

The Lord Is with You

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A Sermon Series on the Life of Joseph

Gen 39:1-23

Years ago, just before my brother left home to go to college in Damascus, my mother called him and gave him the following advice: “Son, many heroes in the Bible fell into temptations. David, Solomon, Jacob and Samson were some of them. But not Joseph. Be like Joseph, resist temptation.”

I do not want to praise Joseph. The story shows us that **God (Yahweh) is the hero** (it appears eight times in chapter 39) and **Joseph is a role model** of a person with whom God is working.

Four times in this chapter we read the statement:

“The LORD was with Joseph (vs 2); “His master saw that the LORD was with him” (vs 3); “The LORD was with him” (vs 21); “The LORD was with him” (vs 23),

What a contrast from chapter 38, the dark chapter! Judah “went down” literally and spiritually. Judah adapted the lifestyle of the Canaanite people. Joseph was sold as slave and went down to Egypt geographically, yet he did not assimilate with the Egyptian lifestyle. Joseph did not lose his identity.

Just imagine his road entering Egypt. He saw the pyramids. Most likely he heard about Ra, the god of the sun; he heard about, Nut goddess of the sky. And just think where he is arriving, to the house of Potiphar, the chief of Pharaoh’s guard (Director of Secret Service).

Before we go further, let me give you an outline made by Carl Temme (PBCC):

A- God blesses Joseph in Potiphar’s house (1-6a)

B- Potiphar’s wife seduces Joseph (6b-10)

C- Potiphar’s wife grabs Joseph’s coat (11-12)

B- Potiphar’s wife accuses Joseph (13-20)

A- God blesses Joseph in prison (21-23)

As you see in the outline, **God has the first and the last word**, and that is comforting. Meanwhile in the middle, there are challenges Joseph will face. So let us dig in.

A. God blesses Joseph in Potiphar's house (1-6a)

Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. ²The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master. ³His master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD caused all that he did to succeed in his hands. ⁴So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. ⁵From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had, in house and field. ⁶So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him he had no concern about anything but the food he ate. (1-6a)

Joseph was sold by his own brothers to the Ishmaelite merchants who in turn sold him to an Egyptian officer. He was treated like a commodity. The officer's name was Potiphar, who was the chief of the bodyguard of Pharaoh. Joseph was the slave of an important person. This was not an accident; this indicates God's hand on Joseph's life.

But it was not easy. He was sold as a slave, he served in a house very foreign to him, he won his master's heart, and he became his master's personal servant. He managed the whole house of the one of the most important people in Egypt. How long this took, we are not sure. Joseph was running with God. God gave him the power and energy to go on despite difficulties. We need to learn from Joseph. He kept going.

The next thing I would stress is that Potiphar witnessed God's presence through Joseph. I hope my lifestyle will witness God's presence in my life. I hope your life will indicate that God is with you. The best testimony is when people see God in your life.

Eventually Joseph became the most trusted person in Potiphar's house. *So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him he had no concern about anything but the food he ate.*(6)

B. Potiphar's wife seduces Joseph (6b-10)

Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. ⁷And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me." ⁸But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master

has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. ⁹He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" ¹⁰And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.(6b-10)

Now the narrator adds an important sentence: Joseph was “**handsome in form and appearance**” (ESV) or “**well-built and handsome**” (NIV) Gen. 39:6b.

The same word was used to describe Rachel. I just want to remind you that the beauty of Sarah, Rebecca or Rachel caused problems. Here we are facing a similar situation.

It is interesting how roles are changed. This time Potiphar’s wife is taking the initiative to start an affair.

Anyone who thinks he will not be tempted, is wrong. We are all going to be tempted.

We read in 1Cor 10:12-13

“¹²So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! ¹³No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”

Here are the two important points from this verse:

- a- Everyone will be tempted
- b- God will protect you so that your temptation has a limit. You can overcome temptation, and this is good news.

-**Jesus was tempted by Satan.** Satan is clever. He tempted Jesus in the desert. Satan knows the timing. Jesus overcame the temptation by quoting from scripture.

WARNING! “When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.” Luke (4:13)

This means that temptation will visit us often, externally or internally.

In the same way for Joseph, the seduction of the woman did not stop. It went on.

-**In verse 8-9, how did Joseph handle temptation?**

“**Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. ⁹He is not**

greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” (Gen 39:8-9ESV)

Notice! Joseph did not **entertain the temptation**. He immediately resisted it by explaining to the woman that he wanted to be loyal:

- a. towards his master: **“my master has no concern about anything in the house,”**
- b. towards his God: **“How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?”**

His master gave him all authority to govern his household, not his wife. We see Joseph’s integrity. But also we see how Joseph wanted not to sin against God. So, Joseph not only defended his case, but also condemned her wrong action. She was violating a trust given to him.

And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her. (Gen 39:10)

What a tragedy that Joseph’s words did not make any impact on the woman; she kept insisting and expressing her desire.

As I said before, Satan left Jesus for a while only to tempt him again later. This woman was insisting. The temptation was there every day.

