

Joseph: A Life of Faith

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Date: 05 August 2026

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[0:00] In Genesis chapter 37 is where we're going to pick up here in just a minute. We're going to find here that it's Joseph's story. The story of Joseph comes to the forefront here in Genesis 37, and it sets him apart as the son who would be distinct because his dad basically said, hey, this is the son I'm choosing to lead the family.

But we know Joseph was not the oldest. He was the firstborn of Rachel. But Leah already had six sons, his first wife.

So I want you to keep those things in mind as we talk about Joseph tonight because I want you to understand Joseph was not born into a perfect family. You know, when you look at Joseph's life, Joseph was blessed by God because he chose to allow God to work in his life.

Joseph didn't have the greatest circumstances. He didn't have the greatest family dynamic. You know what? I think he would...

Joseph's family, Jacob and his kids and his household would probably compete with any crazy family today. When you think about it, that you have Leah, Rachel, and the two handmaids that were given unto them.

[1:25] So he basically had four women, 12 sons and a daughter. Do you think there was any jealousy or problems in the family? Yes, there was. There was a lot of issues.

I want you to understand that Joseph didn't come from a perfect family. Where you go with God, your earthly family does not matter.

What you're born into or what happens in your life doesn't determine what God can do through you. And Joseph is that example we're going to look at tonight of that one who was willing to surrender his will to God's will.

You know, that's an important thing because Jacob, his dad, I mean, if you think about it, Jacob came from a pretty messed up home too. If you remember, Jacob ended up up at Laban, his uncle's place.

Why? Because he was running for his life because he had just tricked his twin brother. All because his mom told him to.

[2:33] But his dad was showing favoritism. He came out of a messed up home and that brought it over into his own home because he starts to show favoritism between his children.

You know, I want you to understand that this is a problem even today. We could spend some time just talking about family dynamics when it comes to Joseph. And Jacob, his father, and the issues with his mom, with the women in his life that were there by choice.

And then we have these issues that we don't, we aren't going to get all the details. But I want you to understand, one thing you can learn is jealousy and envy comes in a family when there's favoritism and separation driven into it.

And we understand the picture and envy comes in a family when there's favoritism and envy comes in a family. And we understand the picture and the issues of this. And we know that Joseph was the son of Rachel, Leah's older sister.

And we find and remember, before we get here into chapter 37, Joseph had lived up with Laban up in Syria with his great uncle for seven years before they came back down.

[3:49] And they came back into the land. And we're going to see him as he works through these things by this dynamic together. And we find that these family dynamic was just a repeat of what he'd already experienced.

You know, take a look over to, hold your finger there and turn back to Genesis 25 for a moment. Because Genesis 25 reveals something that we find plays out in Joseph's life.

But I want you to understand, God used and overcame the sinful choices of others. He overcame struggles that come, not because of where he came from, but because who he was looking to. Think about over in Genesis 25, look down in verse 28. Think about Jacob, what he learned. He learned this, it says, Isaac loved Esau because he did eat of his venison, but Rebekah loved Jacob. You know, it was one great big messed up family. Still, Joseph came forth as the one that furthered God's plan for the ages.

[5:04] You know, God's word is to everyone is this. I want you to understand that your messed up family, the past, present, or future, does not mean God has forsaken you, or that some cloud has come over you that will never pass.

God works in and through difficult and messed up situations. I want you to understand, no matter how messed up you think your life is, God can overcome it if you trust him.

You think about what he did with Joseph. He took Joseph out of a messed up family and fulfilled his plan in his life. Why? Because Joseph was willing to trust God.

You'll see throughout Joseph's story, he trusted God from the time way before his brothers threw him in the pit. I believe you can find that Joseph trusted God because that's one thing that Jacob did was taught his children who God is.

Although he was not a perfect father, he understood and pointed them to the perfect God. You know, as a parent, that's your responsibility. Your responsibility isn't to be perfect.

[6:17] It's to point your children to the God who is. That is the ultimate goal because you're never going to measure up. But I want you to understand, this is where the story of Joseph comes to the forefront.

Jacob and his family reside in the land of Canaan, taking care of the great flocks and herds he had acquired with Laban. And now we find, look here in chapter 37. We'll pick up here.

