

Sermon Notes 6/27/21

“The Temptation of Joseph”

How should we respond to Genesis chapter 39?

1. _____ the Lord in everything we do.
Genesis 39:3-4
Colossians 3:23-24
2. _____ in our struggle against sin.
Genesis 39:10
Hebrews 12:1-4
3. _____ God’s purpose in every trial.
Genesis 39:21-22
James 1:2-4
4. _____ the presence of God.
Genesis 39:23
Philippians 2:12-13



Joseph ran away from Potiphar’s wife.

Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 39: June 27 – July 4

Genesis 39

What should we do when things go from bad to worse and it feels like God has abandoned us? In Genesis 39, we pick up the story of Joseph where we left him at the end of chapter 37. His older brothers sold Joseph into slavery to a caravan of Ishmaelites. Joseph was taken to Egypt, but that was just the beginning of his problems. When Joseph refuses to give in to sinful temptations he is rewarded with false accusations and prison. However, Joseph continues to trust in the LORD, even when things go from bad to worse.

Read Genesis 39:1-23

1. Who purchased Joseph after the Ishmaelites took him to Egypt? (39:1)

As we continue to read about the trials Joseph faced, we will see several parallels to the suffering Jesus endured for us. Kent Hughes writes,

We have to willfully close our eyes not to see bold hints of Jesus in the life of Joseph, because Jesus too was sold and delivered up by sinful men with whom he lived. Also, when suffering untold agonies, he forgave them, even as he forgives our sins today. And today he calls his own people "brothers" and "sisters" and "fellow heirs," much like Joseph did with his own. Joseph was a monumental man living thousands of years before Jesus, but so much like him.¹

2. Why did Joseph prosper in verse 2?

3. What did Potiphar notice about Joseph in verse 3?

4. How did Potiphar promote Joseph in verse 4?

5. According to verse 5, when and why did the LORD start blessing Potiphar?

6. How much responsibility did Potiphar entrust to Joseph? (39:6)

¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 459-460.

7. How does verse 6 describe Joseph's physical appearance?
8. What did Potiphar's wife ask Joseph to do in verse 7?
9. What reasons did Joseph give for refusing to go to bed with Potiphar's wife? (39:8-9)

Derek Kidner shares the following insights:

Joseph's reasons for refusal (8, 9) were those that another man might have given for yielding, so neutral is the force of circumstances. His freedom from supervision and his rapid promotion, which have corrupted other stewards (cf. Isa. 22:15-25; Luke 16:1ff.), and his realization that one realm only (9) was barred to him (which others, from Eve onwards, have construed as a frustration) were all arguments to him for loyalty.²

10. How did Joseph respond to Potiphar's wife when she continued to tempt him day after day? (39:10)

The contrast between Judah's immorality in the previous chapter and Joseph's consistent moral character in the present chapter is striking. Judah fell into sexual sin with Tamar the first and only time the temptation was present (38:16). Joseph, however, continued to resist the temptation "day after day." Paul Kissling observes,

It is noteworthy that the temptation was not offered as a one-time impulse. Potiphar's wife spoke to Joseph day after day. He refused day after day and eventually refused to... even be [near] her. One senses either her desperation or her blatant sexual immorality. Whatever the origins of her behavior, Joseph shows his moral integrity by resisting the temptation each and every time.³

11. What did Joseph do when Potiphar's wife grabbed him by the cloak and tried to force him to come to bed with her? (39:11-12)

² Derek Kidner, *Genesis* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 201-202.

³ Paul Kissling, *The College Press NIV Commentary: Genesis Volume 2* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2009), 457.

12. What story did Potiphar's wife tell the servants after Joseph refused her advances and ran away from her? (39:13-15)
13. What did Potiphar's wife do with Joseph's cloak in verse 16?
14. What did Potiphar's wife tell her husband after he came home that day? (39:17-18)
15. How did Potiphar feel about this situation in verse 19?
16. What did Potiphar do with Joseph in verse 20?
17. How did the LORD show that He was still with Joseph even though he was in prison? (39:21)
18. How did the warden promote Joseph even though he was a prisoner? (39:22-23)
19. According to verse 23, why did the warden trust Joseph with so many responsibilities?

Kissling notes,

A prisoner himself, he was nevertheless placed in charge of all the other prisoners. Everything which was done in that prison, Joseph did it. Just like Potiphar, the warden came to trust Joseph so implicitly that he no longer felt the need to manage it himself. The fact that this included everything in the prison is given special emphasis in the Hebrew (אֶת-כָּל-קְאוֹמָהּ), 'ethkolmə'ûmāh, "all, everything"). The narrator gives the same reason for the prison warden's trust in Joseph as he gave in the case of Potiphar. The Lord was with Joseph and made whatever he did in the prison prosper.⁴

20. What steps can you take to keep your thoughts and actions pure?
21. What should you do when someone is making false accusations about you and trying to get you in trouble?
22. In what specific way can you honor God in your work?

⁴ Kissling, 460.