# When Dreams Become Nightmares — Delivery Transcript

**Genesis 37 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, September 22, 2024** · *Living The Dream*

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Go ahead and have a seat. Good morning and welcome to Broadview Baptist church. If you have your Bibles, we're going to open it to the book of Genesis, chapter 37. If you're new to Broadview, we typically preach through books of the Bible, and right now we're preaching through the book of Genesis. And we're at the last character of the book of Genesis, and his name is Joseph. And we're looking at his life. And as I was thinking about how to frame his life and how to think about our message today I decided to go with the series living the dream because it's a phrase that I find myself using a little bit tongue in cheek every now and then when someone will ask me, hey, how's it going today?

I'll say things like, well, I'm just living the dream. And what I mean by that is I'm technically not living the dream. I'm like living a life that's in a lot of ways what I've always hoped to have. I'm married, I've got three kids. We were able to just buy some some land. We have a have a awesome job I love and find great satisfaction in but there's just some weeks that stink, you know, and you're doing your thing and life is just not panning out like you thought it was going to pan out, and there's a gap between.

What you thought would be and what your current experience is and that's you know you're just living the dream. I was actually literally thinking that last night. We put some fence up on our property. And it's kind of like when you mow the yard you feel really satisfied because you know, you did you did all of it and it's completed and nice and clean and we went to Cotton Patch and had dinner with my dad and my middle brother and it was just a s just they just nailed the I got the ranch hand.

They just nailed that hamburger patty. I mean the brown gravy. Everything was perfect. And I was going home feeling so good about life and I was picking up the tools and cleaning up around where we had made that little catch pen for the sheep. And it was just dark enough where you couldn't really see really great in front of you. And I hear this rattlesnake. I mean

big old monster rattlesnake rattling his tail and I said a word I shouldn't have said and I jumped up and out of the heart the mouth speaks they say so I had some some I had some talking to do with Jesus on that, but I walked away from that experience going, living the dream.

Here we are, living the dream because I d you know that was our dream to have land and all this stuff, but rattlesnakes come with the land. So sometimes you have a dream and things don't quite pan out the way. You thought they were going to pan out. And there's no real better example of that than Genesis chapter 37, the life of Joseph. He is pursuing God's dream for his life and his dream end up ends up becoming a nightmare. And there's a lot of people who pursue their dreams for their life.

It's kind of piped into us, you know, in an early age here in America. Pursue your dreams. You can do anything you want. And we idolize and kind of think of people who reach their dreams. We kind of that's some kind of nirvana or some kind of salvation. But what you realize is when you look at those people's lives, and sometimes they'll even be a little bit honest and open up about the fact that even though they have achieved their dreams, it isn't what they thought it was going to be.

Their dreams aren't quite as satisfying as they thought they were going to be. And then there's guys like that was John D. Rockefeller after his first million, someone asked him how much money is enough. And he said, just a little bit more, just a little bit more. And that's how a lot of people when they get to their dreams, it's just not enough. I want a little bit more, a little bit more. And then those people who pursue God's will for their life and they're pursuing a God dream in their life sometimes even in pursuing the will of God for their life they find themselves in a nightmare.

So what do you do when your life dream becomes a living nightmare? That's the topic today. And even though you may not get to choose God's will for your life, God determines his will, that's up to him to do. You determine whether or not you'll pursue it, and if you pursue it, how it's going to be pursued. So with that in mind, let's pick up Genesis chapter 37, starting in verse 1. It says that Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan. These are the family records of Jacob.

At seventeen years of age Joseph tended sheep with his brothers, and the young man was working with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. If you remember way back, those were two of the maidservants of Rachel and Leah. They were originally concubines, but now it says that his father had married them. They were his father's wives. And he brought a bad report about them to their father. Now, how old is Joseph right now? Did you guys pick up on it? He's he's 17 years old. Anybody 17 in the in the room?

I remember 17 years old. That was a weird time. Yeah. Yeah, everything is kind of crazy. He's 17. He's younger than all of his other brothers. And it sounds like he's ratting on his brothers for doing bad things. It says that he brought a bad report. The bad report wasn't like telling dad news, he didn't want to hear about the crops or the sheep. It's like my brothers were doing evil deeds and I came to rat on my brothers. And so Joseph is probably not the favorite son of his not he is the favorite son.

