When Seduction Strikes — Delivery Transcript

Genesis 39 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, September 29, 2024 · *Living The Dream*

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In the life of our church. If you have your Bible, we're going to be in Genesis chapter 39. So if you turn there, Genesis chapter 39, acute observers will say, whoa, whoa, whoa, what about 38? And you don't skip West, you're an expository preacher. And you're right, I don't skip and I'm not skipping. I'm coming back to Genesis thirty-eight next week. Okay, so come back next week, but don't bring your kids. That's all I can say. In fact I said in Genesis chapter whatever it was where Jacob and Rachel and Leah have their you know love tangle.

I said this is like Jerry Springer on steroids. I regret having said that because I think Genesis thirty-eight is the proper owner of the title, Jerry Springer on steroids. It is it is quite an odd text and so I can't wait, you know, to get into it with you guys. Next week. Part of the reason I am waiting until next week because we just started Joseph last week and I feel like just turning from Joseph super quick would would kind of I just didn't think it was right. So I also want to deal with this story of Joseph in Genesis chapter 39 because I think it'll help us make sense of why Genesis chapter 38 is in the Bible because it does seem odd that you have this cliffhanger with Joseph sold into slavery and then it just totally changes topics to Judah and Tamar and some incestuous sex and all kinds of other some all kinds of other weird things.

So Yeah, so come back next week. Just make sure you tell your kids don't listen to the preacher today, okay? Or put them in put them in the kids wing. We have kids being at both hours now which we love families worshiping with their kids so do not hear me discouraging you doing that and you can bring your kids I don't care what age tom next next Sunday but that's the reason I wanted to get that out there as a public service announcement before before next week. And then also to kind of deal with this issue in Joseph's life, which is really interesting.

It's the issue of temptation, and temptation is something everybody struggles with. I don't care who you are, I don't care how long you've lived, I don't care how old you are You struggle with temptation is part of being human. And we've seen the issue of temptation

throughout the scriptures since we've started the study through the book of Genesis. You could look in chapter three with the temptation to eat the forbidden fruit. You've got Genesis four with the temptation of Cain to kill his brother Abel. In Genesis six you've got the thought of every man only evil continually, so much so that God brings a flood because they didn't restrain succumbing to temptation, you've got temptation in Genesis 13 with lot choosing the Siddim Valley, you've got Genesis 12 with Abraham lying about his wife because he was tempted.

That it was that he was going to die, so he was tempted to lie. You see Abraham's wife Sarah tempted to shortcut God by having Abraham sleep with her. Servants and that didn't work out too well. On and on I could go, temptation after temptation, chapter after chapter after chapter. Genesis is filled with temptation. And oddly enough, it's filled with God's people succumbing to temptation. A lot of people think the Bible's full of people who are nice and pretty and neat and the heroes of the faith and they are heroes of the faith because they're trophies of grace, not necessarily the epitome of what it looks like to live a godly life.

So we all struggle with temptation and temptation I think at root I love this definition from Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who wrote a great book on temptation that I would recommend to you. He says that temptation, he says that in temptation, Satan not He does not fill us so much with a hatred of God as much as a forgetfulness of God. And I just love that quote because it is so true. When I have succumbed to temptation in my life, it has not been because I was mad at God or I woke up angry and said, I'm going to show you and just go and do some terrible things.

No, it's been oftentimes it's been when I've tried to been following God, I've trying to been living for the Lord, and then just bam, out of nowhere, there is an intense desire. That puts me in a position where I forget. I forget what I know about God. I forget that He's better, that He's infinitely to be preferred over the competitors from my heart's affection. As Paul says in Romans 1, we exchange the glory of the Creator God for the things that He has made. You put the creation over the Creator, and that's what we do.

In temptation. What's so awesome about Genesis 37 is that Joseph is not only tempted, and we get an insight into what temptation looks like, but Joseph actually resists temptation, and the way that he resists it, I think, sheds blood awesome insight on how we can do the same in our own life. And so the story picks up in Genesis 39. If you're new to the story of Joseph, he's one of the twelve tribes of Israel. The twelve tribes of Israel were first the twelve sons of Jacob. And Joseph of all the sons was the favorite.

