

Committed • Genesis 39:1-10

INTRO • Read vs. • Nepalese Paratroopers

1. True story: In 1964, there was conflict between Malaysia & nearby Indonesia.
2. The Indonesians asked for their allies in Nepal for help.
3. A group of Nepalese soldiers arrived and were asked if they'd serve as *paratroopers*.
4. But never having been trained, they declined.
5. Early the next day their commander sought out his Indonesian counterpart.
6. His men had talked it over & decided to volunteer for the mission on 3 conditions:
 - 1) They'd jump if the ground was soft & with/out any rocks. He was assured the drop zone was a jungle & provided a soft landing.
 - 2) They asked that the plane fly as slow as possible. The Indonesians said that was standard procedure for parachuting troops.
 - 3) The Nepalese requested the plane fly no more than a hundred ft off the ground. The Indonesians said that was way too low. It wouldn't give the chutes time to open.
7. The Nepalese replied, "Oh, you didn't say anything about parachutes! If we have chutes we'll jump anywhere!"

Commitment

1. Courageous men of **commitment** they were.
2. We're taking a look at **commitment** this morning.

Vs1-6 • Sold to Potiphar

¹ Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there.

1. The story of Genesis tracks the life of **Abraham**, his son **Isaac**, then his son **Jacob**.
2. Jacob had 12 sons who became the 12 tribes of Israel which the **rest** of the OT tells the story of.
3. Jacob's 11th son, & by far his favorite, was **Joseph**; whom Genesis now zeros in on.
4. Joe's brothers were so jealous of him, they decided to get rid of him by selling him into slavery.
5. He ended up being sold to an Egyptian named **Potiphar**, head of Pharaoh's bodyguard.

² The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. ³

And his master saw that the Lord *was* with him and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand. ⁴ So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all *that* he had he put under his authority.

1. 3 words gives us the key to why Joseph was successful: V4 = "and served him."
2. It would have been so easy for Joe to be **bitter** at going from a position of **privilege** back home in Canaan to **slave** in some foreigner's house.
3. Most people, given the same circumstances, would be angry at God; or at least sunk in deep depression.
4. Not Joseph! Because he held on to a truth **all** of us need to hold on to as well.
5. We don't know **WHEN** it happened, but at some point in this young man's life, Joe was faced with a choice To believe in God, or not.
 - a. I suggest it was after his brother sold him to the Ishmaelite traders, as they made their way S toward Egypt.
 - b. Joseph had several days to think about what had happened, but more importantly WHY!
 - c. And just like you and I when we're plunged into a major trial, surely he began to question God's will.
 - d. He came face to face with this question: Either the God he'd heard about all his life was real, or He wasn't.
 - e. If God was real, then Joseph needed to believe the whole package he'd heard about Him.
 - 1) He's all powerful, good, and in control.
 - 2) And even though Joseph didn't understand what was going on, he ought to trust God to work it out.
6. Faith means holding on in the dark, confident a glorious dawn will come.
7. I believe Joe came to that place on that trip to Egypt.
8. So when he arrived in Potiphar's house in the role of a slave, he faithfully did the tasks assigned him.

9. He served the God he could not see, by serving someone he could.
10. And God blessed him. Everything he did just worked.
11. It didn't take long before Potiphar recognize his skill and promoted him to being the chief steward over his entire estate.
12. Lots of lessons there for the followers of Jesus.

⁵ So it was, from the time *that* he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field. ⁶ Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate. [STOP]

1. As soon as Joe became Potiphar's chief steward, his entire estate was blessed.
2. V5 is careful to add that the blessing was God's favor **on Joseph**; for his sake.
3. While the world hates God & abuses those who follow Him, much of the blessing it receives is due to God's favor on believers.
 - a. Jesus said as we follow Him, we are the salt & light of the world.
 - b. The world would be much worse off were it not for the blessing believers bring.
 - c. Indeed; that's what makes for the darkness & corruption of the Great Tribulation.
 - d. God has taken the salt & light of the Church out.
4. Well, apart from Joe being a slave and God blessing him, the end of v6 is where the story turns ... Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.

1. The kid's got it all!
 - a. He's spiritually mature.
 - b. He's successful in business.
 - c. He's risen to a place of authority in a powerful man's home.
 - d. And now we learn he could grace the cover of *Egyptian Quarterly*.
2. But even on the best day; he's still a slave.

Vs. 7-18 • Troubles with Mrs. Potiphar

⁷ And it came to pass after these things

1. Some time's gone by. He's risen to his position as chief steward & become a confidant of the powerful Potiphar.
2. BTW – in ch 37, we're told Joe was 17 when all this began.
3. So he's probably right around 19 or 20 at this point. Keep that in mind as we read this . . .

⁷ And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me."

1. As steward, Joe was in close contact with Mrs. Potiphar.
2. She was attracted to him & made it clear she wanted to hook up.
3. We need a little background here.
 - a. According to the customs & culture, what she proposed wasn't unusual.
 - b. Slaves were property to be used & used they were.
 - c. The Greek philosopher Plato expressed the attitude of the ancient world towards slaves when he said they were merely living tools.
 - d. Mrs. Potiphar was allowed a lot of **both** legal & moral latitude in how she chose to use her servants.
 - e. And of course, Joseph knew all that.
 - 1) So, what will his reaction be to her invitation?
 - 2) What will the fine specimen of the young man's response **be** to the most likely attractive Mrs. Potiphar?
 - 3) You've seen the wives of powerful & famous men. Even **ugly** dudes have **lookers** because of their power, wealth & celebrity.
 - f. Joe's far from home & family.
 - 1) He's young, single, and even though a slave, has some real power & authority.
 - 2) The culture & customs all **allow** him to hook up with her.
 - 3) Even more than **allow**, it's **expected** because it would secure his role in the house even more tightly.