He's probably not the favorite brother. You know what they say about snitches? Snitches get stitches. And so this is this is not a this is a Brady Bunch. So Israel loved Joseph more than his other brothers because Joseph was a son born to him in his old age, and he made a long-sleeved robe for Joseph. Some of your translations will say a multicolored robe or a robe of many colors. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than his brothers, they what. They hated him, and they could not bring themselves to speak peaceably to him.

So Joseph is 17 years old. He's dad's favorite. He wears a coat every day that symbolizes to his brothers he is dad's favorite, and his brothers hate his guts. So this sounds like a extremely dysfunctional family. I was going to say normal family, because that's about how every family I know kind of goes, but the reality is there is no such thing as normal. Most of our families are really dysfunctional. And I think that's an important qualifier, especially as we talk about dreams becoming a nightmare, because there's a temptation from some people to think, oh, well, my family's too messed up.

I come from bad stock. God can't use me. God can't do anything through me because of the problems that I come into the world carrying. And the reality is those are often the people, very people that God does choose because he loves to take the weak things of the world and shame the strong and the foolish things of the world. And shame the wise. So just because you have a dysfunctional family doesn't mean God can't use you. He's going to use a quirky 17-year-old little boy. To do incredible things, even though his brothers hated his guts, and even his own father didn't have a lot of confidence in him.

So he's hated and then to add insult to injury he has these dreams about ruling over his brother. It said Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they what? They hated him even more. I'd underline that phrase. That's repeating over and over again. He said to them, brothers, listen to this dream I had. There we were, binding sheaves of grain in the field, and suddenly my sheaf stood up, and your sheaves gathered around it, and they bowed down to my sheaf. I'm sure that went over like a 10-ton brick.

Are you really going to reign over us? His brothers asked him. Are you really going to rule us? And so they what? They hated him. They hated him even more because of his dream and because of what he said. And then he had another dream. And he told it to his brothers. Look, he said, you think he learned after the first one, but no. Look, he said. I had another

dream, and this time the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me. He told his father this dream.

And his brothers, and his father rebuked him. He said, what is this dream of yours that you've had? He said, am I and your mother and your brothers really going to come and bow down to the ground before you? And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind. So Joseph is seventeen years old, he's a quirky little boy, and he has these dreams, supposedly dreams from God. There's no reason to not think these dreams were from the Lord given what happens in the rest of his story, and his brothers are having none of it.

They already don't like him. But when he shares these dreams, it says that they hated him all the more. Three times it says they hated him, they hated them, they hated him. And I think that's an encouragement. When you think about, is God giving me a dream? Sometimes you doubt whether or not God can give you a dream because of the family you're coming from. Sometimes God will give you a dream and you doubt it's really from the Lord because the people that you love keep denouncing it as crazy. You can't really think God is calling you to go into ministry.

You can't really think God would use you to do X, Y, or Z kind of thing in the world. Given who you are and given your weaknesses, they'll denounce your dream as not from the Lord. They'll denounce your dream as crazy talk. Because a lot of times your dream is actually disrupting their dream for their own life. And so sometimes your dream will get denounced by other people because your dream is actually upsetting the dream they had for their own life. And the way that this is revealed in Joseph's life is with this robe of many colors.

Or the CSB translates it a long sleeved robe. By the way, if you're interested, just a bit of trivial nerd logic for you or nerd information, the reason that the translations disagree on robe of many colors and long sleeved robe is because the King James version and the versions that kind of go in the lineage of the King James version they use as their manuscript tradition, the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament Hebrew. The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, but they didn't have the Hebrew early on.

They just had the Greek version, the Septuagint, and the Septuagint word for robe is poikelos, which means robe of many colors. But when they discovered the dead Sea Scrolls and the Masoretic text and they got back to the original Hebrew, the word is passim, which means long threaded robe. So some say multicolored, some say long sleeve, some say both, like the CSV you'll do a little bit later. None of you even care. I can see it on your faces. I thought it was interesting. So what does it matter? And it doesn't really matter.

I guess if you want to think Joseph is wearing a rainbow every day, I mean that just doesn't strike me as I would hate my brother if he wore rainbow every day. But that's not why they

hated him. The reason that they hated him is because a long sleeve robe symbolized that he was the treasured son. All the other sons are working in the field, right? They're shepherds, they're taking care of dad's business, they're working hard. What's Joseph's job? He's a rat. He tells on them. He says whether they are or are not taking care of business.

