

Jsph 02 – God is At Work - Gen 39:1-6

(with a review of Ch 38)

There've been times in ea of our lives
when things just seem totally "out of control"

Maybe you're in a time like that right now

We - as a church (& individually) have gone thru both
times of relative calm

& times of extreme hectic-ness

both times of relative peace -

& times of extreme spiritual warfare

& if you are in one of those

"out of control" "hectic" or "extreme" times right now . . .

Then pls listen carefully today

Because God hasn't stepped aside - or gone on a break

He is at work - right now

right in the midst of your

out of control - hectic - or "extreme" time

God is at work - for your good - AND -

God is at work to bring about His purpose & plan for you

HOWEVER - that does NOT mean -

you don't have choices to make

choices that can greatly affect your life (& those around you)

1 of the greatest "**Double-Edged**" **lessons**
we learn from the life of Joseph - IS . . .

#1) **God is at work** - in a way we can't see -
for a purpose we aren't aware of

& #2) **We must decide** whether to **JOIN HIM** or **NOT**

So Let's Pray - & we'll continue to **see this lesson** develop

Last week - we met Joseph in **Gen Ch 37**

But we kinda **focused on his father** - Jacob

So today - we need to **review** some of the Key Events
(Pls Get The 1st MSG)

V.3 - Jacob **loved Joseph more** than any of his other sons

V.3 - The infamous **Coat of Many Colors**

V.4 - Joseph's Brothers **Hated him** because of the **favoritism** (& **robe**)

Then in Gen 37:5 - ESV

*5 Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers
they **hated him even more**. (more than they already did)*

This is when Joseph told his brothers (& then his father)
that they would someday be **bowing down to him**

& when Joseph was **caught up in his dreams** -

We can be pretty sure . . .

He wasn't expecting - the attempted murder - the pit,

& being sold into slavery - **ALL at the hands** of his own brothers

We can pretty much assume - that Joseph was good & ready for everyone to start bowing down to him anytime

But then - in V.13 - Jacob makes the mistake of sending Joseph off to check on his brothers

& we pick up our review in Gen 37:19-20 - ESV

19 They [his brothers] said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer.

20 Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams."

But then - God moved on Rueben - to spare Joseph's life
& then - God moved on Judah - to spare his life again

& picking up in V.28 (Gen 37) - ESV

28 Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt.

Now - IF you know the story - the whole attempted murder - thrown in the pit - sold into slavery thing
ALL lines up with God's Plan perfectly

There's only one problem - Joseph DIDN'T know the story

& in Joseph's mind - *because Joseph is just like us . . .*

Just when he was expecting to be
lifted up - looked up to - made something

JUST THEN - his dreams were **totally shattered**
*there was no hope of his dreams coming true **NOW***

& at the bottom of the pit (literally) all Joseph could do
was **cry out to God** . . .

oh, wait a minute - cry out to God . . .
*maybe this **IS** working for Joseph's **Good***

God says I have **such a Great Plan** for your life -
1st your brothers are going to *try to murder you*
then *throw you into a pit* to die
then *sell you into slavery* . . .

& then you'll be *hailed off to a pagan land*
& **you'll be separated** from everything you know . . .
ISN'T THAT GREAT !

& we're like *"well God, if you don't mind - I'd like to go straight to that -
everyone's going to bow down to me part"*

But see - God doesn't take us from A - right to Z -
& he doesn't even show us from A - right to Z - - - **WHY ?**

because there are 24 other letters - **in-between** A & Z

& it is for Your Good & **it is for God's Glory** -
that you go thru every one of those letters . . .

God says Dave - after A, then there's B,
& after B, then there's C -

& guess what's after C. Dave - - well after C, then there's . . . D

Oh . . . & Z, the one you're really waiting for,
well that comes all the way after Y
& that's still 21 letters away

We think we're ready - RIGHT NOW!
oh yeah God, I'm ready - I'm good to go

Yep . . . it's time for everyone to start recognizing just who I am !!

& God says well, there might be just a few more little steps
to make you . . . (let's say) . . . MOLDABLE !

But we think so highly of ourselves
that if something BAD is happening to us
then certainly God must be making a mistake

How could God allow THAT to happen to ME !!!???

