

Joseph - Finding Who We Are in Christ (Part 2)

Sunday, November 8, 2020

I would like to take a journey through the life of Joseph and allow his life to show us who we are in Christ and how we can walk in that identity.

Someone has said... *"Our true identity is found when we stop being 'who we are' and start being who we were created to be."*

We've been talking a lot about what we believe and how we can grow. Now I want to help us understand who we are in Christ and how we can grow into the person we were meant to be

Genesis 37:1-11

37 Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan.

2 This is the account of Jacob's family line.

Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.

3 Now **Israel loved Joseph** more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and **he made an ornate robe for him.** **4** When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, **they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.**

5 Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, **they hated him all the more.** **6** He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: **7** We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."

8 His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" **And they hated him all the more** because of his dream and what he had said.

9 Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

10 When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" **11 His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.**

Let's review for just a minute, because it is important that we have a clear understanding of this first part and hold on to it as we move through Joseph's story and ours

Joseph's NAME - *"he will add"*... the first thing we can learn about our identity in Christ comes from Joseph's name.

Say: "I AM WANTED BY GOD"

Say: "I WILL ADD"

Joseph's COAT - God's love and favor

Highly Favored... Like Joseph, Like Mary we are highly favored

We are ALL His favorite!

Pray this... *"God help me to see how much you love me."*

Joseph's DREAMS - tells us that God has a plan for our lives and wants to fill us with His dreams (purposes)

I want you to pray... *"God fill me with YOUR dreams for my life... Show me what they are..."*

Jacob "born to him in his old age" Age - Even in our old age God wants to bless us and fulfill the dreams He has put in our hearts

It doesn't matter how old you are, God has plans for you.

And it doesn't matter how long you have been waiting, you can't give up on the dreams God has put in your heart.

Keep it in mind. Believe what God has said. Hold on to the things that God has spoken to your heart. The dreams and visions he has planted in you.

Declare this today... "I will not give up; God will fulfill His purpose for me. O' God, finish what you started."

Philippians 1:6

6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Part 2

The Cistern - Holding on to who we are in Christ in dark times

Genesis 37:12-36

12 Now his brothers had gone to graze their father's flocks near Shechem, **13** and Israel said to Joseph, "As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I am going to send you to them."

"Very well," he replied.

14 So he said to him, "Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks, and bring word back to me." Then he sent him off from the Valley of Hebron.

When Joseph arrived at Shechem, **15** a man found him wandering around in the fields and asked him, "What are you looking for?"

16 He replied, "I'm looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are grazing their flocks?"

17 "They have moved on from here," the man answered. "I heard them say, 'Let's go to Dothan.'"

So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. **18 But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him.**

19 "Here comes that dreamer!" they said to each other. **20 "Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams."**

21 When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. "Let's not take his life," he said. **22** "Don't shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don't lay a hand on him." Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father.

23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing— 24 and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

25 As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt.

26 Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? **27 Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.**" His brothers agreed.

28 So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

29 When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes. **30** He went back to his brothers and said, **“The boy isn’t there! Where can I turn now?”**

31 Then they got Joseph’s robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. **32** They took the ornate robe back to their father and said, “We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son’s robe.”

33 He recognized it and said, “It is my son’s robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces.”

34 Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days. 35 All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. “No,” he said, “I will continue to mourn until I join my son in the grave.” So his father wept for him.

36 Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh’s officials, the captain of the guard.

The Cistern - Holding on to who we are in Christ in dark times

The fact is, we are all going to have dark times. Times when the enemy comes against us with circumstances designed to strip us of our identity in Christ.

- **4 ...they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.**
- **5 ...they hated him all the more.**
- **8 ...And they hated him all the more**
- **11 ...His brothers were jealous of him,**
- **18 ...they plotted to kill him.**
- **20 “Come now, let’s kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we’ll see what comes of his dreams.”**

- **23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing— 24 and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.**

That's why it is so important we understand who we are in Christ and then fight to hold on to that when we find ourselves at the bottom of a dark cistern. Maybe you find yourself in dark times right now. It feels as if you have been stripped of your dreams, stripped of your hope, stripped of your faith, stripped of your favor. You're asking yourself, "What happened?" "Why did God allow this?" "Doesn't God love me?" "How will His promises ever come true?"