He was the preferred son. He had a robe of many colors, some say, or a long sleeved robe of kind of preference and that meant he was going to get all the money and all the inheritance and his brothers were immoral and he was pretty righteous, which just made his brothers hate him all the more. They hated him because he was good. They hated him because he was

dad's favorite. They hated him because he was going to get all the money. And so Joseph's brothers devise a plan to throw Joseph into a pit so he would die.

And that's what they do. They take off to Shechem and from Shechem to Dothan. And as they wait for Joseph to get to Dothan, they say, okay, here he comes let's throw him in the pit. And had it not been for Judah, Joseph's brother saying, well if we kill him, we can't get any money. Let's sell him into slavery I think Joseph would have died. But they listen to Judah, they say, okay, let's sell him into slavery, and they sell him to these Midianite slavers. Who are on their way to Egypt.

And when they get to Egypt, it says that Joseph is sold into slavery to not just anyone, but to a particular powerful person named Potiphar, who was the executioner for a man named Pharaoh's king of Egypt. And so Joseph, oddly enough, he dreamed about having a station of power and privilege, and he gets sold into power and privilege in Pharaoh's court. So that's where our story picks up. Joseph had been taken to Egypt, and an Egyptian named Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, and the captain of the guards. In other words, he was the executioner.

He bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him there, and the Lord was with Joseph, and he became, underline this phrase, a successful man. The Lord was with Joseph. And he became a successful man. We're going to see this as a bookend at the very end of chapter 39, so it is a core core point of this chapter He was a successful man serving in the household of his Egyptian master. Now, when his master saw that the Lord was with Joseph, and that the Lord made everything he did successful, Joseph found favor with his master and became his personal attendant.

Potiphar also put him in charge of his household and placed all that he owned under his authority. I'd underline that phrase all. From the time that he put him in charge of his household, and of all that he owned, the Lord blessed the Egyptians' household because of Joseph. Notice the fur the Abraham dynamic those who bless you I will bless. The Lord's blessing was on all that he owned, in his house and in his fields. He left all that he owned under Joseph's authority, and he did not concern himself with anything You got one that was so effective you could essentially have him manage your entire household and worry about nothing except what I'm going to eat today, which means you don't worry about anything.

How Joseph pulled this off, I don't know. I don't maybe Potiphar, when he saw Joseph being sold into slavery, he's like, this boy doesn't have any calluses on his hands. He's he seems like he doesn't have no suntan. He's not like the other ranchers and shepherds who actually work for a living. So maybe he thought this guy's educated, maybe this is a man of high station. Maybe this man has experienced preferential treatment and he knows how to manage people because people of high station had those kind of positions. So I don't know if Potiphar saw that, didn't see that.

Or if Joseph just came at the bottom ladder and just proved himself over and over and over again. But because Joseph was dependent on God and faithful to God in everything I believe when you live life according to God's design, you succeed. Not always, but generally speaking, when you run life according to the instructions manual. It's going to work out for you. So it's working out for Joseph. He gets promoted, promoted, promoted, and he becomes extremely successful. Now my question is, why is it that this idea of success is so central to this chapter about temptation.

And the reason I think Joseph makes that connection is because there is a connection between success and temptation. It's not intuitive, but if you think about it, you'll see it is true. Temptation, I believe, is strongest in seasons of success. In other words, it's when you're most successful that you're most prone to say, well, I don't need God anymore. In other words, when you're down and out, when things are not going well, when Everybody's mad at you and you your money's not working right and it's easy to say, Oh God, I need you.

God I need help. I depend on you. I can't go another day without you. That's you're not tempted to forget God in those moments, but when there's lots of money in the bank and everything's going right. Happy wife, happy life, happy kids, everything's great. Living in the country. Everything's good. Nobody's mad at you. No drama in the church. Everything is awesome. To quote the Lego movie, everything is awesome. It's in those moments that you think to yourself. Well, I must be doing pretty good and God must be pretty happy, so maybe I don't need to spend as much time in the Word.

