosperous man. He was in the house of his master, the Egyptian.

He was a slave, a servant, yet counted as a prosperous man. He was a good administrator. He was a hardworking man.

Potiphar saw this. The quality of this man, the integrity of Joseph in the workplace. It goes on, Genesis 30 from 3 to 4.

And his master Potiphar saw that the Lord was with him. He recognized this. The Lord was with Joseph.

[7:49] And it says, 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. Joseph showed integrity in the workplace.

He put into his hand. He made him overseer his house. He put into his hand. He put into his hand. He put into his hand. He put into his hand.

He made the overseer of his house. He put into his hand. He put into his hand. He put into his hand. He put into his hand. He put into his hand. and we see how the Lord blessed Joseph verse 5 and it came to pass from the time that he made him a seer in his house and over all that he, Potiphar, had that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house and in the field Joseph worked well in the small things he was made the overseer and the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house and in the field when Joseph worked he worked as unto the Lord and so should we that are in the workplace that are in the workspace we should work as unto the Lord you might work for a boss who gives you a hard time or maybe you get some duties and hours that are not always easy but yet as a Christian in the workplace when you have something to do do it well like Joseph did he wasn't really working for Potiphar or later for Pharaoh or the jailer as it turned out but he was working as unto the Lord his integrity in the workplace and it was recognised when we work we work as unto the Lord

Genesis 39 verse 6 we read and he left all that he had in Joseph's hand and he knew not what he had save the bread which he did eat he just left everything in Joseph's hands he knew Joseph would do it well and Joseph was a goodly person and well favoured now here we see the next thing that happened was that Joseph faced temptation he was young and handsome and Potiphar's wife the wife of the master the Egyptian's master Potiphar's wife who's not named she chased him she chased after him she was a married woman yet she chased after Joseph and he knew it was wrong he was the head of the house he was around he could have got away with it no one would have known how he came to the temptation by Potiphar's wife but Joseph had a healthy fear of God he had integrity in the home place if you like the household of Potiphar he had integrity there integrity there when no one was watching he had a healthy fear of God and he refused temptation as we read in

[11:10] Genesis 39 verse 9 when he refused the woman he said there is none greater in this house than I neither had I kept had he Potiphar anything from me but thee because thou art his wife how then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God he knew it was sin against his master to take his master's wife and he knew it was sin against God how

can I do this great wickedness and sin against God he had integrity he stood by his principles no one else was watching he could have got away with it but no he stood for the right he stood for purity he stood for God he stood with his faith intact with integrity yet Potiphar's wife now made a false accusation she took his as he fled and he used that and said oh he tried to lie with him and this false accusation landed Joseph in prison it was false yet accused and locked up for this false accusation and it says verse 20 of Genesis 39 and Joseph's master took him and put him in the prison a place where the king's prison was found and he was there in the prison here was Joseph falsely accused shut away now as the bars locked behind him as the doors clanged behind him he was locked there down in the king's dungeon bound with chains and things got worse things got worse for Joseph yet God in all his trials because sometimes our disappointments are God's appointments and Joseph stayed faithful even in this time when his name was stained falsely accused

God locked him still because he maintained his integrity he rose to a place of honour and even in the prison now we see Genesis 39 23 the keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand this responsibility within the prison because the Lord was with him that's what made the difference the integrity of Joseph the Lord was with him which he did the Lord made it to prosper so the prison keeper now gave Joseph that role of oversight of leadership responsibility yet again Joseph was shown favour and yet Joseph rose above his circumstances now he got just about as low as he could go in the pit now in the prison the dungeon yet he rose above his circumstances again

Joseph continued to be faithful and like Joseph too we can be true to God true to God the Lord again blessed Joseph in all of his work he put his heart into it he wasn't half-hearted he was wholehearted he was serving as unto the Lord and even in the prison he was given this responsible charge the Lord blessed him in all his work jailer gave him charge over all the other prisoners and now in the prison we know the story goes in the prison that he helped the chief butler the cup bearer to restore his position pharaoh's office he interpreted the dreams there of the two men excuse me one was put to death and one who was put back into the king's palace back into the pharaoh's service restored to his position and the deal was really the pharaoh should not forget Joseph but he did Joseph was forgotten again Joseph was neglected again and the cup bearer forgot his promise to mention about Joseph's innocence to the pharaoh it took two years when pharaoh had two dreams and the cup bearer remembered Joseph pharaoh was tearing his hair out because he wanted someone to tell him the meaning of the dreams he knew these dreams had meaning had significance and he called this one and that one various and and a guide to guide him to the wise counsel to give him advice and to interpret to bring meaning as to these dreams but no one could and then the cup bearer the light went on he remembered Joseph Joseph interpreted my dream he remembered

