



Walnut Street Church of Christ
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Happily Ever After – Lesson Two
Dreams Do Come True
God Used Joseph, A Dreamer, To Save His People
(Genesis 37:39-47)

Happily Ever After -- Theme: Dreams do come true -- God used Joseph, a dreamer, to save His people from starvation. (Genesis 37:39-47) The Memory Verse for this lesson is Genesis 50:20. “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.”

There are many great Bible characters. None surpasses Joseph in goodness, moral excellence or godliness. He lived his life close to God and he was dear to God. Joseph was a righteous man. He had a great influence for the work of God. The story of Joseph is the story of a man who became a slave and finally became the Savior of thousands to the providence of God. Joseph was a man of great purity of heart. The life of Joseph should inspire us to live a more godly life.

Joseph was Jacob’s favorite son. The Bible says, “Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.” (Genesis 37:3) Possibly the reason for this love was that Joseph was the first-born son of Jacob and his favorite wife, Rachel. Joseph had two unusual dreams. The meaning of the streams was unmistakable. His parents and older brothers would bow before him. Joseph was a Shepherd boy who was loved by his father. He was hated by his brothers. “And when his

brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.” (Genesis 37:4)

Joseph was a dreamer. “And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him...” (Genesis 37:5-11) The lesson of Joseph is a lesson of the overruling providence of God. Joseph’s ungodly brothers plotted to murder him. Ruben persuaded them to put him in a pit. Joseph’s brothers became “men-stealers” and sold Joseph into slavery. This is how Joseph came to be a slave in Egypt. He was despised by his brothers, but loved by God. Joseph became an instrument in the hand of God. God was able to overrule the evil and bless Joseph and his family with good.

Twenty pieces of silver: Joseph is sold as a slave for twenty pieces of silver and his father was deceived into thinking he was dead with his bloody coat. These very sad words describe the actions of Joseph brothers, “And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content. Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.” (Genesis 37:25-28) After selling Joseph as a slave, they took his coat of many colors to their father. They had soaked it with blood to make him think Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. “And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood; And they sent the coat of

many colours, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no.” (Genesis 37:31-32) The grief of their own father did not soften the hearts of these evil, lying men.

Joseph withstood the test: Joseph was sold to a leading man in Egypt named Potiphar. He was placed in charge of all upon the first house. Potiphar’s wife pursued Joseph. He withstood the test at Potiphar’s house and was put in prison under false charges. While in prison, he met Pharaoh’s butler and baker. He interpreted their dreams. For one there would be blessings; for the other there would be death. (Genesis 39-40) After several years of imprisonment Pharaoh’s butler remembered Joseph. This led to Joseph having an opportunity to interpret Pharaoh’s dreams. Joseph was eventually made second ruler in Egypt. (Genesis 41) The famines that Joseph had predicted came, just as he had said. The famine was so bad that his brothers came to Egypt to buy food. Through a series of visits and events Joseph eventually made himself known to his brothers. (Genesis 42-45) If Joseph had not come to Egypt, thousands of the Jews would have perished, including his own family. God brought the Jews or the Israelites to Egypt in order to save that remnant through whom the Messiah would be born. The events that happened with Joseph and the Jews in Egypt are a great demonstration of the power of God. God’s overruling Providence put Joseph in that position of respect, honor, influence and power. As second ruler of Egypt, he was able to save his people from starvation.

Joseph saved his people from starvation. God allowed Joseph to be raised from prison, often a place of death. He was raised to a position of power in Egypt. “And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.” (Genesis 41:42-44) Joseph used his position wisely to bless Egypt, many people in the world and especially his own people. Joseph was acknowledged to be the Savior of the people. They were also willing for him to be their ruler, as those early dreams had predicted. “And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.” (Genesis 47:25) Joseph was a mighty man of God. His life teaches us what God can do with a willing man. God’s providence is real. “And we know

that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

Lessons from the life of Joseph: Evil did not win in the life of Joseph and evil will not win if we are faithful to God. (2 Timothy 3:12-14) Evil people often reap tragic earthly consequences for their evil actions. They then also must face eternal consequences. God’s overruling Providence is at work in the life of his faithful children. The words of Romans 8:28 will always be true, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” No doubt Joseph felt discouraged at times, but he knew God was at work. His wonderful statement should encourage us. “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.” (Genesis 50:20) God is willing to lead our lives to His glory if we are willing to follow. God raised up Joseph for his work and he is looking for godly men and women today to accomplish great things in His Kingdom. Let us never forget that God is in control. “And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.” (Daniel 4:32)

Make up your mind now to allow God to use you like he used Joseph. To become a Christian you must hear the word of God (Romans 10:17), believe in Jesus as Lord and Christ (John 8:24), repent of all sins (Acts 17:30-31), confess Jesus as Lord (Romans 10:9-10) and be baptized into Christ. (Galatians 3:26-27) As Christians let us remember that, “He that endureth to the end shall be saved.” (Matthew 10:22) Joseph also teaches us that we can do good for God even in our dying. “By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.” (Hebrews 11:21-22) Joseph wanted the Jews to understand that God would bring them out of Egypt. They would be brought back to the land into which the Lord had promised to send the Messiah.

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