You don't have to pray today. I don't have any real needs today. Forget about your daily bread. And God becomes an afterthought. That's why I think God is so absent in American culture because we're so stinking rich. If you have if you have all your needs met and you don't feel like you need the Lord, why would you remember him? And so that's when temptation strikes. It strikes when you're most successful and that's when it struck Joseph most intensely. And personally that's how I experience temptation in my life. And the reason I think that is, I've been thinking about this, because there was a pastor this last week who I deeply respect and admire.

I'm not going to give you his name, but he had a moral failure. He had a moral failure, lost his ministry, elders fired him from the church that he was at. All of his teachings, which is a lot of teaching, come off the internet. He was persona non grata. And what was so shocking about it is, you know, pastors fall a lot. And in some ways pastors are just people. So You can't assume that they're never going to fall. But there's some pastors that fall, and I think to myself after their failure, I can see that.

I can see that happening. Given their personality, other things I know. Okay. But this guy, I was like, what the what is how? He was so faithful. He's so gifted. He's he was a man of conviction, a man of truth. He was bold. He defended things against he wasn't

compromising. How could he fail morally. And as I was thinking about that in relationship to Genesis thirty nine, because it was the text that I had this week, the Lord sh just struck me with this correlation between success and temptation. And the correlation isn't necessarily success and temptation.

I think it's a connection between responsibility and vulnerability. My favorite definition of responsibility is from the Latin root. Responsibility literally means able to respond. You're able to respond. If you're responsible for something, you're not just able to respond, but you're morally bound to respond. Well when you become successful, what happens? Do you get more or less responsibilities? You get more. You get way more. In fact the more successful you become, the more responsibilities you have. And as you get more and more responsibilities, there are more and more things to which you are able and morally bound to respond, which necessarily means you're more vulnerable.

And the best definition of vulnerability also comes from the Latin root. It means able to hurt. In fact, when you're vulnerable with a person, what are you doing? You're giving them permission to hurt you. Vulnerable means able to hurt, which means when you don't respond as you ought to respond, it inflicts harm on the object of your trust. That you are responsible to, those who are impacted by your irresponsibility, and on and on we can go. There's a connection, a necessary connection, and it and ex whatever it called an innate connection between responsibility and vulnerability.

So I just say that to say for those of you guys and girls that want to be successful and I want to be great go get them, that's awesome, but know that it comes with the price tag, that responsibility comes with a ugly underbelly and that you are most prone to temptation when you least expect it. Just like Joseph. It comes in seasons of success. So if that's true, then how do we see it coming? Because Joseph didn't see his coming. So I think there's some things to learn about temptation.

Let's one of the things Joseph was responsible for was a extremely hot body. So look at verse six. You laugh, but that's exactly what the text says. Joseph was well built and handsome. Some translations don't say well built. I think they're trying to get away from the hot body comment. Ah, but I ain't scared. When I think of someone with a hot body, what do you what do you think of? Well, I mean I think of this right here. No, I'm just joking. I don't think of this. I didn't anticipate saying that in the middle service, but after I didn't I just couldn't resist.

This is an example of not well built. Okay. Well-built you might think of someone like Dwayne The Rock Johnson, right? Or Hulk Hogan, you know, maybe he's a little overkill, but some kind of wrestler, you just think they're they're flawless. I don't know how they do that thing where they make their pecs bounce around and stuff like that. It's just they're just engineering of human like of how human is supposed to look. That's it. That's Joseph. Now

the reason this is a big deal is because the Bible very rarely comments on people's physical looks.

In fact I can only think of three or four instances where that's the case. So the reason that it's a comment I think is because Pharaoh's wife is attracted to how handsome it is, and I also think it's a statement of He was just really, really handsome. Just a very good looking man. And when you are that good looking, you need to know you're responsible for your looks and the invitations that come your way as a result. Whether you're a man or a woman. So one of the women that was attracted to him was a Potiphar's wife.

