

FAITH SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

January 17, 2009

When Life Seems Unfair

Focal Passage: Genesis 39

Cross References: Ephesians 6:5-8; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Romans 8:28; James 1:2-4

Key Vs: Gen 39:2 *The LORD was with Joseph and he prospered...*

Central Idea: In the midst of trying and unfair situations, God proved His faithfulness to Joseph.

Lesson Idea: When we are in trying and hard situations we must stay faithful to God and trust Him to bless us and use us in spite of the hardships.

Historical Context: Jacob had 12 sons but his favorite was Joseph. His brothers became jealous and plotted to kill him. By the providence of God, they didn't kill but sold him to slave traders who traveled to Egypt. Genesis 39 begins with Joseph being sold to Potiphar, an official of Pharaoh.

Gen 39:1-6

The Trustworthy Servant

1 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there.

2 The LORD was with Joseph and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. 3 When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, 4 Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. 5 From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. 6 So he left in Joseph's care everything he had; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.

QUESTIONS:

Even though Joseph had been betrayed by his brothers and sold into slavery, vs. 2 says that "the LORD was with Joseph and he prospered." If someone had been looking at his circumstances, would it look like the LORD was with Him?

How do you measure success? What would success look like in your life by God's standards?

Who reaped the benefits of Joseph's success?

How would others benefit from the LORD prospering your life?

Gen 39:6b-15

The Faithful One was Framed

Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, 7 and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"

8 But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. 9 No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" 10 And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

11 One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. 12 She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.

13 When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, 14 she called her household servants. "Look," she said to them, "this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. 15 When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

QUESTIONS

What reasons does Joseph give for not giving into Potiphar wife's advances?

Joseph spoke of the importance of keeping the trust of his owner and also not sinning against God. How trustworthy are you at your place of employment? (see Eph. 6:5-8) How can you better your reputation at work?

Joseph refused to sin against the LORD by having an affair. Adultery, fornication, and other sexual sins are prevalent in Princeton, TX. Spend some time in prayer asking the LORD to guard your heart against sin, but also that God would break Satan's hold in our community.

In vs. 12 Joseph "ran" away from the temptation. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. God always provides a way of escape from sin. Are there some temptations in your life that you need to "run" from? How can you avoid those temptations?

Gen 39:16-23

Prospering in Prison

16 She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home. 17 Then she told him this story: "That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. 18 But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

19 When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, "This is how your slave treated me," he burned with anger. 20 Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined.

But while Joseph was there in the prison, 21 the LORD was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. 22 So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. 23 The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

QUESTIONS

Have you ever been accused of something falsely? How did it make you feel? How do you think Joseph felt?

How did Joseph respond differently from how most people would respond if they were falsely imprisoned?

Vs. 21 says that the LORD was with Joseph while he was in prison. How can that bring comfort to us when we are in hard situations?

APPLICATION

Read Romans 8:28 and James 1:2-4. How should we respond to the difficult situations of our lives?

The bad things that happened to Joseph (sold by his brothers, falsely imprisoned by Potiphar, etc.) ultimately led to him being in position to interpret Pharaoh's dreams and rise to power in Egypt (Gen 41ff.). Can you see God's providence in working all of Joseph's various situations for Joseph's good and God's glory? When you look back at your life, how has God used difficult situations to glorify Himself and to work good in your life?

Are you willing to pray that God would allow any situations in your life that would help bring you closer to Him and accomplish His goals for your life? Consider carefully and prayerfully and commit to His Lordship over your entire life.

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Focal Passage: Genesis 39

Read the Bible Through

Highlights of the Week:

January 11-17, 2010

Gen 37: Joseph's Dream and betrayal by his brothers

Gen 38: Judah and Tamar (see Matthew 1:3)

Gen 39: False charges by the wife of Potiphar put Joseph in prison

Gen 40-41: God gives Joseph the ability to interpret dreams

Gen 42-45: Reconciliation with his brothers and family saved from famine

Gen 46-47: Israel moves to Egypt

Gen 48-49: The blessings of Israel on his sons

Gen 50: The death of Israel and Joseph

Exodus 2: Birth and Basket of Moses

Exodus 3-4: Burning Bush and Mission of Moses

January 17th is

Sanctity of Life Sunday

Pray for an end to abortion and the devastation it causes. Pray for those whose lives have been affected by the pain of abortion. Pray that our nation will honor all life as a gift from God.

Bible in a Year Daily Readings

January 2009

Jan 1 Genesis 1 - 4

Jan 2 Genesis 5 - 8

Jan 3 Genesis 9 - 12

Jan 4 Genesis 13 - 17

Jan 5 Genesis 18 - 20

Jan 6 Genesis 21 - 23

Jan 7 Genesis 24 - 25

Jan 8 Genesis 26 - 28

Jan 9 Genesis 29 - 31

Jan 10 Genesis 32 - 35

Jan 11 Genesis 36 - 38

Jan 12 Genesis 39 - 41

Jan 13 Genesis 42 - 43

Jan 14 Genesis 44 - 46

Jan 15 Genesis 47 - 50

Jan 16 Exodus 1 - 4

Jan 17 Exodus 5 - 7

Jan 18 Exodus 8 - 10

Jan 19 Exodus 11 - 13

Jan 20 Exodus 14 - 16

Jan 21 Exodus 17 - 20

Jan 22 Exodus 21 - 23

Jan 23 Exodus 24 - 27

Jan 24 Exodus 28 - 30

Jan 25 Exodus 31 - 34

Jan 26 Exodus 35 - 37

Jan 27 Exodus 38 - 40

Jan 28 Leviticus 1 - 4

Jan 29 Leviticus 5 - 7

Jan 30 Leviticus 8 - 10

Jan 31 Leviticus 11 - 13

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