Why? Because Joseph was chosen by dad to be the treasured son. Now that doesn't just mean there was favoritism going on. It had financial implications. Because the way the ancient Near Eastern cultures worked is not like America where if your dad or mom die, it splits between all your siblings evenly. Like four kids, twenty-five percent each, everybody gets the same. That's kind of how things go these days. Back then that's not how it would work. One son would get the vast majority of the inheritance because it was his responsibility to carry on the family farm or the you know the th the thing.

So all the other brothers would kind of be like servants working for the oldest son. And traditionally it was the oldest son who would get that right, but every now and then it wouldn't go that way in the case of for example Jacob. He was the second son, but he would been blessed by his father. Or in the case of Ishmael and Isaac, it was kind of that way. And now we're seeing the same thing take place with Joseph and his brothers. Who's the original firstborn son of Leah? Reuben. Reuben was the firstborn son of Leah.

It should have been his, but it's not his. It's Joseph's because he's daddy's favorite. And every time they see Joseph wearing that long sleeved robe, it might as well have been emblazoned with the phrase, I'm daddy's favorite. I will rule over you someday. I will be the boss, and I am getting all the money. So you can imagine he was not their brother's favorite person. Especially when he's ratting on them all the time, even though he's younger, probably doesn't work as hard. Deep down their resentment is not at Joseph, it's at God.

Because God had chosen Joseph to advance a particular purpose. And in God's plan, using Joseph for those things was disrupting the dream that those brothers had for their own lives. And sometimes the reason that your dream will be denounced as crazy talk not from God, selfish ambition, is because your dream being obedient to God for your life is actually disrupting the lives of other people or the dreams that those other people had for their lives. Think of it this way. If your dream you're walking in obedience to the will of God for your life and God saying go due north.

And someone else has another dream for their life that's not from the Lord and they're rebelling against God, walking due south, eventually those two worlds are going to collide and it's not going to be pretty. And that's exactly what Joseph is experiencing here. And it's just a reminder that just because a dream is crazy doesn't mean it's not from the Lord. And I feel like some of us so often discount what God wants to do in us and through us. Because it's cra it sounds crazy. How could God use me to do that kind of thing?

Sometimes a dream can be from the Lord and you discount it because it costs too much money. Or it requires more than what your talents and abilities are able to deliver. Or it's going to upset. This person or that person and you don't like conflict and so surely this isn't from the God because He's a God of peace and He wants me to live at peace with everyone. Be careful of discounting a dream as being from God just because it's a little crazy. And the other thing I would say from this text is be careful of discounting another person's dream because when you reject the dream, you're actually rejecting the source of the dream, which in this case they're not rejecting Joseph, they're rejecting God who gave the dream.

Reuben's rejecting the God who gave the dream. His brothers are rejecting the God who gave the dream. And when you find yourself in a position of resisting God, you're going to end up losing that battle, and it's not going to turn out good for you. So I'm not saying you shouldn't reject dreams that are clearly from the devil or clearly from some selfish ambition. And I'm not saying it doesn't take nuance and discernment to figure those things out, but I would just warn us from making the same mistake his brothers made and his father made of rejecting it outright because it was crazy and assigning it.

As not coming from the Lord and ending up resisting God in the process. And because they resist the Lord, their dream for their life ends up becoming a nightmare. Look in verse 12. The brothers had gone to pasture their father's flocks at Shechem, and Israel said to Joseph, Your brothers, you know, are pasturing the flocks at Shechem. Get ready, I'm sending you to them I'm ready, Joseph replied. And then Israel, that's Jacob, said to him, go and see how your brothers and the flocks are doing, and bring word back to me.

And so he sent him from the Hebron Valley and he went to where? Shechem. Do you notice how often the word Shechem is used there? More than it had to be, right? That's oftentimes a clue in the scripture of the author saying, look up here. Look up here. You guys remember three of me goes, look up here. Why is he so concerned about them going to Shechem? And where is he coming from? He's coming from the Hebron Valley. Well if you do a little bit of thinking back in Genesis twelve to 22, the Hebron Valley was the place where Abraham truly connected with the Lord.