So after some time, he might underline that phrase, after some time, his master's wife looked longingly at Joseph and said, sleep with me. That's pretty forward. I read a guy this week that said Egyptian women of all the women of ancient antiquity were the most sexually liberated. Which I don't know if you call that sexual liberation, but that was very forward. Very aggressive, sleep with me. Now notice she's his boss. So there's all kinds of complexities with that, but Joseph probably would have been very tempted to oblige for a handful of reasons, but he doesn't.

Look at verse eight. He refused. Not only does he refuse, he explains why. Look, he said to his master's wife, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in his house. And he has put all that he owns under my authority. No one in this house is greater than I am. He has withheld nothing from me except you why? Because you are his wife. So how could I do this immense evil? And how could I sin against God And although she spoke to Joseph, day after day, he refused to go to bed with her.

Now one day when he went into the house to do his work, and none of the household servants were there, she grabbed him by his garment and said, sleep with me. This time my text has an exclamation point, seems more like a command. I'm your boss, do what I say. But leaving his garment in her hand, he escaped and ran outside. Now there's just so much so much in there. We don't have time to deal with all of it, but I see not only how temptation comes in those verses, but how Joseph resists temptation as well.

And as I was thinking about these things, this resonates as true. In my own experience as I think about temptation in my own life. I'm using three S's to help me remember it. But you can use whatever words you want to use. I think temptation comes surprisingly. In other words it's unexpected the biggest baddest temptation is out of nowhere. Temptation comes with strength. So comes surprisingly, it comes with strength. In other words, it's an intense desire. Temptation isn't kind of sort of temptation is holy moly, that's strong. And then temptation comes in secret.

So it's surprising, it's strong, and it's in secret. Or you could say it's unexpected, it's intense. And it's discreet. Now let's think about those three things as it relates to this text. First it

comes surprisingly, it's if you notice in that verse I can't remember the number, but it says after some time. After some time, I think it's in verse 4. She began to look longingly. That means that there was some time prior up to that moment where she was not looking longingly. Maybe Potiphar and his wife were taking care of business at home and meeting each other's physical and emotional needs, but that stopped somewhere along the way and she got eyes for Joseph, that's I think also a reminder for married people to often when you're not meeting the needs of your spouse, it those needs don't go away.

Just because you don't meet them. They just have a temptation to be met elsewhere. So it came out of nowhere. There were probably many days where Potiphar's wife engaged in conversation with Joseph just fine, no n no talk of sex, and then one day, bam, sleep with me. Very sudden, very unexpected. And as I think in my life the temptations which have been most damaging and the strongest, I didn't see them coming. Sometimes the reason that people succumb to success is because it was an overnight success. They just woke up one day and I'm famous.

Sometimes the reason that people succumb to temptation with money is because they got a windfall of cash. They didn't see it coming and they don't know how to handle it. Sometimes the reason people succumb to temptation and suffering is because it's out of nowhere. They didn't see it coming. Temptation comes surprisingly. Temptation comes strongly, comes with strength. And in the text, the way I see that is she says very frankly, sleep with me, which is very frank. And then after that, what does she do? He turns her down, but does she stop no, she says day after day after day she came to him and spoke with him, probably saying, sleep with me.

And then even though he denied her in those times, time and time and time again, the next time it happens, it's all alone, none of the other servants are in the house, and she physically touches him and grabs his garment, maybe takes it off. In other words, the intensity is growing the longer Joseph puts himself in an environment where that temptation is available. And that's just how temptation works. That's why. They say don't flirt with temptation. Don't make no provision for temptation in your life because the thing about temptation, it's not like stationary.

The longer you live with it, the stronger it grows. That's why I think that's why Jesus, not only did he experience every temptation we've ever experienced, but he experienced them to a greater degree than any of us have ever experienced because he resisted temptation to the end. Some of us never know how strong temptation is because we shut it because we yield to it. But Jesus knew the s full strength of temptation because he lived with it to the very end. He denied it to the very end. Be careful of tolerating temptation in your life.