Joseph and his skills to interpret dreams and he told Pharaoh of this and then Genesis 41 verse 14 the story goes on and Pharaoh sent and called Joseph Joseph we've got to get Joseph and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon and Joseph it says he shaved himself and changed his raiment and came in unto Pharaoh now Joseph had been in prison maybe three years I don't know if he had a three year long beard but he had to get shaved and he had to get fitted out he had to come into the king's palace before Pharaoh and Joseph was beckoned in haul him hastily get him hastily out of the dungeon and Joseph was called brought and he interpreted those dreams that meant about seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine and Joseph suggested storing food in preparation to store the food in the years of plenty for the years of famine to store the food during the good harvest years for those years of lack and

[17:52] Pharaoh liked his proposal he saw the wisdom and Joseph was a wise man and so Joseph taken hastily out of the dungeon out of the prison of the Pharaoh this same night would be wearing the king's on his hand and elevated to a position of honour Pharaoh made Joseph the head of state to implement the plans for the upcoming famine from the prison to the palace Joseph was here now and God was working he had already been working but now it was exalted he was 30 at this time

Genesis 41 verse 39 we read there Pharaoh said unto Joseph for as much as God hath showed thee all this there is none discreet and wise as thou art he saw that Joseph was discreet he saw that Joseph had wisdom that he had integrity verse 14 thou shalt be over my house and according to thy word all my people be ruled only in the throne will I be greater than Joseph had endured some 13 long years of adversity 13 long years now Joseph became governor the second in command of all that Pharaoh the king of Egypt had and we pick up the story again in verse 41 of 41! Genesis 41 verse 41 and Pharaoh said unto Joseph see I have set thee over all the land of Egypt and Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand and put it upon Joseph's hand and arrayed vestures of fine linen and put a chain around his neck and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had and they cried before him bow the knee and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt and Pharaoh said unto Joseph I am Pharaoh and without them shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt Joseph had now a gold ring a personal chariot fine linen and the control of all Egypt's grain and he was given an Egyptian name and apparently the Egyptian name has the meaning of the saviour of the world he was exalted such that they was recognised as this is the saviour of the world and he was married to an priest daughter 30 years old he had 13 years of suffering and struggle and now

God made Joseph the most influential person in all the known world at that time second only to Pharaoh his wisdom and his planning saved the lives of people not only from Egypt but many other nations Joseph showed integrity integrity in the workplace in those various workplaces!

Joseph showed integrity in that life space if you like his whole life was integrity faithfulness to God from beginning through to the end faithful to God he walked with integrity now I was talking this morning about another Bible character Joshua but Joseph is one that it's interesting not a single word of reproof he had really an unblemished record as far as his life record in the word goes he had integrity he was faithful to

[22:38] God and he knew protection from the pit through the prison to the palace God was with him every step every place every moment and not a single word of reproof of fault found his faith was unwavering despite the accusations he showed a faithful no matter what and so we see God's hand was there with Joseph in each of those chapters of his life even in the delays and the disappointments along the way and the setbacks and the prison time and the time of being forsaken by his own brothers in the time of being falsely accused in the time of being forgotten by those who should have remembered him and God used the trials to purify and strengthen

Joseph to make him the man that God wanted him to be to shape and make the man Joseph from Genesis 42 through 50 we read how the famine struck and it brought all people from nations to get help including his brothers from Israel Jacob sent ten of his sons to Egypt to buy some grain Genesis 42 verses 1 to 3 and while there they met their long lost brother but they did not recognize him he had a shade he had some clothes on a bit of an Egyptian look to him that he never met before there was something different about the changed when he came to Egypt but he was still the same man but they did not recognize him it says that Joseph's brothers came bowing down to him they recognized his authority recognized position that they had to come to beseech him for grain and as they bowed down

