

HOW OUR FAITH REVEALS ITSELF

Heb 11:22

INTRO

- In Faith's Hall of Fame we've come to **Joseph** ... the great-grandson of Abraham; grandson of Isaac, and the **11th** son of **Jacob**
 - Some **25%** of the Book of Genesis is devoted to the life of **Joseph ...**
 - In the Fall of 2015 ... we covered his life in a **13-part** series
 - Today ~~ I have **35 mins !!**
- I think the Holy Spirit had Moses write so much about this saint because he teaches many practical lessons which can help us in our **walk with God**
 - Joseph's response to envy, injustice, temptation, and cruelty ~ as well as the use of his God-given talents & power ~ are detailed in the chapters of Genesis
 - Let's briefly explore his life ... beginning with:

JOSEPH'S SUPPRESSION

- Joseph was the first child of Rachel ... and was Jacob's favorite: **Gen 37:3**
 - The other sons didn't respond well to Jacob's preference for Joseph ... **V 4**
- And when Joseph was **17** ~ he had a dream in which he ruled over his brothers
 - When they heard him share the dream ... they decided to get rid of him
- On the surface this might seem a bit extreme ~ however Scripture shares three times that the older boys **hated** their younger brother (Gen 37:4, 5, 8)
 - **Repetition** is a powerful tool used by writers / thinkers throughout history
 - A famous example is **Martin Luther King, Jr's "I Have a Dream"** speech (if you've never heard it - watch on YouTube)
- Joseph's older brothers were shepherds in the land of Canaan ... and one day their father sent Joseph to find them ~~ **Vs 18 - 20**

- Remember the older brothers **hated** Joseph - in truth ... they were **envious** of him
 - All of us from time to time ... are tempted to be envious because we see someone who prospers ~ is promoted ~ or received an honor we "deserve"
 - **16 SPTG/CD**
 - **James 3:14** then **16**
- Because his older brothers yielded to this temptation ~ Joseph was sold as a slave to Midianite merchants ... who took him to Egypt
 - Brothers returned to Jacob with Joseph's coat stained w/ goat's blood and told their father to his beloved son was killed by a ferocious animal
- **So we come to:**

JOSEPH'S INCARCERATION

- **Gen 39:1 – 5**
 - **Joseph** proved to be such a good and honest administrator ... **Potiphar** put him in charge of all that he owned [Egyptians viewed Jews as a **lower** class]
 - **God** was really **blessing** Joseph while he was in Egypt ~~ but when God is blessing His Children – the **devil** often tries to bring **us down**
 - This certainly was true in Joseph's case
- **Vs 6, 7**
 - FYI ... this is the first recorded case of sexual harassment in the workplace
 - Joseph w/ his well-developed, positive character ~ rejected her advances
 - However **Satan** seldom removes the temptations he tempts us with
 - **Vs 12 – 15**
 - Joseph lost his coat ~ but kept his character intact
- **Oscar Wilde** is said to have coined the phrase: **No good deed goes unpunished**
 - Certainly **not** a Biblical concept ... much antidotal evidence that it is **not** true

- However - Potiphar's wife was enraged by Joseph's rejection and made up lies @ him
 - As a result ... Joseph was put in prison for a crime he **didn't** commit
 - There he **didn't** lose heart ... nor his faith ~ and again did such a good job accomplishing his duties - he was put in charge of the whole prison
- He made friends with the Pharaoh's (**King**) baker and cupbearer (**butler**)
 - When each of them had a dream ... Joseph tried to them by interpreting the dreams for them - **Gen 40:14**
 - **No good deed goes unpunished** ... **V 23**
 - As a result ... Joseph spent two more years in prison
- **We learn** some **eternal truths** from the life of **Joseph**
 - For example:
 - **Jealous** people will try to hurt you ...
 - **Immoral** people will try to defile you ...
 - **Selfish** people will try to use you **John 15:18, 19**
- Joseph was **17** yrs old when his brothers sold him into slavery ...
 - And IAW **Gen 41:46** ... **30** yrs of age when we was released prison
 - For **13 yrs** Joseph had to **wait** on the Lord - during the prime yrs of life
 - **??** How many of us can claim to be blessed with patience
- There are times for all of us when we think life isn't fair ~~ some of us might be thinking that right now
 - When we fall into this often used **trap of the devil** ...
 - ... let us ponder on the life of Joseph ~ and remember **Gal 6:9, 10**
- **Example from SOP ... EW – 268:** *Satan took advantage of the covetous, selfish disposition of **Judas** and led him to murmur when Mary poured the costly ointment upon Jesus. Judas looked upon this as a great waste, and declared that the ointment might*

have been sold and given to the poor. He cared **not** for the poor, but considered the liberal offering to Jesus extravagant. Judas prized his Lord just enough to sell Him for a few pieces of silver. And I saw that there were some like Judas among those who profess to be waiting for their Lord. **Satan** controls them, but they know it not. God cannot approve of the least degree of covetousness or selfishness, and He abhors the prayers and exhortations of those who indulge these evil traits. As **Satan** sees that his time is short, he leads (us) to be more and more selfish and covetous, and then (he gloats) as he sees (us) wrapped up in (ourselves) ... (mean) and selfish. **If** the eyes of such could be opened, they would see **Satan** in hellish triumph, exulting over them and laughing at the folly of those who accept his suggestions and enter his snares.