Don't be one of those people that says, well, I can dance on the line. And I'll see how close I can get without without compromising. You have no idea the forces that you are dealing with

and this and the strength and intensity with which temptation comes. Now. In Joseph's case, it wasn't just intense and surprising, it was also secret. You can see the secret implicitly in that she says very frankly, sleep with me. I'm assuming that wasn't in front of her husband. Most most married women don't say sleep with me in front of their husbands unless things have gone way, way, way wrong, way earlier than that.

When she grabs him that last time, who's in the room nobody else is in the room, right? All the servants are gone. And that's how temptation works. It comes secretly. I'm sure she whispered it. How about today? How about today? No one's going to know. My husband doesn't take care of me. You can meet my needs so much better You have all the power. That's how temptation works. It's so seductive because no one else knows about it. And it's also why people tolerate temptation in their life because if they brought it out into the open, there's a fear, well they're going to think I'm immoral, they're going to think I'm weak, they're going to think X, Y, or Z thing about me.

Because temptation comes in secret, it's effective. Sin grows in isolation. Sin grows in the dark. That's why scriptures always say you've got to bring your sin into the light because temptation gets stronger. The longer you tolerate it, and the more secretive it becomes. So you got to know that about temptation in your life. It's going to come out of nowhere, it's going to come on super strong, and no one else is going to know about it, oftentimes except you. And there will be little Phrases that temptation speaks that says you can get away with it, nobody else will know.

It's just this once you deserve it, whatever the case may be. So if that's true, then how do you resist temptation? Well, one of the things to resist temptation is to actually believe you can resist temptation. And I feel like a lot of people these days think I can't resist temptation. Especially as it comes to temptation to succumb to pleasure, sensual, sensual sin, addictions, things like that. There's this idea that all I'm You know, I'm an addict and I can't overcome my addiction. My brain chemistry's changed because I changed my grain brain chemistry.

Or I know that happens with pornography for a lot of guys. I'm just locked in. I got to be addicted to sex the rest of my life. And that is nonsense. That is a lie from the devil. Yes, you can. And then one of the reasons I'm so confident that that yes you can well there's a lot of reasons why I'm so confident, but one of the reasons is because the scripture actually says, yes, you can. Not here with Joseph, because you can say, well, Joseph's a one-off. He was you know, daddy's favorite.

I'm not daddy's favorite. But the Bible actually says in first Corinthians chapter ten, anybody can resist temptation because no temptation has come upon you except what is common to humanity. The X factor is the Lord. God is faithful, and he will not allow you to be tempted beyond which you are able, but he with the temptation will also provide the way out. So that you may be able to bear it. Now I think this is unique to Christians. So I'm not saying

everybody can resist temptation, but if you have the Holy Spirit of God living in you have a promise from God that He is faithful to give you a way out of the temptation if you will but take it.

The problem is so many of us don't want to take it for whatever reason. Temptation, no matter the stripe, can be resisted. So how do you resist it? Well one of the things I see in this text is to fortify your defenses I see Joseph fortifies defenses in that he shut it down so quickly. And you don't shut down that kind of an offer that fast unless you've been doing the necessary work on the back end to become that strong. Fortifying your defenses, this idea is that you proactively prepare yourself for the reality of temptation.

Because you know, in other words, temptation comes suddenly and unexpectedly you don't wait until you're put in the position to resist the temptation. You prepare yourself beforehand. This is why when I was growing up they did true love waits. Which people criticize purity culture and true love weights and all that stuff to warn kids about sex before marriage and You know, I would they'd have things in school with all the STDs you could get from from unprotected sex and I you know kids laugh at that stuff and they mock it and they say whatever they say, but that's because they're fools it's because they don't they don't see it.

They don't know that there's so much wisdom to fortifying your defenses before you're put in that position to comp to compromise yourself morally or spiritually. Now what that's one thing to prepare young people for the temptations they're going to face, what about you? Well if you know you're oriented a certain kind of way, you know you struggle with certain kind of vices. You know that your context because of your marriage or because of your job or because of your environment, you know that you are more suitable to these kinds of things.

One of the wisest things you can do to resist temptation is to fortify those defenses. So that you're not put in those kind of positions, you don't go to those kind of places, you don't ever engage in those kind of conversations because you've done the necessary work of wisdom to fortify the defenses. I think that's what Joseph does. One, because he's trusting the Lord at this terrible point in his life. I just think he was a man of faith. He was a man of integrity and he was working on himself all the time.

