



The Account of Joseph, son of Jacob: God is at work, even in the hard times

Gen 37-50

[based on the sermon preached on 27.11.22 – available on the [church app](#) or at <https://lwac.org.au/sermons>]

KEY IDEAS

1. Joseph was Jacob's favourite son because born to him in his old age, from his favourite wife, Rachel.
2. Genesis records five main events in Joseph's life in his rise to co-ruler of Egypt.
3. Joseph's life foreshadows that of Christ in several key ways: he was despised and persecuted, he was sold for money, he was falsely accused, he suffered unjustly, he was raised to prominence, and he saved his people/others.
4. Joseph's life reminds us that God is at work in our lives, working things out for good

CONNECT

- Have you ever been in a favoured or privileged position, like the young Joseph? Perhaps in your family growing up or at work. Was this favoured position deserved? Did it feel awkward to be in that position or did you enjoy it? Did others around you know about your privileged position? If so, how did they feel about it? Did you brag about your favoured or privileged position to others? How did they respond? Were they envious, resentful or angry? What was this experience like? Or, did you know someone who was favoured or privileged when you were not, like Joseph's brothers? What was this experience like?

STUDY

Read Genesis 37:1-11

- Jacob clearly loved Joseph, but was he wise or unwise in showing his favour of Joseph so openly by buying him a special coat which elevated him above his brothers by its ornateness?
- Why do you think Jacob couldn't see, or did not want to see, what should have been obvious about Joseph's brothers' attitude toward him?

- Similarly, have you ever closed your eyes to what was in front of you, perhaps with dire consequences?
- Were Joseph's brothers justified in their resentment of Joseph over his coat and being the favourite of their father? Why or why not?
- Was Joseph foolish in telling his brothers his dream or was he just excited? Have you ever opened your mouth and told others something which later you realized only alienated you from them out of jealousy?

Read Genesis 37:12-28

- Have you ever been angry at or jealous of someone else because they received a privilege or favour which you believed was not warranted? How did you deal with that jealousy and anger?
- Have you ever acted out of jealousy towards another person out of anger or spite?
- What was Jacob thinking when he sent Joseph to check on his brothers, knowing (as he surely must have) of Joseph's penchant for brutal honesty and of his brother's intense jealousy of him? Have you ever been blind to or naive about a situation as was Jacob and even Joseph? What did you miss which in hindsight you should have known or understood?
- What do you think Joseph was feeling as his brothers mistreated him, openly talked about killing him, then sold him as a slave to be taken to Egypt for selling again on the slave market? Put yourself in Joseph's place for a moment; what would you be feeling? Do you think he felt abandoned by God, too?

Read Genesis 39:1-6

- Joseph's finding favour with Potiphar and being raised to prominence in his household - prospering and experiencing blessing - is remarkable, but shows that God was with him in his dark time. Joseph's attitude surely most of been that of "making the best of a bad situation." Have you ever been in an unpleasant or difficult situation where you took a similar attitude to make the best of your bad situation? How did this turn out? Share about this as you are able. How important is our attitude in enduring hardship and difficulty or injustice at the hands of others?
- The text tells us that the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in everything he did in running Potiphar's household, but it does not get specific about what this involved. Venture

rime Minister to oversee the agricultural and economic salvation of Egypt. This leads also to the salvation of Jacob's entire family.

- Note that in this Joseph is in many ways a type or foreshadow of Christ. Both Joseph and Jesus were despised by others who were jealous, both were falsely accused, sold for silver and suffered unjustly; both were also raised to prominence, vindicated and saved many others. Joseph's statement to his brothers in 50:20-21 that what they meant for evil God meant for good applies to Jesus as well; what the religious leaders in Jesus' day meant for evil, God was at work in and through for an incredible good, our salvation.

APPLY

- The bigger picture in all this is that God is at work bringing about his larger plan, even using (though not causing) the evil actions of people in the process. Take a moment to reflect on what God's larger picture of your life might be. What larger purpose or goal might God be up to in your life, using your mistakes and failures as well as your successes and achievements, even the hardships and sufferings you have endured? What is God up to in your life?
- Which other aspect of this study has struck you the most and why? What are you going to do as a result ?
- Identify one or more truths from this study which speak to and can be applied in your life.
 - 1.
 - 2.

PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH AND FOR ONE ANOTHER

- According to need.