

In The Beginning...God: Joseph's Brothers

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OK – we're wrapping up our series today

And there's so much to get to

I can't get to all of it

**So, get your Bible open {Genesis 49 – page 37}**

And get your brain engaged

And buckle your seatbelts

OK?

So, if you've not been with us

You'll need to log on to the website

Or the app

Or our YouTube channel

And catch up

If you don't know how to do any of that

We want to help

Go to our welcome / information table

And we can help you

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So, when last week ended

Joseph had been seduced by Potiphar's wife

He resisted so she framed him

Made a false allegation

And he was sent to prison

God was with him in prison

As He had been all along

And Joseph, a couple years later

Becomes the 2<sup>nd</sup> in command over all of Egypt

The most powerful nation in the world at that time

You should read that

This week

It's the Genesis 40's

Is that how you say that?

It's like the 1980's

Is 1980-1989

Well, this is the Genesis 40's

There's a lot of good stuff in there

Sorry

*Read Genesis 49:28-33*

So, Jacob is dead

Which potentially changes everything

For Joseph and his brothers

There were terrible to him

And now he has all the power in the world

What happens now?

What happens to them?

Before we answer that

We need to step back

And get a bigger picture

Of the timeline

They didn't have standard dating

Back then

So, let's just focus it on

**Joseph's life**

You may want to write this down

Or take a picture here in a minute

But you can get this information

**Straight out of eleven texts {Genesis 29:27, 30:25, 31:38, 37:2, 41:46, 41:53, 45:6, 46:21, 47:9, 47:28, 50:26}**

Joseph had 11 brothers

I give you 11 texts:

So, if we're taking this

From Joseph's life

**His birth is at year 0**

See what I'm doing

His dad at that point is 91

If any of you feel like

You're too old to work in the nursery

Just sayin'

His older brothers

Would have all been under 7

And Benjamin wasn't born yet

**So, he was sold into slavery at 17**

He was in Potiphar's house

And in prison

For the next 13 years

I'm not making these number up

I'm not guessing

Those eleven texts tell you everything

But you kind of need to like mysteries

Or geometry

At this point

After 13 years

Pharaoh pulls him out of prison

**And makes him 2<sup>nd</sup> in command**

There are 7 years of prosperity

And 7 years of famine

And in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of famine

**Joseph's family comes to Egypt**

And they all reunite

Let's talk about Benjamin for a second

How old was he at this point?

Well, we know he was at least

**6 years younger than Joseph**

Because he was born

After they left Laban's

But we don't know

How much younger

But when he arrived in Egypt

He was no older than 33

But he had 10 sons at the time

How much younger can you be?

And have 10 sons

**I'm going with 33**

They all live together

For the next 17 years

**Until Jacob dies**

We just read that

Remember Yoda?

Let me give you one more date

We know that Joseph dies

At the end of Genesis

**At age 110**

That's the last one

Are we good?

OK

*Read Genesis 50:12-18*

How long did they hang on to their own sin?

**39 years!**

39 years of uncertainty and unsettledness

And elephants in the room at every family gathering

39 years of secrets and lies

39 years of debilitating guilt and grinding shame

39 years!

Let me ask you a question:

Why didn't they deal with this before?

Why didn't they talk to Joseph?

Ask the question?

I think it's because it's a real temptation

To not deal with something

If the pain of dealing with it

Costs more than the pain of staying quiet

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I read an article on WebMD

Talking about guilt

And it said, essentially

Guilt is neutral

Guilt can be good

Leading us to accountability and good choices

But guilt can also be bad

When it's not addressed

They call that kind

Excessive guilt

**WebMD - Excessive guilt, however, is when guilt turns sour. It can lead to anxious obsessions, depressive tendencies, and physical symptoms if it's not addressed.**

The article goes on to list

Lots of possible effects of guilt:

**OCD, anxiety, depression, problems with sleep, digestive issues, muscle tension, low self-esteem, avoiding your full range of emotions, being overwhelmed by possibly making the "wrong" decision**