Notice what it says in verse 1. It says, You know, here we find Joseph, 17 year old.

You know, that's just a young man trying to figure out direction of life. We find Joseph and his father begins to break him out from his brothers, his older brothers.

Because we see here something that takes place. And this is often what we talk about. Here, notice in verse 3, that, And he made him a coat of many colors. You know, I want you to understand, that coat wasn't a fashion statement.

[7:56] That coat distinguished Joseph as being the one that the family lineage was going to be passed to. Now, remember, Jacob and Esau had a little struggle over that, didn't they?

I want you to understand, Jacob set up his son for a problem. Because of favoritism. But I want you to understand, just because you had favoritism in your household doesn't mean you have to let it continue into your own.

You can change those things. You can make a change that makes a difference. And we'll see families later who make a difference because they say, We're not going to allow what was to be what God wants us to be.

And we're going to see here as we look through this tonight, The description before us is one of preparation. But we find that this process is not one that others had accepted.

You know, you think of how popular it is. If you had 12 sons, and you take one of the younger sons, and you put a coat on him and say, Hey, older boys, he's going to be the one who takes the family.

[9:07] Do you think that would settle well? You know, think about even in your own family. If you give somebody and rise them up with favoritism, what happens? Now, I'm going to make a statement here that's important.

Because as a parent, you're going to find a couple things. One, you're going to have some kids.

Some of your kids you're going to connect differently with because of personality. But you ought to love them all equally, and they need to know you love them all equally.

That one is not a priority over the other. That needs to be an important element. Because jealousies cause a lot of problems. And we need to understand how that works together in this.

And so, when we see here that the sons of Jacob through Bila and Zilpah, you know, we see here, we don't know much about the young men at this point, but we know that they're discussing something they shouldn't be discussing.

Because Joseph brings back an evil report. He brings back a report to his dad to say, Dad, do you know what my brothers are plotting?

[10:15] Or what are they doing? We don't know what it was. They might have been skimming off the herd. They might, I mean, we don't know. The Bible doesn't tell us. All we know is that Joseph brought back an evil report about his brothers.

And it caused an issue. And we see as this plays out, I mean, with his dad promoting him, and he's telling his dad what his brothers are plotting to get in trouble.

You know, every family's got that one kid that, no matter what, they'll tell on the other ones. And the parents laughed. You all know it's true. You know, you got one kid that's the one that's going to bail. I want you to understand that Joseph wasn't just bailing. He was giving a report of responsibility as the heir to say, Dad, you need to know what's happening.

He wasn't just tattling. He was telling about something that was needful to be reported. But we need to understand this picture. But I guarantee it didn't make him any more popular with his brothers.

[11:17] We find here that his brothers were not very happy with him. Look down at verse 4. It says, When his brethren saw their father loved him more than all his brethren.

And that's a pretty powerful word. What's the next word there? They hated him. And notice this next part. And they could not what? Boy, that sounds like a family dynamic, doesn't it?

With jealousies and anger and bitterness. That people can't speak peaceably one to another. Like I told you, Joseph's family could rival anybody's family today.

So I want you to understand, just because of what you're going through or where you come from, doesn't mean God cannot use you. God can overcome those things. And we find here that Joseph was the one that was loved.

And this sets the stage for what's to come. Because we're going to find here that Joseph now has a dream. You know, Joseph gets himself in trouble without even trying.

[12:27] God gives him a dream that tells us that he's going to be the one that his brothers are going to come and bow down to. Now, think about that for a moment.

How do you think that went over? You know, they already hate him. They won't speak peacefully to him. And Joseph comes and says, Hey, I had a dream about sheaves of corn. And they were all bowing down.

And everybody understood in the room who he was talking about. Then he has another dream that includes his mother and his father going to come and bow down. Boy, that really causes an issue. I want you to see here, God was telling Joseph what was going to happen and how he was going to fulfill some things that in the future that God had promised. Because I want you to understand the children of Israel going down into Egypt, God had told Abraham it was going to happen.

Matter of fact, God told Abraham when it was going to happen and how long they were going to be there before they come back out. So, in other words, this wasn't like, in a sense, new information. But we find here that Joseph's brothers despised him over this.