- I lately read an article, which stated that affairs which destroy marriages mostly begin at work. Joseph was tempted at his workplace. Unfortunately, many relationships start as emotional affairs as people look for someone to talk to at work. Then these develop into physical affairs, which destroy marriages and families, and eventually people’s lives.

- I know a friend who whenever goes on a business trip, takes along his wife’s picture. He puts her picture next to his bed wherever he sleeps. It is an interesting way to resist temptation.

C. Potiphar’s wife grabs Joseph’s coat (11-12)

But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house, ¹² she caught him by his garment, saying, “Lie with me.” But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house. (39:11-12 ESV)

We find here that Joseph’s garment again becomes an issue. The garment of favoritism became garment of grief. Now the new garment that Potiphar gave (head of the salves) to Joseph became the garment of false accusation.

Therefore Joseph:

- He refused to have an affair
- He did not stay where she was; he fled from her.

B` . Potiphar's wife accuses Joseph (13-20)

And as soon as she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled out of the house, ¹⁴ she called to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to laugh at us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. ¹⁵ And as soon as he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried out, he left his garment beside me and fled and got out of the house." ¹⁶ Then she laid up his garment by her until his master came home, ¹⁷ and she told him the same story, saying, "The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to laugh at me. ¹⁸ But as soon as I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment beside me and fled out of the house."

¹⁹ As soon as his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, "This is the way your servant treated me," his anger was kindled. ²⁰ And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison. (13-20)

Finally Potiphar's wife found a way to put Joseph in big trouble.

Please notice that this woman was insisting on this temptation. She was **focusing only on this thing**. And let me tell you something, when you focus only on one thing, you **will lose your perspective**. She did not care; she was ready to do anything to satisfy her desire.

Looking at and gazing on one thing is not healthy.

- **Eve** was gazing only on the forbidden fruit. "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye..." (Gen 3:6)

- **David lost his** perspective when he saw Beersheba bathing.

Flee from temptation. Joseph did.

1 Cor. 6:18 "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body."

When I go to Costco, I quickly walk away from the section of flat TV's.

We cannot get away with the sin that is not confessed or dealt with. We think if we are not caught, everything will be smooth; no one will know.

This is very childish. Children think that way. Let us not put our heads in the sand. (Bedouin's date illustration)

God knows our lives. God exposes our sin eventually. We cannot hide from God.

Let me remind you how Joseph dealt with temptation:

- He fled from temptation by focusing on God. He had a priority. He had standards of ethical choices.
- He refused to listen to her.
- He kept himself as pure as possible.

Unfortunately, Potiphar's wife got hold of Joseph's garment in her hand. She used it as "evidence."

False accusation and betrayal.

Now notice please that the penalty of such action was death. The Bible does not say why Potiphar did not put Joseph to death. I wonder if he liked Joseph. I wonder if he knew his wife. I see God's hand in protecting Joseph. Again we see Joseph in the "pit", betrayed and falsely accused. Think about Joseph. "What did I do wrong? Why am I back in the 'pit'? What is going on, God?"

A`. God blessed Joseph in the prison (39:21-23)

But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love. (39:21)

Remember, we read again, "the Lord is with Joseph and showed STEADFAST LOVE, MERCY to him." The word in Hebrew is *Hesed*. An important characteristic of God showing kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and mercy. Do you see the hand of God on Joseph, preparing him for later years? We will elaborate next week.*

What can we conclude? Application:

1. God is with you.

Joseph trusted God is his decisions. And God was with him in every action. God is with us. God knows our life and He is there in the midst of it. If there is pain and suffering, that does not mean God is absent. God is right there. God feels my pain, and God hates sin. His Son Jesus Christ came and carried our sin and pain. We are not alone when we are in unfair circumstances.

This is very important. Put this in your head. God is there in my suffering. In his book "The Problem of Pain," C.S. Lewis says, "God whispers in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain."

2. Choose Integrity

I see nobility in Joseph. He kept his promise to his boss, to God and to himself. In today's society instead of learning to be responsible for our actions, we try to blame others. Life is not fair; we will face similar situations. With the help of our Lord Jesus, I can face today's and tomorrow's challenges.

3. Flee Temptation

Temptation will come and knock our door. **Resistance starts from our mind.**

Romans 12:2 (renew your mind everyday with Christ). Do not play with fire.

Joseph fled from temptation, as much as he could. Do not entertain "temptation"; it will fire back at you.

Therefore, examine and see from what areas, things, people...you need to flee from. (Books, internet, apps, people, places...)

Temptations are around us. **God will help those who allows God to interfere to their lives.** God promised us that He will help us to go through these, and He will give us a way to conquer them. **But those who trust in God.**

4. You can become God's blessing

Because of Joseph, Potiphar's house was blessed. We read: the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had, in house and field.

Are you blessing in your environment?

Let us learn from the story that devil does not have the final word or the first.

God has the first and the final word.

Amen

**Joseph is back to the prison- a new "school" for Joseph to be trained, a new place where he became the chief of the prisoners. In Potiphar's house, he learned leadership. Most likely he met the important leaders of Egypt. Now in jail, he learned further how to become a leader. Again, the narrator reminds that God is in control. He is the one who is charge helping Joseph to be successful. Joseph rises again to top, even in jail.*