HOPE for better days ahead

When you are at the bottom of the cistern your way out starts with HOPE. You've got to have HOPE.

HOPE doesn't mean you ignore the hurt, the pain, and the anger. It doesn't mean you pretend that you are not in the circumstances you are in. But it means choosing to let go of all of that and instead hold on to HOPE.

Ecclesiastes 9:4

4 Anyone who is among the living has hope—even a live dog is better off than a dead lion!

HOPE for better days ahead doesn't mean that those days will be tomorrow. It doesn't even mean that you know the date and time when Hope will arrive. But you choose to put your Hope in God

Romans tells us...

Romans 4:18

18 Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

Job said...

Job 13:15

15 Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him...

The theme of hope is found throughout (18 times) the book of Job

David said...

Psalm 71:1-5

1 In you, Lord, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame. **2** In your righteousness, rescue me and deliver me; turn your ear to me and save me. **3** Be my rock of refuge, to which I can always go; give the command to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress. **4** Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of those who are evil and cruel. **5** **For you have been my hope, sovereign Lord, my confidence since my youth.**

Dare to let hope rise up within you today... With the Psalmist boldly declare...

Psalm 42:5

5 Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? **Put your hope in God,** for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

WALK forward in faith one step at a time

Hebrews 11:1 (KJV)

11 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

When Joseph was pulled up out of that cistern and handed over to the Ishmaelites, I picture him (like you see in movies) hands in chains or ropes and bound to other slaves, perhaps tied to a camel, making the journey to Egypt. In other words, he is walking.

The evidence of his hope is his walk. In faith he puts one foot in front of the other and keeps moving forward. You can choose to live in the past, to stay in your anger and disappointment; or you can choose to move forward in faith

2 Corinthians 5:7 (ESV)

7 for we walk by faith, not by sight.

Your faith is not in yourself; your faith is not that your circumstances will change; but your faith is in God. You may not know where you are going or how you are going to get there or where you are going to end up; but you have the faith in God that gives you the strength to not give up.

Acts 27:25

25 So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.

TRUST that God still has a plan and is still in control

Psalms 56:3

3 When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.

It's normal to feel afraid. It's normal to wonder how things are going to work out. But instead of giving in to the fear, we put our trust in God.

Trusting God means putting your life in His hands (And that starts with salvation) If we can trust Him with our eternity; don't you think we can trust Him with what happens in this life too?

Have you ever thought that in order for God to fulfill his plans for Joseph's life, Joseph had to go through all of this? What Joseph found out later is that God set all this up so that Joseph's dreams could be fulfilled.

What we often see as a setback is nothing more than God setting us up for the accomplishment of His will for our lives.

Remember that His ways are not our ways and that so often in God's plan, the way up is down

We learned in our Bible Study on Wednesday that Paul went to Philippi to share the message of the Gospel. He was having some success and yet there was a young girl, possessed by a spirit, who followed them around

shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." **18** She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment, the spirit left her.

They were beaten and thrown in Prison. They could have given up hope that they would see success in Philippi. Instead, they trusted in God and what seems to be a setback was really a set up for the purposes of God to be fulfilled in a greater way in Philippi.

The praises of God were heard by a jailer and prisoners who may not have heard the word unless Paul and Silas were thrown in prison. The power of God was manifested and became a testimony and the catalyst for the salvation of the jailer and his family. The believers were encouraged and the Church grew.

Psalms 28:7

7 The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.
My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him.

PRAISE God in spite of the pain

You can choose to grumble about the situation, You can choose to direct your energy towards blame and plans of revenge or you can turn your attention to God and Praise Him in spite of the pain

I can picture Joseph quietly praising God at the bottom of that Cistern. I see him worshipping the Lord as he made the discouraging journey to Egypt not knowing what was going to happen.

Psalm 125:2

2 As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people
both now and forevermore.

Deuteronomy 31:8

8 The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”