[13:37] You know, they despised the hatred. You know, look down at verse 11. Look what it says. And his brethren envied him, But his father observed the saying.

You know, this is the stage that we find Joseph's story is brought forth. His brothers hate him. His dad sets him on a pedestal. I want you to understand, let me just make another declarative statement. You cannot control how other people treat you. You cannot control whether it's good or bad.

You cannot control it. Your responsibility is what you do with it. You know, one thing we're going to look at Joseph's life. We have no recorded incident of Joseph having a negative spirit or attitude towards God because of what happened in his life.

But that tells me that Joseph said, Lord, I don't understand it, but I'm going to trust you. I'm going to walk through with you and we're going to see in Joseph's life here.

[14:48] You know, because take a look as we find here that Joseph's brothers despise him. They sell him into slavery. You know, Joseph goes out and his brothers see him coming.

I mean, we're going to kind of brush over the story a little bit tonight, but we see all this. We know from this familiar account what takes place. But notice what happens. Look down in verse 28.

They threw him in a pit only because of his brother Reuben. They didn't kill him. Just another interesting thing. If you haven't figured out, Reuben's the oldest. He was the heir. And Reuben said, no, I'm going to deliver him back to dad.

It tells me Reuben had some faith too and understood some responsibilities. Whether he was the chosen one or not, he was willing to let the Lord do what God would want.

But notice here in verse 28, and it says that we're, and then they're passed by Midianite merchants and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for 20 pieces of silver.

[15:48] And they brought Joseph into Egypt. And Reuben returned under the pit and behold, Joseph was not in the pit and he rent his clothes and he returned unto his brethren and said, the child is not and I, whither shall I go?

And they took Joseph's coat and killed a goat and dipped the blood in the coat. And they sent the coat of many colors and they brought it to the father and said, this have we found. Know now, whether it be thy son's coat or no.

You know, this is where the brothers get left off in the story. Let's turn over to chapter 39 because we find that now Joseph ends up down in Egypt.

Joseph ends up down in Egypt and we find something here. Notice what it tells us in verse 1. It says, And Joseph was brought down to Egypt and Potiphar, the officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, brought him into the hand of the Ishmaelites, which had brought him down thither.

Now notice that next phrase. And the Lord was what? With Joseph. And he was a prosperous man and he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian.

[17:02] Now you think about this for a moment. Did Joseph have something to complain about? I mean, I think Joseph had some things to complain about. I mean, I think if you had Facebook, he'd been posting up or Instagram or other things.

He'd been all sorts of upset. Did you see what's happening to me? You know what? He didn't let what happened to him dictate what he did. Joseph, the Bible says, he was prosperous.

Why? Because the Lord was with him because he trusted the Lord. You know, when we understand how God's going to use Joseph throughout saving his family, the very one that they exiled by force is the one who God uses to rescue them.

You know, Joseph has a lot of pictures of Jesus and we'll talk about that in a little bit. He's a type, a picture of Christ being sold for silver, being abandoned, being placed, but then rising to authority. And we'll look at some of those things here in just a minute, but I want you to understand that Joseph had faith in the Lord before he came to Egypt. His spirit and attitude were such that revealed his faith.

[18:20] In other words, he says, my faith isn't going to change depending on the circumstances. But you can let circumstances dictate your faith. This year has been a tough year. But you know what?

I serve a God bigger than anything else. You can trust God because God is the one who knows. What God does and does through that is up to him.

Our job is to be faithful. to stand where we need to stand, to continue to do what we need to do.

Those are our responsibilities before God and we need to understand that as the Lord uses Joseph, he's there.

We find that when he's in Egypt, what happens to him? What happens to Joseph in Potiphar's house? He's lied about, doesn't he? As a matter of fact, he has lied about something that's pretty atrocious.

He's put in prison. But I think you've, the more I read through this account over the years, the more I see how God was working in Joseph's life. Think about who his master was in Egypt.

[19:28] Potiphar, the captain of the Pharaoh's guard. Joseph was a slave. What could a guy like that do to a slave? He could have killed Joseph on the spot, but I have a feeling he looked at the situation and said, I think something stinks.