⁸ But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what *is* with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. ⁹ *There is* no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you *are* his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

1. Even though custom allowed her to proposition Joe, HE knew it wasn't something her husband approved.
 2. She'd be cheating on him and Joe won't go there.
 1. Joseph's response here is highly instructive.
 2. **FIRST:** Note how *polite* his resistance is to her offer.
 - a. He didn't get all morally superior, though he certainly was.
 - b. He didn't arrogantly *shame* her for her attempted seduction.
 - c. Joseph is much like Jesus in this regard.
 - 1) Sinners were *attracted* to Him because His holiness was humble, not haughty.
 - 2) Jesus saw what sinners *could become* thru His truth & grace & held forth the hope of new life.
 - d. Listen: If your work-mates invite you to Happy Hour, don't screw up your face in disgust, saying while they're sucking down devil juice *you're* going to Bible Study!
 - e. By all means, *go* to study instead of HH; but tell them to be careful & 1 day, invite them to study with you before they head off to HH.
 3. **SECOND:** Joseph was *prepared* for this.
 - a. He had a response all ready when Mrs. Potiphar started her seduction.
 - b. He was a sharp guy and had seen the hungry looks she'd been giving him.
 - c. He knew it was just a matter of time till she invited him to her bed.
 - d. So he'd already worked out what he'd say when it happened.
 - e. When she said, "Lie with me," he whipped out his list and ticked them off
 - 1) It's a betrayal of her husband's trust in him.
 - 2) It's adultery, which is morally wrong.
 - 3) And most important of all, it's a sin against God.
 - f. Let's learn from Joe's example here.
 - 1) Are you going to be tempted? = Of course.
 - 2) And while we don't know ALL the ways we'll be tempted, there are lots of ways we can assume we WILL be.
 - 3) So, decide ahead of time how you're going to deal with it. Have a plan!
 - 4) Don't wait till you're in the grip of temptation to figure out what to do.
 - 5) That man or woman at work whose marriage is a mess and has been asking you for counsel may suggest you meet up after work. What are you going to say?
 - 6) When the cashier gives you change for a 20 rather than the 5 you gave, what are you going to do?
 - 7) When your boss tells you to fudge some numbers on a report; what will you say?
 - g. Planning our response to temptation is a key strategy in spiritual warfare.
 4. So far we've seen Joe was *polite & prepared*.
 5. **THIRD:** And most important—Consider his *priority*.
 - a. Joe was *totally committed to God*.
 - b. To yield to her would be a *sin against Him A compromise* of that commitment.
 - c. He'd come to his total commitment to God on his way to Egypt, *before* arriving in Potiphar's house.
 - d. That *commitment* freed him from anger & resentment toward his brothers.
 - 1) *They* hadn't sent him to Egypt; *God* did!
 - e. Joseph's *commitment* to God delivered him from the soul-crushing bitterness of going from *favored* son to *lowly* slave.
 - f. It empowered him to serve his master, because he saw it as service of God.
 - g. And his *commitment* gave him the resolve to resist Mrs. Potiphar's seduction.
 - 1) Because although no one else might know,
 - 2) God saw, & marked it as wrong.
 6. What a great example Joseph is. His example becomes *even more* inspiring as we read
- ¹⁰ So it was, as she spoke to Joseph *day by day*, that he did not heed her, to lie with her *or* to be with her.
1. She didn't just attempt to seduce him *once*. It went on & on, day after day!

2. When it says he did not heed her, to lie or be with her, it means he never **entertained** the temptation.
 - a. And that's a really good way to phrase it = **Entertaining** a temptation.
 - b. We **welcome** it in and allow it to play out in our minds.
 - c. Fantasize & spend energy & effort imagining it.
 - d. Like a movie we see on the back of our eyelids.
3. Friend, be careful the movies your mind creates don't poison your soul & stir up desires your flesh craves.
 - a. Don't write mental checks your soul can't cash without going bankrupt.
4. Joseph was *committed* to God, and that commitment drew a fence around his life he would not tear down for anything.
 - a. It didn't matter what his **circumstances** were, he was God's man.
 - b. He'd **surrendered** himself to God's keeping.
 - c. What God chose to do with him was up to Him.
 - d. Joseph's duty was simple: Stay *faithful*!
5. Though it wouldn't be written till almost 2000 yrs later, Joseph lived by the principle Paul spells out in Col. 3:17

Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father thru Him.

Conclusion

1. Joe's story goes on and gets really gnarly. But we need to end here today.
2. We'll pick it up at this point in our study Wed.
3. I want to end here as we spend a little more time this morning in worship pondering Joseph's commitment to God and how well it served him in the trials he endured.
 - a. You see, while he's already been through the wringer
 - b. It gets **even worse** for him before he rises to become 2nd in Egypt to Pharaoh.
 - c. And thru it all, Joe's **faith** remained true; his **commitment - uncompromised**.
4. For members of CCO and those who attend regularly, you've picked up a theme we've been in for a few months now.
5. It's the call to trust God when it's difficult; when things are hard.
6. That's been front and center because as your pastor, I have a duty to prepare you for what's coming.
7. Just as Joseph was headed toward the challenge of Egypt and reasoned things out with God, so you & I are headed into the challenge of difficult days.
 - a. We too, need to reason things out.
 - b. The God who went with Joseph goes with us, for Jesus has promised to never leave us.
 - c. He is with us till the end of the age.
 - d. So let's do what Joe did. Be committed to God in all things.
 - e. Let's love & serve the God we cannot see by loving & serving those we can.
 - f. And let's let the blessing of God so cover us it causes those around us to be drawn to Him.