He set up an altar there and he worshipped the Lord. Same thing happened with Isaac and even his even Jacob had some some experiences here at Hebron. The word Hebron means presence. And in the Old Testament, it often came to symbolize the presence of God. Now, sometimes, you know, they would experience God's presence in other locations, but it's just I think pointing out they're leaving the presence of God, these brothers are leaving the presence of God for Shechem. Where's Shechem? Well the word Shechem means strength. It actually means moral strength.

But if you've been paying attention to the book of Genesis, you know that Shechem was not a place of moral strength. It was a place of moral compromise and spiritual compromise. For

Jacob and his daughter and two of his sons, Simeon and Levi. At Shechem Jacob stops short of the will of God for his life in Bethel. He stops twenty miles short of the will of God for his life. And as a result of bedding down in Shechem, buying land across from Hamor, the son of Shechem, who was the chieftain of the city, his only daughter Dinah, is sexually assaulted and raped.

His sons, in vengeance for their sister, manipulate the people of Shechem to become circumcised so that they pretend to give Dinah away in marriage to Shechem, who violently raped her, but thought he was in love with her. And then after three days of them healing from that operation, they come and murder all the men of the city and take all of their stuff. And Jacob's response to that grievous evil, both against his daughter and by his sons, is, you guys have really made life hard for me. He's totally numb to the damage that he's done.

I think that is mentioned here strategically. They're leaving the presence of God to a place of moral and spiritual compromise and as a result they are going to position themselves so that their dreams end up becoming a nightmare. So Jacob is there, he's in Shechem, he's looking around, he doesn't know where his brothers are, and a man finds him. I think that's interesting that a man finds him. Was this where we were supposed to go? If you're taking notes, I don't know where we are. This is my sermon. I don't know where I am.

So okay, the man finds him there walking in the in the fields. He says, what are you looking for? And Joseph says, I'm looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are pasturing their flocks? Now, this guy, as far as we know, is a stranger, but he finds Joseph. And when he asks the question, do you know where my brothers are? He knows where they are. He says, oh yeah, I know where they are. They've moved on from here, the man said. And I actually heard them say, let's go to dothan.

So Joseph set out after this, or after his brothers, and found them at dothan. So they're drifting away from the presence of God. To a place of moral compromise and then they intentionally, I think, leave that land of Shechem, knowing that Jacob was going to come after them because Dad always sends Jacob to come and rat on us and give a bad report. But this time we won't be caught off guard. This time we're going to see him coming. And so I think they sent this messenger to find Jacob to tell him where they were.

And the word dothan means place of two wells. A lot of people think it means place of spiritual dryness because the well had had run dry. Just like in the old testament book of Jeremiah, when Jeremiah is rebuking the people of God because they had left the they had left the well that was the Lord the fountain of living water and they had hewn out empty cisterns for themselves where there is no water. The point is they're drifting from their devotion to God. And as a result of their drifting further and further away from a relationship with God and communion with God, they are drifting closer and closer to their dreams, becoming a living nightmare.

Now we're going to talk about Joseph's dream becoming a nightmare, even though he's obedient to the will of God. But I do think it's important for us to see how these brothers dream become a nightmare because of their rejection of the will of God. And when you begin to drift in your relationship and devotion to the Lord, you will find yourself positioned so that your dream becomes a nightmare. And I think it's so interesting that it starts out with hatred. It starts out with envy, but graduates from hatred and envy to a premeditated plan to murder their brother, which is exactly where things go in the next verse.

If you'll skip that Jeremiah passage and go to Genesis 37, verse 18. They saw him in the distance, and before he had reached them, they plotted to kill him. And they said to one another, oh look, here comes that dream expert. This is the Hebrew word Baal, and Baal worship was a form of idolatry. A lot of Old Testament Peoples who were not Israel would worship Baal. It means Lord of the dreams. Oh boy, here comes the Lord of the dreams. And what they're basically mocking is the fact that in Joseph's dreams, he was the Lord.

He was the boss big man in charge. And so they're saying, oh look, here comes Mr. High and Mighty. So come on, let's kill him and throw him into one of the pits. And we can say that a vicious animal ate him, and then we'll see what becomes of his dreams. So not only do dreams become a nightmare when you drift in your relationship with God, they're going to have their dream becomes a nightmare because they take God's will for Joseph's life. Which is to make him Lord over his brothers, and they say we're going to kill him instead.