I thought

This is a really helpful article

It's not a religious website

Obviously

But their medical research

Is leading them the same place

Theologians have been for centuries

Long-term guilt is debilitating

So, I was reading down through the article

And I got to a headline titled

**Dealing With Guilt**

And I thought, here we go

They're going to talk about how people

Can rid themselves of this debilitating trauma

And *that* paragraph starts with:

**There's no magical cure for excessive guilt.**

Well... thanks a lot

That really helped

And then it hit me

They don't know

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No disrespect to the doctors and scientists

Who wrote this article

They're probably some of the smartest people

On the planet  
But they don't know

Listen friends

The church is essential

Remember when our culture was deciding

Which jobs were essential

And needed to keep working

Even through the pandemic

And which could stay home

Cause they didn't *really* matter

The church is essential

Our culture is beginning to unravel a bit

And it's not because they're naughty

It's because they don't know

The church is essential

Not because we're the ones who know how to be good

The church is essential

*Because we're the only ones who know how to be saved*

The church is essential

*Not because we're the ones who know who Joseph is*

The church is essential

Because we're the only ones who know who Jesus is

Far more important than

Us telling people who to vote for

Is us telling people

Who to live for

Because they don't know

**1 John 4:9 - If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

**Titus 3:5-6 - He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior**

**2 Corinthians 5:17-18a (NLT) - This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to Himself through Christ.**

This is how you get rid of "excessive guilt"

Our world is hurting

Many of us are hurting

Because we're carrying around guilt and shame

Sometimes

Like Joseph's brothers

From decades ago

Sometimes

Like Joseph's brothers

Because the pain of dealing with it

Costs more than the pain of staying quiet

Our world is hurting

Our world is hurting

Because they don't know

I don't think it's a coincidence

*That these verses*

Continues

*With these verses:*

**2 Corinthians 5:18b-20 (NLT) - God has given us this task of reconciling people to Him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And He gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making His appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!"**

There *is* a cure for excessive guilt

You & I weren't designed to live with excessive guilt

If you didn't know

Come back to God

If you did know

You've gotta tell 'em

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*Look at Genesis 50:18-21*

This is a powerful way

For Moses to end this book

This is a powerful way

For us to end this series

Let me put it up on screen

So, we all can work with it

**Genesis 50:20 (NIV) – *You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.***

Man, that's really cool

God worked through Joseph's life

For 22 years

From the time he was 17

Till the time he was 39

God was working

Joseph's brothers do sinful things

Joseph seems to be a bit arrogant

As a teen

Potiphar's wife tries to seduce him

Then, when he rejects her

She frames him

He had a lot of bad things happen to him

But God was still working

I love the New Living Translation of that verse:

**Genesis 50:20 (NLT) - You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.**

I looked at the original Hebrew

And I don't know Hebrew

But I studied it a bit

And that phrase, "you intended"

**ḥāšab (חָשַׁב) - to think, plan, calculate, imagine**

Joseph's brothers had a plan

So, Joseph is saying

*You* had a plan

But God had a

*Different plan*

Your plan was to hurt me

And God allowed it

Because He gave you freedom

To be a jerk

But that wasn't *His* plan

That was *your* plan

And God never gave up on His plan

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In fact

God had a plan for Joseph

Before *they* had a plan for Joseph

Do you remember that?

In fact, it was God's plan

And the dreams that foretold His plan

That frustrated them in the first place

That must be really cool

I mean, think of it

**God having a plan for your life {Show Eph. 2:10 NLT}**

Even before you have a plan for your life

That would be amazing

Joseph must've been really special

And think about it

**God committing to work {SHOW Romans 8:28 (NLT)}**

Everything together for good

Just because Joseph kept pursuing Him

That would be amazing

Joseph must've been really special

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So, God had dreams for Joseph's life

And He was constantly working all things together

For Joseph's good

Even though other people

Had other plans

**So where are you at in the Joseph story?**

Joseph began with great

**Potential**

God had dreams for his life

And even though he didn't understand them fully

And even though he didn't always handle them well

He had great potential

And God saw it

Some of you are right there

The young people in this church

You can do a lot of things

That'll make a lot of money

And you're going to be successful

At whatever you put your hand on

But make God your top priority

Because He makes your success

*Mean* something

And He redeems your failure

*For* something

And He heals your heartache

With *Someone*

Who cared enough to die for you

If this is you

If your life is characterized by potential

Hear these words today:

**Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT) - Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take.**

The next phase of Joseph's life was:

**Painful**

Some are right there

You remember what the potential stage felt like

You felt like God had plans for your life

You had plans for your own life

And then something

Or *multiple* somethings

Or *someone*

Derailed that plan

Heck – you may have derailed it yourself

And nowadays doesn't feel like potential

Nowadays feels like painful

If this is you

If your life nowadays is characterized by painful

Hear these words today:

**Joshua 1:9 (NLT) - This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.**

Joseph wasn't ultimately successful

Because of his resume

When he was a slave

When he was in prison

He must've been afraid and discouraged

But God was *with him*

And that's all you really need

The next phase of Joseph's life was:

**Powerful**

He was at the top of his game

He wasn't struggling financially

He wasn't struggling relationally

He was very successful in his career

And you wouldn't say it

At least not out loud

But this is where some of you are

You have worked and struggled

It's not been easy

But you're at a great place in life

You aren't struggling financially

You aren't struggling relationally

You've been very successful in your career

A couple hundred years

After Joseph died

Moses led the people

Out of slavery in Egypt

And in Deuteronomy 8

Moses is guiding the people

Right before they enter the Promised Land

He reminds them of the painful years

The years – like Joseph

When they were slaves in Egypt

The years – like Joseph

Where they felt trapped in the desert

Not sure where God was leading them

And Moses said

You're getting ready

To change stations in life

Your life is about to go from

Painful to powerful

And when it does

Don't forget the Lord your God

Because catch this

If this is you

If your life nowadays is characterized by powerful

Not painful

Hear these words today:

**Deuteronomy 8:1-18 (NLT) - Be careful to obey all the commands I am giving you today. Then you will live and multiply, and you will enter and occupy the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors. Remember how the Lord your God led you through the wilderness ... humbling you and testing you ...**

**Just as a parent disciplines a child, the Lord your God disciplines you for your own good... For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land ... But that is the time to be careful! Beware that in your plenty you do not forget the Lord your God ...**

**For when you have become full and prosperous and have built fine homes to live in ... be careful! Do not become proud at that time and forget the Lord your God, who rescued you ...**

**He did all this so you would never say to yourself, 'I have achieved this wealth with my own strength and energy.' Remember the Lord your God. He is the one who gives you power to be successful.**

We've covered three phases in Joseph's life

Potential

Painful

Powerful

But there's one more

And like the other three

Several of us are right here

And of course, it has to start with a P

**Patriarchal**

Settle down

Some of you are thinking I'm talking gender

I'm not

The last five verses of Genesis

Describe the last years of Joseph's life

And I want you to notice something

Look later

It doesn't say anything

In those verses

About pseudo legacy

Not a word about Pharaoh

Not a mention of silver or gold or possessions or positions

Those last verses are about true legacy

About God

And about family

About what really matters

Some in this room are here

There are more years behind you

Than ahead

The things that used to dominate your thoughts

Aren't that important anymore

And you have an opportunity

To be a patriarch

For those in your life

You may retire vocationally

But do not retire spiritually

Do not just leave it to the younger people

Continue to use your faith

Use your wisdom

Use the experience that you paid for in the painful and powerful years

To lend a hand to the one behind you

If this is you

If your life nowadays is characterized not by potential or painful or powerful

But by patriarchal

Hear these words today:

**2 Timothy 2:1b-3 (NCV) - Be strong in the grace we have in Christ Jesus. You should teach people whom you can trust the things you and many others have**

**heard me say. Then they will be able to teach others. Share in the troubles we have like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.**

WellSpring needs

Scratch that

Our world needs

Sometimes you'll hear people say

"We need the next generation to..."

I'm flippin that around

"We need our patriarchs

Men & women of faith

Who have more wisdom and experience and time

Then they've ever had

To invest in a true legacy

God

Family

And what really matters

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Where are you at in the story?