Never stopped. The best time to work on your marriage is not to wait till you have a marriage problem, right? While y'all are still talking. You know, then get together, then go to the marriage retreats, then focus on making things strong, fortify the defenses so that the temptation doesn't have as much success. The second thing he does is he identifies the pretense the pretense, what I mean by that is every temptation comes under cover as a lie. All temptation is unbelief at the end of the day, wrapped in a pretty wrapper.

In the case of Joseph's it was probably something like Joseph, you're so powerful, and you'll never get away with it, and my husband is not taking care of business. And you take care of

all of my husband's stuff anyway. I mean you take care of everything else in the house, you might as well take care of me too. You know. These kinds of believable lies that Joseph could have thought to himself, well, you know, he is all he does is eat and I do take care of everything and I probably could get away with it and that's a lie.

Temptation always gets you because it leads you to believe the lie, the lie that he really cares about me. Or the lie that he'll love me if I'll just do this thing, or the lie that it's just one time, or that they're or that it's not that bad. Temptation always comes as a pretense. You've got to identify the pretense and call it out. That's exactly what Joseph does. In verse 9, he says, listen, nobody in this house is greater than me. And it's wrong for me to have sex with you.

You're his wife. You may be unfulfilled, it doesn't matter, you're his wife. It's evil. This is not right. This is evil, and it's a sin against God. So identify the pretense and then evaluate the expense, which is the other thing he does in these verses. Evaluate the expense. This I found helpful in my own life when it comes to temptation. One of the best ways to fight intense sudden desire is with intense sudden desire. So when you're tempted to sin against God or forget God and your love for God begins to wane, fight that desire with another desire.

If you can't use love for God, then use fear of loss. Because a lot of times what you lose in succumbing to temptation is tremendous. That's in my own life as a young minister dealing with temptation. I can't tell you the number of times where I didn't go to a certain place or I didn't engage in a certain kind of behavior, not because I didn't want to but because I'll probably get caught and then I'm going to lose my job and my education is worthless for anything other than teaching and preaching in a local church and I don't want to be working a minimum wage wage job and for the rest of my life or whatever the case may be that you know look at the consequences of your sin and what is that going to result.

I had a mentor who told me Wes sexual temptation is strong for ministers because they're not attracted to your looks, they're attracted to your spiritual maturity. And the fact that your life is put together and he said it doesn't matter if she's the most attractive woman in the universe. And the sex is the best experience of your life. Thirty minutes with the most attractive woman and the very best sex in the world is not worth the lifetime of damage that infidelity would create in your life. You're the only person who can be Audra's first husband.

You're the only man who can be a dad to Blaise and Addy Joe and Briggs. And you blow that up, you don't get it back. And man those words hit like a 10-ton brick. It's so costly. But what happens is when you're tempted, you don't think about the loss, you just think about the gain. But one of the ways to keep yourself from being overwhelmed by that is to remember. This is what caving does to me. Because your sins will find you out. It's a matter of time until the rooster crows.

So identify the pretense, evaluate the expense, fortify the defense, and then the other thing he does is he crystallized the offense He you notice what he says. He says, this sin is not just a sin against you, it's not just a sin against Potiphar, it's a sin against God. And this is a theological point that a lot of people somewhat disagree with when David says in Psalm 51, against you and you only have I sinned. Talking to God. People say, well, he didn't just sin against God, he sinned against he sinned against Bathsheba, he sinned against her husband, he sinned against the people of Israel.

And David's not saying I didn't sin against those people. What he is saying is in sinning against those people, I've actually sinned against God. So not only did I sin against God in violating his design, I sinned against God by Defiling someone created in his image. I sin against God by corrupting the institution of marriage that he made. I sin against God by disrupting his purpose in my life for the future. And so God doesn't just get offended and grieved one time in our sins, but he gets offended over and over and over and over again.