Sent Joseph to prison. Joseph's attitude didn't change when somebody made false accusations against him. He understood this dynamic that God must be moving through the circumstances. Look back, we'll skip to Genesis chapter 50 for a moment. Genesis chapter 50. Look there in verse 20. Genesis chapter 50 in verse 20 tells us what?

Find the page. We're going to read this together. All right. Everybody on the page? Got it found? I want to give everybody time to catch up. Here we go. But as for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good to bring to pass as it is this day to save much people alive.

You know, have you thought about that? Joseph, at the end of his life, fully understood how God was putting the pieces together.

[20:44] I don't think Joseph really understood how God was going to put the pieces together until his brother showed up. When we understand, look down back in chapter 39, look down here in verse 21.

All these things come to pass. It says this, but the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

You know, and the keeper of the prison committed Joseph's hand to all the prisoners that were in the prison and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. And the keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand because the Lord was with him and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.

You know, I want you to understand, Joseph, God didn't prosper Joseph because he had a bad attitude. He prospered Joseph because Joseph, even in the midst of this, trusted God.

Joseph trusted the Lord. You know, you think about just trusting the Lord. You know, what are some other stories from the scripture we can talk, that you can remember that somebody had to really trust the Lord?

[21:55] Daniel in the lion's den, that's a good one. Job. Noah. Yeah, Joseph's Mary's husband there in the New Testament. You ever notice that's a recurring theme in it?

Why? Because it's by faith. By faith. Read Hebrews chapter 11. What is it? By faith. By faith. By faith. By faith. By faith. What was that faith?

They believed God. They trusted God that no matter what happened in their life, they're willing to say, Lord, this is for your purpose in my life.

You know, I want you to see the picture that is there as we see God working in and through Joseph's life. Joseph was there. I mean, it's not unlike Paul.

You think about Paul in a Roman prison. In 2 Timothy, he writes, notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me. You know, how many times did God do great things when Paul was in prison?

[22:59] You know, it wasn't the place to be. I guarantee you, a Roman prison, what we have downtown here for the state and around is a lot nicer place than Paul was in. In the ancient world, prisons didn't have standards that we raise them to today.

Matter of fact, most countries in the world don't have very many good standards for prisons. Even some first world countries don't have very good standards for prisons. I want you to understand that he was not in a good place, but we know that God was working in and through these things in his life.

But we find here that God shows and reveals something that God overrules evil for good. You know, God took what happened in Joseph's life as he's there, his brothers abandoned him, sell him into slavery.

He goes down to Potiphar. Potiphar's wife makes false accusations against him and his character. You know, let's do another rabbit trail for a moment because this is another good one for today's application.

You know when Joseph got in trouble? When he was in the house with nobody else. That's one reason we do some of the things we do around here to make sure somebody's with somebody because it protects you.

[24:18] Joseph's a prime example when he went into the house doing his business and what he was supposed to be doing, but nobody else was in the house is when he got in trouble. Just side note. It's good to have others with you.

It keeps things from being said or discussed that should not. But I want you to understand God overrules all these things.

You know, think about in Genesis 50. What did Joseph tell his brothers? He said, ye thought evil against me. You know what? Joseph didn't pretend his brother's sin wasn't real. I imagine what his brothers did to him hurt him pretty bad on a personal level.

You know, there's going to be things in life where people hurt you, but Joseph gives us the reality of trusting God in the midst of those things. Get your eyes off what people do and get your eyes on the Lord.

God overcame what they did. You know, think about over in Genesis 45 for a moment. Genesis 45 that God says, God did send me before you to preserve life, to save your life by a great deliverance.

[25 : 28] You know, I want you to understand that Joseph understood what was happening. He understood what God had shown him as a young man of 17.

That God was using this to perform what God wanted to perform. What God was going to accomplish. You know?

I want you to understand this dynamic because look over to Proverbs chapter 19 for a moment. Proverbs chapter 19 verse 21. One of those verses that we read.

Proverbs 19 in verse 21. Notice what it says. There are many devices in a man's heart. Now, I think if you've lived very long, is that a true statement? People think of all sorts of things.

Good and evil. There's many things that they want to work things out the way they want it to happen. But notice what it says. Nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall what?

[26 : 31] Stand. You know what? What God has said and what God has put forth is going to stand. That's what we can trust.