Somehow we think God is only at work in our lives
when everything's GOOD

THAT - is a man-centered fallacy

God is at work - right now - right in the midst of your situation
FOR YOUR GOOD !

He has not left you - He is not angry at you -
He's molding, shaping, & preparing you

& the only question is - Are you going to JOIN HIM - or FIGHT HIM

We somehow think our preparation should **resemble a Day Spa**

Oh yes, ***prepare me Lord***, make me ready to do your work,
only the best preparation will do for preparing **me**

unfortunately that is **Totally Egotistical**

because **God is saying** - well, it's *kinda like a Day Spa*
only kinda more like a **Chain-Gang** - in a **Sweat Room** - **Sauna**

God **wants to prepare you** for the plan He has for you . . .

only **His preparation** is very probably - **NOT** *what you think* -
& it's probably - **NOT** what *you'd like it to be*

THAT is why - He's **the potter**, & we are **the clay**

Jospeh had **NO WAY** of knowing what God was doing
or **IF** God was **doing anything** -
or **IF** God **even knew** what was **happening** to Him

but God **WAS** at work -
behind the clouds of Joseph's **trials** - *God was at work*

& if you love God

then you have a **loving, caring, All-wise, All-powerful** God . . .

Who is **at work** - **on your behalf** - for **Your good** & for **His Glory**

He **hasn't forsaken you**, He's **at work** for **your good** -
just **not in a way** that you **can even** "*comprehend*"

But So often - when His **work of Preparation**

"really begins" - in our lives

It feels kinda like **Hell-Week** at *Football camp* - doesn't it

It doesn't **HAVE to be** this way

& - **for you** - *I hope it's not . . .*

But for me . . . I felt like I was at the bottom of a pit

& *God had forsaken me*

& **we can be sure** - That's **exactly** what *Joseph was feeling*

We get a glimpse at the drama of the story

by skipping way ahead . . .

Some **25 yrs later** -

the brothers were **still carrying** the *guilt of their sin*

& in them *re-living their guilt* - we **get some insight** into that day

Gen 42:21 - ESV

21 Then they [his brothers] said to one another, "In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he begged us and we did not listen. . .

Wow - we saw the **distress of his soul**,

when he begged us and we did not listen. . .

Guys - Joseph **wasn't going quietly**

He was *Distressed in his soul* - & *Begging for mercy*

he would've pleaded with his brothers on every ground

for the sake of their father

for the sake of the family

for the sake of God . . .

but all his pleading would've gone unheard . . .

Because God had to get Joseph into a place

where he cried out to God alone

where he trusted God alone

& the best place (the only place) Joseph could learn that -
was in the same place you & I most often learn it . . .

At the bottom of a pit !

But Wait - we need to "Insert" a little more HOPE here . . .

Read with me what F.B. Meyer says at this point;

"Little did [Joseph] think then, that hereafter he should look back on this day as one of the most gracious links in a chain of loving providences; . . . It is very sweet, as life passes by, to be able to look back on dark and mysterious events, and to trace the hand of God where we once saw only the malice and cruelty of man."

Joseph is Crying Out

& Learning to Cling to God Alone

& God is AT WORK - For Joseph's Good, & God's Good Purpose

Now - **Gen Ch 38** - steps away to look at Joseph's brother Judah
& his own **dysfunctional** family life . . .

& then - **we pick up** Joseph's life again - in **Gen 39**

Gen 39:1 - ESV

1 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.

The **favoured son** of Jacob - **Mr. Coat of Many Colors**
had been **sold** as a **common slave**

& Tho **not dying** in a pit
Joseph **was facing** a **dreadful & uncertain** future

first sold to hardened **salve traders**
then **re-sold** in Egypt - like a **piece of merchandise**

Joseph was now - **way - way - out of his element**

He had come from a sheep-herding family in the hills
to the **Palace of the Pharaoh**
under the "**Captain of the Guard**"

He **did not know** the **language - culture - surroundings**
& this guy - **Potiphar** - was **no one to mess with**

Potiphar was "*The Captain of the Guard*"

Which was the Pharaoh's *Royal Body Guard*
Who also **doubled** as - *The Royal Executioners*

Potiphar would've been an **Elite Officer** of Pharaoh
he would've **lived** in a **Grand Palace** . . .