That's why that's why Joseph says this is immense evil. This is so big. This is not just a one one and done. This is not just a little thing. This is a grievous thing in the eyes of the Lord. And when you crystallize your s your sin as a as a as a great sin against the Lord, it will make you less likely to succumb to the temptation. So fortify the defense, identify the pretense, evaluate the expense, crystallize the offense, and then finally make no allowance. Joseph shuts it down immediately.

He says, look I ain't doing this. He refused. She comes day after day after day. He refuses. He doesn't tolerate it. He doesn't say, let me think about it for a few days. And then when she grabs him by the cloak and says, sleep with me, he literally leaves. He flees the scene of the crime that he didn't commit. And that's how the Bible talks about resisting temptation in our life as well. Make no allowance. Make no provision for the flesh, Paul says. In Romans chapter 13. You say, well, that sounds legalistic.

And it may sound legalistic, but it'll save your life. And I'm not saying my extra rules and fences have to be your extra rules and fences. You're a unique person. You have a unique environment. You have your unique struggles. But whatever it looks like for you to shut it down early, it is wisdom for you to put those structures in your life so that there is no allowance for temptation. Don't even visit the store. Don't even subscribe to the channel. Don't don't get a device without internet protection, you know, whatever the case may be.

The Bible says flee sexual immorality, especially for young men flee from youthful passions. Sexual immorality, impurity, greed should not even be heard of among you. In other words, don't dance on the line. Don't give even an impression that this is something you're flirting with in your life make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires. And I remember as a young teenager listening to preachers say stuff like that and thinking, you just don't get it.

And I felt so strongly about it. And I feel just as strongly now on the other side of some deep regrets.

No, you don't get it. You don't understand what you're playing with. You have no idea the power and the and the seductive nature of temptation. And it would be so much better for you to just put in some difficult, painful decisions that say, I'm cutting this out of my life. And I don't care what my friends say, and I don't care if people think I'm weird. I'm not going to be, I'm not going to be one of those people, I'm not going to be another statistic, I'm not going to be a casualty.

Of the enemy. Make no allowance. Jesus said if your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out. That's very extreme, Jesus. Well, you think that's bad. If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off. Jesus, you're usually a very nuanced and reasonable person. Why would I gouge out my eye and cut off my hand? He says, because I'd rather you lose your eye and your hand than to go to hell. Better to lose the little thing, better to lose the job, better to lose the boyfriend, the girlfriend, better to lose the opportunity, the sorority, better to lose the tiny thing than to compromise improve yourself to have never really known me at all and spent an eternity separated from me because you loved the creation more than the creator.

It's a test. It's a test of your faith. To refrain from temptation. And so I would be violent with whatever in your life is tempting you to compromise. Be ruthless with your emotions. Be ruthless with that seductress or whoever it is, man or woman, who is putting you in a position to sin against the Lord. But even if you do everything right, I wish I could tell you God would bless you and make you rich and happy and famous, but that's not how the story ends. She's mad, and hell hath no fury, like a woman scorned, as someone said.

And when she saw that he had left his garment with her, and he had run outside, she called her household servants and said, look, My husband brought a Hebrew man that's very racist comment. He brought a Hebrew man to make fools of us. He came to me so that he could sleep with me, and I screamed as loud as I could. Now she had screamed. Now she's spinning a narrative to make her scream seem like something it wasn't. And when he heard me screaming for help, there's the word scream again, he left his garment beside me and ran outside.

And then she put Joseph's garment beside her until his master came home, and then she told him the same story. The Hebrew slave you brought to us came to make a fool of me. But when I screamed for help, he left his garment beside me, and he ran outside. And when his master heard the story, his wife told him he these are the things your slave did to me. He was furious, and he had him thrown in prison where the king's prisoners were confined, and so Joseph was there in prison.

I don't know if you picked up on all of it, but there's some words that get repeated in those verses. You get the word garment repeated over and over again, you get the word screamed, repeated over and over again, you get the word Hebrew, slave repeated over and over and over again. And then you get the word fool repeated over and over again. And what she's doing is she's crafting a narrative. She really did scream. She was really made a fool of. He really left his garment. But what she's doing is she's taking the truth and building a lie because the most believable lies have a lot of truth embedded into them.