And because of that commitment to detouring from God's will and design for their life, their dreams are going to turn into a nightmare. Now it's not just their dreams. Joseph's dreams are going to turn into a nightmare as well. But I want you to watch how this whole thing begins to unfold and just fall apart. At the seams because they had drifted in their relationship with God and be and decided I'm going to chart my own course, do my own thing, then I'll have my dreams achieved in life. So Reuben, who's watching, hears his brother say, hey, let's kill this guy.

Let's throw him in the pit. Reuben sees a window of opportunity. I think Reuben sees the window because he's the true firstborn. And he's thinking to himself, I bet if I can save dad's favorite son, maybe dad will let me back in on his good graces. Because remember, Reuben is on the outs. Why? Because he slept with his father's concubine, Bilhah, which was the maidservant of Rachel, who was his favorite wife. Some say he slept with that woman because he was trying to get his dad to love his mom instead of instead of Bilha.

I don't know if that's true or not. I just know it's really crazy and really sick. And it says that Israel found out about it. And so I think maybe Reuben is on the outs and he sees, well I'm d obviously not getting the inheritance like I'm supposed to. Dad is obviously not happy with me. Maybe if I save my s brother Joseph, maybe Dad'll let me back in to his good graces. So

he sees a window, he says, hey, let's not do this. Let's not shed blood. Let's throw him into the pit in the wilderness.

Don't lay a hand on him, intending to rescue him from them and return him to his father. The problem is even though that was a wonderful plan, he's not the only person thinking thoughts. And his other brothers have a plan on top of that. So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped off Joseph's robe the robe of many colours that he had on. Notice the CSB is changing the game here. The robe of many colours. Then they took him and threw him into the pit, and the pit was empty without water.

So Joseph has gone from the top to the bottom. He went from clothed and splendor and power to stripped and naked in the bottom of a pit. His world is huge reversal. The brothers are so calloused, they sit down and eat a meal together. And when they looked up, there was a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, and their camels were carrying aromatic gum and balsam and resin, and they were going down to Egypt, and Judah Another brother, son of Leah, said to his brothers, listen, what do we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood?

Yeah, we get vengeance, maybe feels good. But we don't get any money. So let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay a hand on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh, and his brothers agreed. In other words, he's incentivizing them with money. This way we get Joseph out of our hair. We get a little bit of money because we weren't going to get any money anyway, because dad had picked Joseph for the inheritance. So it's a it's a win-win and we don't have to kill our brother because do we really want to do that?

All of this is going on over a meal while Joseph is down in the bottom of a pit. Crying and begging them for help. When Reuben finds out about this plan that Judah had hatched, he is he's in a he's in a pickle. The Midianite traders. Did I already read that part? The Midianite traders passed by, his brother pulled Ju Judah Joseph out of the pit and sold him for twenty pieces of silver. Underline that. That's important later, to the Ishmaelites who took Joseph to Egypt. And then when Reuben finds out he returned to the pit, saw that Joseph wasn't there, he tore his clothes, went back to his brothers and said, the boy is gone.

What am I going to do? So notice Reuben had detoured against God's will for his life, thought, I can give my dream without obeying the Lord, and now he's discovering. What I thought was going to happen isn't going to happen. And the same was true for the other brothers. And it's just a reminder, I've said this before, and I'll say it again till I'm blue in the face. You can choose your sin, but you can't control its consequence it's very tempting to s to think, well it's only a small compromise here and I'm not it's you know I'm not as bad as the other people and surely God understands and I'm just going to do this once and never again.

You think you can control the fallout of your sin, but the reality is you can choose the sin. You can't control the consequences. And sometimes your sin gets out of hand. Sometimes it takes you places you didn't think you were going to go. Case in point, these brothers went from hatred and jealousy to a place of premeditated murder, selling their brother for 20 pieces of silver. How does that happen? How much is a human life worth? How do you go from being a little bit jealous to hatching up a plan like this?

It's the seductive power of sin in the human heart. And you think sin isn't blinding you think it's not numbing you think it's not doing incredible damage to your relationship with God and your relationship with the people around you and that you love. You think you can have your cake and eat it too. And yeah, I get a little convicted when I come to church and I know I should stop doing that and I know God's not happy, but I'm just going to kind of keep going, keeping on, because I can control the outcomes.