Joseph's prophecy that he had had in the beginning but they could not recognize him but he knew them and he remembered the dream that he had had when he was just a young boy and Joseph after testing them in different ways he made himself known to them imagine what it would have been like as he revealed I am Joseph how they would have felt wouldn't they they would have been really worried afraid here is Joseph and he's got the authority of the land to put us to death and rightly so after and so we read in verse 1 to 3 of 5 Genesis 45 1 to 3 and Joseph could not restrain himself he could not refrain before all of them that stood by him and he cried cause every man to go out from me he just wanted it to be him and his brothers and there stood no man with him while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren verse 2 and he went to last and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard Joseph said unto his brethren I am Joseph doth my father yet live and he could not answer him for they were troubled at his presence they had been knocking their knees they had been really worried what is he going to do to us as he revealed his identity to his brothers and he gave them for their wrongdoing what grace the integrity of man the forgiveness of their

wrongdoing Joseph saw that it was the hand of God in his life everything that had happened to him everything that he had gone through verse 8 of

Genesis 45 so now it was not you that sent me hither yes I did God sent me here and he made me he has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his house and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt you didn't send me here God did I'm here by God's appointment and Joseph forgave them to come and settle in Egypt with their father Jacob in the time of famine of course I'm cutting the story short here there's various comings and goings but the point is that Joseph placed his brother now I am Joseph he welcomed them he embraced them he forgave them and we know the story goes that Jacob and his family moved to Egypt to be with Joseph and Jacob's descendants stayed in Egypt some hundred years until the time of

[28:07] Moses Joseph years in Genesis 50 verse 26 we see that he passed away and it's interesting that Joseph that his that his bones would go to the promised land to be buried he had faith in that so the story of Joseph shows us that no matter what God is in control even in the pit in the prison in Potiphar's house and in the palace Joseph was the same man he had integrity right through he wasn't changeable to suit the circumstances he wasn't overwhelmed by the disappointment whilst there was some anguish he made it through and God refined him and made him the man

Joseph and likewise for you for me in the work space in the work where we can so that the quality of our work the character of our workmanship the integrity of our life is not stained by neglect or slackness or tardiness or sloppiness but there's integrity in the workplace and there's integrity in the home place we're in the household when we're in a family setting Joseph was there in Potiphar's household and he showed Potiphar the master of the house he showed due respect to the married status of this woman that she was here he could not have her and he was faithful he showed integrity and in the home setting in the family and relationship space we need to have integrity and likewise the life space really his whole life the whole extent of it even as he was elevated and he could have been prideful it could have gone to his head the authority that he had it could have gone to his head

I'm the ruler now second only to Pharaoh you know what I can do to my brothers now I can really hurt them but he didn't did he he loved them he gave he showed the grace that God shows to us doesn't he and Joseph shows us that no matter what God is in control God is in control and no matter what no matter what circumstances no matter what disappointments we can trust God as Joseph did and in it all God is in charge he is in charge and he will allow what he will allow he will stop what he will stop he is sovereign he is master and we are but clay in his hands and we see verse 20 of

Genesis 50 just to wrap up as Joseph spoke to his bread and you know they were saying they were bringing to memory what had happened what they had done they knew they were bad they were guilty they were ashamed and Joseph reassured them here in Genesis 50 verse 20 he says but as for you he thought evil against me but God meant it unto good to bring to pass as it is to save much people alive you thought to do evil to me but it was God who meant it unto good God meant good and likewise we can think looking back the hurts the hardships the hatred you know as Christ hated without a cause people falsely accusing people murmuring backstabbing friends turning against you whatever it be we all have moments of that

God brings good even out of that and it says that all things work to those who are called according to his purpose to those who love him that all things work together for good so God's divine purpose will prevail his divine appointments can be sometimes our life's disappointments because God is making you the man the woman that he wants you to be and even others try to harm and hurt it can still turn out the glory of the veteran so be encouraged tonight I know it's perhaps very real for some of you here these experiences that Joseph had of that integrity tested of that hurt that can happen in life yet it can bring good even out of that which is hurtful and hard you might say well preacher it's for you to say what about what I'm going through

[34:05] I can't honestly say someone who I was trying to empathise and I said I can understand what you're going through and then I thought no I really understand what you're going through it made me feel really teary that I can't understand what you're going through I'm not in your shoes

I've got my own cross to carry I've got my own things I'm going through as we all have I can't understand what you're going through your cross is different from my cross and your burden might be heavier than mine God helping us carry one another's burdens can't we the Bible says we should bear one another's burdens and most of all to cast it upon the Lord St.

Joseph showed that character that integrity right through and so can you and me in whatever space of life the work space the home place the life space as it were a whole life that we being we're growing and we might spend some moments in the pit or Potiphar's household or the prison ultimately he will vindicate