That's what we can put our faith in. You know, think about how many times have you read or somebody quoted or you heard this applies. You know, Romans 8, 28. You know, we know all things work together for good to them that love God to them who are called according to his purpose.

Most of the things we forget about Romans chapter 8. It wasn't written when everything was going the way we thought it would. Romans chapter 8 is written for the days it doesn't make sense to know that God will work through it.

God's already got a plan no matter what somebody does. You know, when we understand what takes place, I mean, you think about even Jesus.

Did they lie about Jesus? You know, perfect guy and didn't have perfect result from people. I want you to understand you can do what is right and not make people happy.

[27 : 41] Because if you're serving the Lord it's not going to match up with what the world wants. So when we understand that of what God is doing yet God brought out salvation and offered it freely to whosoever will through that.

God took what men meant for evil. They thought they were going to get rid of Jesus. They thought it was going to shut everything down and God said watch this. I took what you meant for evil and turned it to what will benefit you.

I will work through those things and we understand that even forgiveness flows from trusting God's plan.

You know think about Joseph's life. Joseph could you know I just more I think about Joseph it's like he had all sorts of reasons to be bitter. Angry. I mean you think about all the things that he could have done in his position of authority.

Joseph was second in command to Pharaoh when his brother showed up. There was one person in the nation that could override Joseph and that was Pharaoh himself.

[28 : 54] The Bible says that Pharaoh gave him his ring. Now to us today that doesn't make much difference of dynamic but let me put it to you this way. He basically said Joseph you have all authority.

If there's something you can't handle you come to me and I'll solve it. And I'll know if we want to have Pharaoh solve it after Joseph couldn't. Because I have a feeling what the solution would be. You know? They'd no longer be a problem. That's Joseph's position of authority but you know what? Joseph forgave them before they asked.

Ever thought about that? Joseph forgave them before they asked. How many times do we harbor bitterness and I've had people come and even sit in my office and well as soon as they get things straightened out I'll forgive them.

It's like I want you to understand forgiveness begins with you. Forgiveness never begins with the other person that's done wrong. Forgiveness is a choice that you make. Because if you don't forgive you get bitterness, anger, resentment, very things that are counter to trusting God.

[30 : 06] situations that we're not going to know why God does but I want you to understand God has it under control. Go over to Genesis chapter 45 again. Genesis chapter 45 and look down here at verse 4.

Let's go on up a little bit. Let's go to verse 1. Let's pick up here. Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood before him and he cried cause every man to go out from me and there stood no man with him while Joseph made himself known unto his brother.

And he wept aloud and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph. Doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence.

And Joseph said unto his brother, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near and he said, I am Joseph your brother whom you sold into Egypt. Now therefore be what?

Not grieved nor angry with yourselves that you sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life.

[31 : 15] Understand that Joseph said, Lord, I am willing to trust you even when people do evil things. when life doesn't go the way I want it to go.

That's faith. That's trusting in the Lord. And we see that Joseph is the one because that gives us a picture of our need to trust the Lord, to trust him, to understand what God is doing even in our own lives, and allow him to see what God is doing.

Because Joseph points us to Christ. You think about Christ, all the things that happened to him. Think about Christ's statement on the cross.

Father, what? Forgive them, for they know not what they do. He wasn't talking to in a repentant crowd. Joseph is a picture that we have of what Christ did for us also.

God forgave you and made a way to reconcile to him before you ever turned to him. Christ did for you.

[32 : 30] But I want you to understand, God is never absent from your hardest moments of life. He can take what we perceive as difficult or hard or even harm in our life, even our own failures, and God can take them and use them and weave them into good.

God is now, why is that important? Because that allows you to continue to trust God knowing and having confidence that frees us to forgive just as we've been forgiven.

To trust God as we move forward. To understand the picture of Joseph. This reason Joseph is an important foundational account for us to understand.

As we walk and we've been moving through Genesis of understanding how do these things tie together, it's a picture that God is laying out for us for us to understand today what he's done for us and how we ought to respond for those things.

Next week we're going to talk about the Exodus. These souls go down into Egypt. A million come out. God protected them and preserved them the whole time. And we'll see those things come to pass.

[33 : 51] Let's pray. Heavenly Father,