& in a way we could **never understand** - or **design**
Joseph ended up a **slave there !**

we don't know how much **time** passes
between **Gen 39:1** - & **the verses** that follow

But we know One Crucial truth
that **we must learn** from the life of Joseph
It's **5 KEY WORDS** - at the beginning of **V.2** . . .

Gen 39:2 - ESV

2 The Lord was with Joseph, . . .

YES ! - ALL these terrible things **had happened** to Joseph
BUT ! - **The LORD was WITH Joseph**

Joseph was **NOT** abandoned, forsaken, nor forgotten
The LORD was WITH Joseph

HOWEVER - as we mentioned at the beginning -
we must **ALSO LEARN** - from the life of Joseph . . .

Joseph had to JOIN GOD - in what God was doing
He couldn't **Fight God** - **Rebel** - or go **Whine** in the corner . . .

Joseph had to **'Step-Up'** - & **DO** what was right
he **had to live** as a man of **integrity** - *no matter his situation*

& **we'll see** Much More of that - as **we go thru** Joseph's life

But right here - in these next Vs's - we see

- 1) The **Miracle** of God's **Sovereignty** - &
- 2) The **Requirement** of our **Responsibility**
in **whatever situation** we find ourselves in

Gen 39:2-3

2 The Lord was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master.

3 His master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord caused all that he did to succeed in his hands.

The Lord **was with Joseph**

The Lord **caused all** that Joseph **DID** to succeed

But Every day - Joseph had a **decision to make** - *a role to play*

He could **join God** in what **God was doing** . . .

Or - he could **go sit in the corner** & **pout**
because God let his **pretty robe** get **taken away**
by his big bad brothers

The Lord was **with** Joseph - **The Lord** had a **great plan** for Joseph
BUT - *Joseph still had a part to play*

He had to **wake up** each day - & **be a man** of **integrity** - & **WORK**
& then the Lord **caused all** that he **did** to succeed

& that is a perfect REASON - to take Col 3:17 seriously → →

Col 3:17 - ESV

17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Whatever your circumstance is - **Do your work** as Unto the Lord & **let Him** cause it to succeed !!!

I promise you - if you will **tackle that Circumstance** you're In **as if you're doing it** for the Lord Jesus Christ Himself . . .

Then the Lord will give you **favor** **in the sight** of those around you !

Gen 39:4 - ESV

4 So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him [NLT - made Joseph his personal attendant], ***and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had.***

Wait a minute - Something's starting to change

Suddenly Joseph - the cry baby of his father's house **was in charge** of all that this **Captain** of **Pharaoh's palace** had - & that would've been - a lot of stuff

Something has happened to this young man !!!

Something that **NEVER** could've happened **back** in his **coddled** family environment

God was doing something **BIG** & Joseph was **joining Him** in it

Joseph was working **WITH** God - not **AGAINST** Him

God's plan was on-the-move
& **Joseph** was **joining God** in His Plan

Gen 39:5-6A

5 From 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.

6 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. . .
[we'll stop there]

Pls Look Carefully Here

The Lord **blessed** the **Unbelievers house**
for the sake of the **Believer** - who was working for him

Because of God's Plan -
& **Because Joseph** was Joining God (by working w/ Him)

God had brought Joseph **From the PIT - To the PALACE**
Praise the Lord !

→ → →

NOW - Does this mean - God is **DONE** w/ Joseph's preparation - **NO!**

But Joseph has come a long way

from **thinking** that God had **Abandoned** him in a **pit**
to **seeing** God **Bless him** in the **palace**

& if we'll **stay with Joseph** thru-out his life - We'll learn

in **ALL THINGS** - - God is **AT WORK**

For **Our Good** - & For **His Glory**

*"Behind our life the Weaver stands
And works his wondrous will;
We leave it all in his wise hands,
And trust his perfect skill
Should mystery enshroud his plan,
And our short sight be dim,
We will not try the whole to scan,
But leave each thread to Him."*

CHARLES MURRAY

Let's Pray