TRAN: After Joseph's SUPPRESSION and INCRACERATION ... we come to:

JOSEPH'S ELEVATION

- When the **Pharaoh** had dreams which his counselors couldn't interpret ... the **butler** told him that Joseph could interpret dreams
 - **Joseph** was summoned to decode the dream ... he shared there'd be 7 yrs of plentiful harvests ~ followed by 7 yrs of devastating famine
 - Because of Joseph's honest and hard work ~~ eventually he was promoted to preside over all who had **used** - **abused** - and **hurt** him
 - In power and authority ... he was second only to Pharaoh himself
- **Here's a point I don't want us to miss** ...
 - ... Joseph's character was revealed by the fact he did the best he could ~ regardless of the circumstances
 - The quality of our work reveals our character - there's a direct relationship between substandard work and a poor character
 - Although Joseph never had the pleasure of reading it ... am confident he knew the truth found in **Colossians 3:23**

TRAN: Joseph supervised the plan to store food during the years of plenty and distribute it during the famine ... others came to Egypt for food ~~ including Joseph's brothers

Which brings us to:

JOSEPH'S INVESTIGATION

- When Joseph's brothers came to Egypt ~ they stood in line to buy food from him
 - He was 40 yrs old ... it had been 23 yrs since his brothers sold him into slavery
 - His appearance ~ speech ~ and attire were now Egyptian: **Gen 42:8**
- Joseph decided to test his brothers to see if they had changed
 - He accused them of being spies ~ but sold them some grain with the stipulation that Simoen stay as a hostage ...
 - Until they brought their youngest brother - **Benjamin** - to Egypt
- After returning with Benjamin and purchasing more grain ... the brothers started home
 - One their way ... one of Joseph's servants caught up with them and found a silver cup which had been "planted" in Benjamin's bag
 - The brothers were forced to return to face Joseph ~~ **Gen 44:14 – 17**
- A rather moving event how occurs ... **Vs 30 – 34**
 - The import of this touched Joseph's heart: **Gen 45:1, 2**
 - Decades of **loneliness** ~ **pain** ~ and **emotional** hurt was released
- Tears are streaming down his face with Joseph declares: **V 3**
 - His brothers stood speechless and terrified because they knew Joseph could order their immediate execution ~~ they were painfully aware of their guilt
 - But Joseph made an amazing statement of faith ~ **Vs 7, 8a**
- *Joseph's life reminds us ... adverse circumstances often have a hidden purpose*
 - Usually we discover the purpose long after the pain has passed
 - **Never judge** the path God leads you down ... until we get to the **end**

- When Joseph got to the end of his life ~ let's notice how he described to his brothers the pat God lead him down: **Gen 50:20**

TRAN: After Joseph's suppression, incarceration, elevation, and investigation ... we'll close by looking at:

JOSEPH'S SUPPLICATION

- He lived to be **120** ... and when he sensed he was about to die he shared - **V 24**
 - Though his words were **few** ~ they contained a very clear expression of his deep faith in God's promise
 - Like his father Jacob ... Joseph made a request of his children: **V 25**
 - Although his body was in Egypt his mind – heart were back "**home**"
 - 300 yrs after his death ~ as Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt ~ ~~Exodus 13:19~~ says they took Joseph **home**
- Living a life which pleases god isn't a matter of circumstances or opportunities ...
 - A faith which pleases god reveals itself in one's character
 - A character which leads one to live for God every day ~ regardless of our situation
 - A practical definition of **character** ... doing the right thing {as defined by God} when **no one** is watching
 - No one ... except God

Rom 5:4

Mind, Character & Personality of, Vol 2, pg 659

- *For every class of temptations there is a remedy. We are not left to ourselves to fight the battle against **self** and our **sinful natures** in our own finite strength. **Jesus** is a mighty helper ... a never failing support. The mind must be restrained and not allowed to wander. It should be trained to dwell upon the Scriptures Portions of Scripture ... may be committed to memory, to be repeated when Satan comes with his temptations. When Satan would lead the mind to dwell upon earthly and sensual things ---- he is most effectually resisted with: **IT IS WRITTEN.***