

Sermon Series: HOPE FOR MESSED UP FAMILIES

Sermon 1: THE DYSFUNCTIONAL DYNASTY

Genesis 37:1-36

Genesis 30:14-24 “One day during the wheat harvest, Reuben found some mandrakes growing in a field and brought them to his mother, Leah. Rachel begged Leah, ‘Please give me some of your son’s mandrakes.’ (Mandrakes grow wild in the middle east, but are difficult to find. They are prized for their fragrant, sweet tasting fruit, and were believed to help with fertility) 15 But Leah angrily replied, ‘Wasn’t it enough that you stole my husband? Now will you steal my son’s mandrakes, too?’ Rachel answered, ‘I will let Jacob sleep with you tonight if you give me some of the mandrakes.’ 16 So that evening, as Jacob was coming home from the fields, Leah went out to meet him. ‘You must come and sleep with me tonight!’ she said. ‘I have paid for you with some mandrakes that my son found.’ So that night he slept with Leah. 17 And God answered Leah’s prayers. She became pregnant again and gave birth to a fifth son for Jacob. 18 She named him Issachar, for she said, ‘God has rewarded me for giving my servant to my husband as a wife.’ 19 Then Leah became pregnant again and gave birth to a sixth son for Jacob. 20 She named him Zebulun, for she said, ‘God has given me a good reward. Now my husband will treat me with respect, for I have given him six sons.’ 21 Later she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah. 22 Then God remembered Rachel’s plight and answered her prayers by enabling her to have children. 23 She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. ‘God has removed my disgrace,’ she said. 24 And she named him Joseph, for she said, ‘May the LORD add yet another son to my family.’”

Genesis 37:3-4 “Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other children because Joseph had been born to him in his old age. So one day Jacob had a special gift made for Joseph—a beautiful coat of many colors. 4 But his brothers hated Joseph because their father loved him more than the rest of them. They couldn’t say a kind word to him.”

I) THE CALL: vv 5-10 “Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. 6 He said to them, ‘Listen to this dream I had: 7 We were binding sheaves of grain in the field, and suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to mine.’ 8 ‘Do you intend to reign over us?’ his brothers asked. ‘Will you actually rule us?’ So they hated him even more because of his dream and his statements. 9 Then Joseph had another dream and told it to his brothers. ‘Look,’ he said, ‘I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.’ 10 He told his father and brothers, but his father rebuked him and said, ‘What is this dream that you have had? Will your mother and brothers and I actually

come and bow down to the ground before you?’ 11 And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept in mind what he had said.

II) THE COLLUSION: vv 12-28 “Some time later, Joseph’s brothers had gone to pasture their father’s flocks... 13 Israel said to him, ‘Get ready; I am sending you to them.’... 14...So he sent him off from the Valley of Hebron... 18 Now Joseph’s brothers saw him in the distance, and before he arrived, they plotted to kill him. 19 ‘Here comes that dreamer!’ they said to one another. 20 ‘Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. We can say that a vicious animal has devoured him. Then we shall see what becomes of his dreams!’ 21 When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue Joseph from their hands. ‘Let us not take his life,’ he said. 22 ‘Do not shed his blood. Throw him into this pit in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him.’ Reuben said this so that he could rescue Joseph from their hands and return him to his father. 23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his coat—the robe of many colors he was wearing— 24 and they took him and threw him into the pit. Now the pit was empty, with no water in it. 25 And as they sat down to eat a meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were carrying spices, balm, and myrrh on their way down to Egypt. “26 Then Judah said to his brothers, ‘What profit will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? 27 Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay a hand on him; for he is our brother, our own flesh.’ And they agreed. 28 So when the Midianite traders passed by, his brothers pulled Joseph out of the pit and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.”

III) THE COVER UP: vv 29-35 “When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes, 30 returned to his brothers, and said, ‘The boy is gone! What am I going to do?’ 31 Then they took Joseph’s coat, slaughtered a young goat, and dipped the robe in its blood. 32 They sent the robe of many colors to their father and said, ‘We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son’s robe or not.’ 33 His father recognized it and said, ‘It is my son’s robe! A vicious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces!’ 34 Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth around his waist, and mourned for his son many days. 35 All his sons and daughters tried to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. ‘No,’ he said. ‘I will go down to Sheol mourning for my son.’ So his father wept for him.” You can’t read this without your heart breaking for Jacob and his wife Rachel. It’s hardly imaginable that a family could be this distorted by sin. But it’s recorded for all the world to read.

IV) THE CLIFFHANGER: v 36 “Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.”