And so she goes and gets eyewitness testimony. Although there was no eyewitness testimony, she says, You guys heard me scream, right? You other servants, you heard me scream. Let me tell you why. And you see the cloak, right? It's right here in my hand. Well, here's why. And then they could corroborate her story with her husband, who she told the what kind of story? The same story to her husband when he came home. And some think Potiphar believed Joseph that that his wife was kind of known for this kind of behavior.

I don't know that there's a ton of evidence for that other than the fact that Potiphar doesn't execute Joseph, which he probably I would have done that. So maybe he believed Joseph, but the reality is even if he did believe Joseph, there was nothing he could do. Because he was a slave, she was his wife, and he had to act. So he throws Joseph into prison, even though he did the right thing. And sometimes you will resist temptation and you will suffer as a result. Just like Jesus was tempted in the garden, Father, let this cup pass from me.

And he said, not my will but yours. He overcame the temptation and then he suffered and he bled and he died. Stripped, mocked, beaten, scorned, the suffering of the cross. Because in God's kingdom in this world it's just part of the territory. And I wish I could tell you, do the right thing and God will bless you. He will bless you. He will be with you, but you may suffer for doing good. This is what Jesus said. I'm sorry, if you're taking notes, you need to trust God with the consequences.

Jesus said, You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me. Rejoice. Be glad, your reward is great in heaven. That's how they persecuted the prophets who were before you. And the passage ends with the words, the Lord was with Joseph. And extended kindness to him. He granted him favor with the prison warden. The warden put all the prisoners who were in the prison under Joseph's authority, and he was responsible for everything that was done there. The warden did not bother with anything under Joseph's authority.

Notice this phrase again. The Lord made everything he did successful. The chapter opens with the phrase, the Lord was with Joseph and made him very successful. The passage closes with the words, the Lord blessed Joseph, he was with him, and he made everything he did successful. And it's a reminder that temptation may come at the very high moments of life, or temptation may come at the very low moments of life. Resisting temptation doesn't

ensure that your life will be drama-free or suffering-free. But it does ensure God will be present with you, He will bless you, and one day He will vindicate the righteous.

And that's what you hold on to in this world, filled with evil and temptation to sin, that my high priest himself was tempted. And every way that I am, that he suffered, bled, and died, so that I might have the Holy Spirit of God living in me to resist temptation and find a way of escape, and that one day the king of Kings will come, and he will set everything right. So that those who are rewarded for evil will be eternally punished, and those who are punished for righteousness will be eternally rewarded.

And so I don't know what that looks like for you. I would hope that would be words of hope if you are here and you're resisting temptation and your life is filled with difficulty and hardship. I hope that you'll be comforted by the promise that God is with you. For those of you who are flirting with temptation, or God forbid, those of you who have destroyed your life because you succumbed to temptation, Jesus is here this morning to say, I can rebuild your life. I can give you hope again and purpose again, but you've got to submit to me.

You've got to stop choosing to live based on your own authority, and you've got to bow the knee to me as Lord. And if you've never made that decision, I would encourage you to come this morning and to get your life right with Jesus. And if you are a Christian and there is a sense in which you've foolishly allowed temptation to have more influence in your life than it should. Maybe this morning the Lord's using this message to say, I love you so much. I don't want you. To hurt. I don't want your life to be destroyed, but I need you to listen to me.

Because I am not mocked. And whatever a person sows is what he's going to reap. So sow repentance today. Sow godly sorrow and grief over your sins so that I can heal you. Forgive you and cleanse you of this unrighteousness in your life. And if I can pray with you and helping you go through that decision, I'd be glad to do so. Father in heaven, we thank you for this time and your word, and I thank you, Holy Spirit, that you that you speak through the scripture. And it's really not about acute outline or stories from a preacher.

At the end of the day it's about what the Holy Spirit wants to say to God's people. And so give us ears to hear what you have said and hearts to obey. Jesus, because he's worthy of whatever it cost, we pray these things in his name