I can keep things under control. And the reality is you can't. And you won't because sin has a de a devastating seductive power that will ultimately lead to death and destruction. And it's if it's true for Joseph's brothers, it'll be true for us as well. You can choose your sin. You can't control its consequences. And when you choose to reject God's dream for your life, to pursue your own dream, your dream will become a nightmare. And I wish I could tell you that if you pursue God's dream for your life, then your dreams won't become a nightmare.

But the story of Joseph suggests otherwise. Joseph pursued God's will for his life and his dream still became a nightmare. So what do you do then? What do you do when you did everything right? I went where God said to go, I did what God said to do. I said what God said to say, and I'm still suffering I'm at the bottom of a pit. It's not just that my life isn't going as good as it could go. My life is absolutely horrible right now. What do you do then? Well that's where the rest of the chapter goes.

It says that they took Joseph's robe, they slaughtered a male goat, and they dipped the robe in its blood, and they sent the long-sleeved robe to their father and said, we found this. Examine it. Is it your son's robe or not? Notice they don't even call him by his name. It's not our brother, it's your son. Is this your boy's or not? His father recognized it. It is my son's robe, he said. A vicious animal has devoured him. Joseph has been torn to pieces, and then Jacob tore his clothes. And he put sackcloth around his waist, and he mourned for his son for many days.

And all his sons and daughters tried to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. No, he said, I will go down to Sheol, I'll go down to the place of the dead to my son mourning. And his father wept for him. I think it's interesting that it was Jacob who tricked his own dad Isaac, using a goat. To pretend to be Esau. Remember he put goat hair on his arms and he's like, look dad, I'm Esau. I'm hairy like my brother. And he's like, oh, but the voice is Jacob's.

No, but the hair is Esau's. Now Jacob is getting tricked by his own sons using the blood of a goat. It's kind of sweet irony. Jacob finds out his son is dead. Or at least he thinks his son is dead and he and he loses it and he refuses to be comforted. And I think there's something there. Sometimes I feel like people in the deepest parts of suffering feel the pressure that I have to put on a pretty face and I have to say, bless the Lord. And I know even though my life is terrible, God is on the throne, and theologically that's true.

But don't let your theology rob you from grieving. Your dream becoming a nightmare. Sometimes your dream becomes a nightmare not because God is punishing you or because you've got sins to atone for. Sometimes your dream becomes a nightmare because in God's sovereign plan he has chosen to allow, permit. Certain evils to transpire in the world that negatively impact your life and trajectory and it's okay to be discouraged when those things come. And it's okay to pound your fist and say, God, why is this happening to me? Careful in your approach, as job said.

He did not sin in his lips in saying that God has done this to me. So there's nothing wrong about acknowledging the fact God you are sovereign, you are powerful, you are in control, and here I am, and my life is bad. The Lord gives, the Lord takes away. In either case, blessed be the name of the Lord. But don't allow those doctrinal truths to keep you from grieving. Suffering in your life. Sometimes your life will become a nightmare because you're being obedient to the will of God. And what's crazy, I had someone come up after the last service and say, well how do I know if my nightmare is because I was disobedient or obedient.

Because in this chapter it's hard to tell. And in your life, if there's no grievous sin in your life where you know you're being disobedient to the Lord, then I would say. If you've done everything you know to do and God has still left you in a nightmare, then the answer may to be to endure. But if you're living in a nightmare because of your sin, then repent. But if there is no sin, then grieve, and it's okay to grieve. But as you grieve, don't ever forget this one truth, God is still sovereign.

And nothing hits your life that doesn't pass through his sovereign hand. And you see the sovereignty of God in verse 36 when it says that the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar They could have sold Joseph to anybody, but they go to Egypt and sell him to Potiphar, who is the, he's basically the executioner for Pharaoh. He's an officer of Pharaoh and the captain of the guards. And so Joseph gets sold into power. And what's crazy is Joseph, because he was smart and godly and responsible, he ends up getting promoted in Potiphar's household to oversee everything that that that Potiphar was in control of.

