



Genesis 37-41
Joseph's Dreams
From Sermon 3.21.21

Read *Genesis 37:1-11*

Review from Sunday's sermon: Much has happened in the "Jacob family" life in the previous chapters. All the text is important, but we had to move forward quickly due to time constraints. In chapter 35, Rachel gives birth to another son: Benjamin. But, she dies giving birth. Isaac also passes in that chapter. Because of Jacob's deep love for Rachel, the stage is set for more family drama and dysfunction.

1. What three factors set up the conflict and hatred in the family? 1. Playing favorites. More than just an affinity for Joseph, Jacob gave him the coat of promise. 2. Joseph was made to be the tattletale. 3. Joseph's dreams of one day ruling his family.

2. Joseph's brothers hatch the elaborate plan of selling Joseph and tricking Jacob into believing he was dead. They are thinking they got away with it all. Now read *Galatians 6:7*. How is (seemingly) getting away with something the worst thing that can happen to us? Various answers. But, include: it sets us up for repeating. We think we've outsmarted God and there are no consequences. [Simple human example: breaking the speed limit]. Sin only grows. But, God knows and records all things. Discuss

3. Read *Genesis 39:6-12*. How did Joseph respond when facing immense temptation? He ran. He knew it was far more than sinning against Potiphar (Re-read verse 9 and David's confession in *Psalms 51:3-4*)

4. How do we sometimes respond in the opposite, especially in moments/times/seasons of great trial? Various answers. Too often, we linger in the situation, getting more and more vulnerable to caving. We can find various ways to justify our sin and compromise. "I've been through so much; I deserve a little indulgence." "No one will know" "It's a victimless sin/crime". "This person did this to me; I'll get them back" "Doing the right thing didn't work; I might as well have fun".

5. When is it hardest for you to maintain your Christian character and integrity? What can you do to strengthen your faith and avoid failure? Prayer for those times, **before** those times. Resolve to run...just leave. Have accountability in place. Avoid those times, places, people.

6. Joseph served at his best, regardless of the situation. What lesson is there for us in Joseph's character? Our ethic and mindset should be the same. Joseph had a high regard for God and a sound understanding of God's nature. It is not man/our boss/leaders we are serving. As long as it's not sin, we are serving Christ in all things. We should be the best workers, employees, and servants right where God has placed us. See also *Colossians 3:22-24*

6a. See also *1 Peter 3:15-17*. How does this verse also call for a consistent Christian character? Various answers. We can't stop the world from insulting, demeaning, persecuting us. We can make sure it for being faithful Christian and not for some sin.

7. What trying event is about to hit Joseph's world? What was his/God's plan for surviving it? What scenario does it set up for the final chapters of the book? A severe worldwide famine. Joseph has Egypt stock up reserves of food for the 7-year famine. Back in Canaan, Jacob's family will need to find food.