And then when Potiphar's wife sinfully seduces Joseph to have sex with her, he refuses, and he's thrown into the pit again. And what does this say? It says God was with Joseph. He was with Joseph in that pit just like he's with Joseph in this pit. That's exactly what Stephen says

in Acts 7 when he's giving an Old Testament survey a as a sermon talking about the cross and Jesus. He says the patriarchs became jealous of Joseph. And they sold him into Egypt, but God was with him. Can you say that with me?

God was with him. God was with him. That's the whole point of the story of Joseph. God was with him in the pit. God was with him in the palace. God was with him every step of the way. And when you're suffering, don't ever forget, God is with you. God is with you. His your pain does not mean he's absent. God is with you. And don't ever forget that and it's because God was with Joseph that in a way Joseph is really painting for us a picture of the ultimate Joseph, who is the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I just can't get over the similarities between Joseph and Jesus. It's almost as if the Holy Spirit designed it by inspiration of Scripture. If you look at some of these parallels, they were both the beloved son of the Father. They were both rejected by their own people. They were both betrayed for coins of silver, Joseph 20, Jesus 30, or vice versa. They were both stripped, mocked, and scorned. They were both handed over and punished. They were both faithful to the end. They both forgave their betrayers. They both saved the lives of many.

In fact, when Joseph has the opportunity to get vengeance on his brothers for the pain and misery they caused him, he said, I forgive you. Because what you intended for evil, God intended for good and the salvation of many people. And Jesus said the same exact things to those executioners who were torturing him Within an inch of his life, as he hung there on the cross, he said, Father, forgive them because they know not what they do. Three days later, He rose up from the grave just like Joseph was raised up from the pit.

He overcame evil with good, and he gave was given a name above every name. Joseph is pointing us to Jesus. And that conclusion of Joseph's story, that what the enemy intended for evil, what you intended for evil, God meant it for good. And I choose to see the purposes of God even in my suffering. And that's what I want to close with this morning. That when you are in the nightmares of life, because you're being obedient to the will of God, never forget God is with you, and never forget that God's dreams never die.

Even in death, God's dreams come bring about resurrection. John Piper wrote a book called Spectacular Sins, where he talks about the big, huge, nasty, messy sins of the Bible And shows you over and over again how God doesn't just work in spite of those sins, but he actually works through the sins. It's because of the sins that God's perfect purposes prevail and he can take the worst evil of human history and bring it so that it brings about the salvation of you and me and any who would repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so as we bring our time to a close, for those of you who sense that God has given you a dream, and in obedience to that dream, you find yourself in the pit. I want to encourage you to look up and see that he is still here. He is still with you. And maybe even in this moment,

the Word of God is saying, I'm here. I haven't left you. I'll never leave you. You may be here and you've been pursuing a dream that is not from the Lord and you're in a nightmare and God's word to you is repent.

This is not my will for your life. This is not going to take you where you think it's going to go. And I would rescue you from that if you would just repent and believe. Or maybe you're resisting a dream that God has given a spouse or a friend or a staff member or whatever the case may be. And you'd ask the Lord, would you give me faith to believe and eyes to see, so that I don't end up resisting you and my attempt to be wise and live the life you've called me to live.

Lots of ways for us to respond. The altar's open. If you want to pray about anything, I'll be happy to pray with you if God leads. But let's respond now as the Lord leads. Heavenly Father, we thank you for Joseph and his life and what an encouragement he is to me to be reminded that even when life isn't going the way we thought it should go, it doesn't mean that it's punishment or vindication or you know, you saying I told you so sometimes it's your sovereign plan coming to fruition through brokenness and pain and suffering.

And I don't understand it and I don't even venture to guess what all of the reasons may be, but I just find comfort in the fact that whether it was Joseph or Jesus or any other number of men and women in the scripture You do not allow evil to have the final say. And that you don't overcome evil with evil, but that you somehow overcome evil with good. And so help us to endure, to persevere, to not give up, to be strengthened by the grace that is in our Lord Jesus, and to persevere until the dream that you have given us finds its way to completion.

And for the struggler here this morning who's not sure whether this passion and burden that they have is indeed from you, their Heavenly Father. For those that are discouraged and torn down because of the resistance that they've received, I pray that if it is from you, if it is your will, they would receive in this moment all the affirmation they need to continue and the ministry that you've given to them and that you would strengthen them, bless them continue to move them forward until your plan and purpose prevails. And we pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.