JOSEPH'S COAT OF MANY COLORS

Read GENESIS 37 (below I have printed some excerpts to highlight some specific verses)

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him. 4 When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

5 Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. 6 He said to them, “Listen to this dream I had: 7 We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it.”

8 His brothers said to him, “Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?” And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

9 Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. “Listen,” he said, “I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” 10 When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, “What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?” 11 His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

12 Now his brothers had gone to graze their father’s flocks near Shechem, 13 and Israel said to Joseph, “As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I am going to send you to them.” 14 “Very well,” he replied. So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan.

15 But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him. 16 “Here comes that dreamer!” they said to each other. 17 “Come now, let’s kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we’ll see what comes of his dreams.”

18 When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. “Let’s not take his life,” he said. 19 “Don’t shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don’t lay a hand on him.” Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father.

20 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing—and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

21 As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt. 22 Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? 23 Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.” His brothers agreed. 24 So when the Midianite merchants
came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels[b] of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

31 Then they got Joseph’s robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. 32 They took the ornate robe back to their father and said, “We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son’s robe.” 33 He recognized it and said, “It is my son’s robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces.”

34 Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days. 35 All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. “No,” he said, “I will continue to mourn until I join my son in the grave.” So his father wept for him.

36 Meanwhile, the Midianites[c] sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh’s officials, the captain of the guard.

What are your first impressions of this passage? List one or two things that “stuck out” to you – something that resonated with you.

Joseph was a teenager whose 10 older brothers hated him enough to leave him in a pit and had even considered killing him. If the Jerry Springer show had been on tv during Old Testament times, Jacob’s family definitely would have been favorite guests. 😊

Joseph was Jacob’s favorite because he was the son of his old age and of his favorite wife (Rachel, for whom he had worked 14 years to marry!) How do you think it felt for Joseph to be his father’s obvious favorite? Do you think the fact that his brothers hated him and never said a kind thing to him tarnished the fun of being the favorite?

What are some ways favoritism has caused problems in your family or circle of friends? What is the biblical answer to playing favorites?

I know that at times we have all felt like we are in a “pit” – health problems, financial, spiritual, relationship problems. Some pits others have “thrown” us in. Tomorrow we will begin to see how God can use the pits we may be in for His glory.
Week 9 Devotions
“The Truth Behind the Flannelgraph” - Joseph

DAY 2

JOSEPH’S “LOST” COAT

GENESIS 39 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh’s officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there.

2 The LORD was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. 3 When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, 4 Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. 5 From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. 6 So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph’s care; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.

Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, 7 and after a while his master’s wife took notice of Joseph and said, “Come to bed with me!” 8 But he refused. “With me in charge,” he told her, “my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. 9 No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?” 10 And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

11 One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. 12 She caught him by his cloak and said, “Come to bed with me!” But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.

13 When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, 14 she called her household servants. “Look,” she said to them, “this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. 15 When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house.”

16 She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home. 17 Then she told him this story: “That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. 18 But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house.” 19 When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, “This is how your slave treated me,” he burned with anger. 20 Joseph’s master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king’s prisoners were confined.

In the passage above, circle or highlight every time that you see the phrase “The Lord was with Joseph” or a phrase indicating God’s blessing because of Joseph.
Joseph had just been sold into slavery and already he could see God working in his life. Over a short period of time, he became in charge of everything in Potiphar’s house except the food that he ate.

Potiphar’s wife may have been the first “desperate housewife.” Verse 7 in the NIV says she “took notice” of Joseph and the KJV says that she “cast her eyes” upon him. She talked to him “day after day” trying to convince him to sleep with her. She watched him, flirted with him and dreamed about him until her thoughts caused her to take action. How can we keep from falling into the same type of sin?

Read Job 31:1 How would this verse help keep us from sin?

Genesis 39:9 tells us whom Joseph would sin against if he gave in to the temptation she was offering. Who was it?

In verse 12, Joseph lost his coat, but kept his integrity. If we find ourselves in a situation where we are being tempted, the best thing to do is to FLEE! What are some situations in your life that you need to “flee” to keep yourself from temptation?

We all make mistakes because we are human. Let’s take some radical, intentional, prayerful steps to keep ourselves out of situations where we may choose to sin. What is one step we can take to keep our integrity?
DAY 3

JOSEPH'S “ORANGE JUMPSUIT”

GENESIS 39 19 When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, “This is how your slave treated me,” he burned with anger. 20 Joseph’s master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king’s prisoners were confined.

But while Joseph was there in the prison, 21 the LORD was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. 22 So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. 23 The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph’s care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

Joseph had just been removed from a position of much power and has been thrown in prison because of a lie. Instead of getting bitter at the situation (or God), he faithfully works as he has done before regardless of where he is.

Read Colossians 3:23-24. How does this verse describe what Joseph was doing in prison?

GENESIS 40 tells us of an incident in the prison that occurred between the king’s cupbearer and the king’s baker who had Joseph interpret dreams for them. One was released and restored to his former position on Pharaoh’s birthday (as was the custom to release a prisoner on his birthday), the other was impaled. Joseph asked the cupbearer to remember him. Sadly, he didn’t.

Sometimes we feel forgotten – by others, but especially by God. When you feel that way, how can the promise in Hebrews 13:8 help us to see the truth and overcome doubt?

List three ways that God has been faithful in your past that can remind you of His faithfulness in the present and how He will be faithful in the future.
DAY 4

JOSEPH’S ROBE OF FINE LINEN

Two years later, when Pharaoh had two dreams that no one else could interpret, the cupbearer remembered Joseph’s interpretation of his dream while in prison. He tells Pharaoh about Joseph and Pharaoh sends for him. Joseph tells Pharaoh that he can’t interpret the dream, but that God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires (Genesis 41:16)

Pharaoh’s dreams involve cows and heads of grain. (Genesis 41:17-24) Joseph tells Pharaoh that Egypt will have seven years of abundance, then seven years of famine.

Joseph is then so bold as to give Pharaoh a plan:

GENESIS 41:33 “And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt. 34 Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. 35 They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept in the cities for food. 36 This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine.”

The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials. 38 So Pharaoh asked them, “Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?”

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. 40 You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.”

So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt.”

Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph’s finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. 43 He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command and people shouted before him, “Make way!” Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt.

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, but without your word no one will lift hand or foot in all Egypt.” 45 Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah and gave him Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, to be his wife. And Joseph went throughout the land of Egypt.

Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from Pharaoh’s presence and traveled throughout Egypt. 47 During the seven years of abundance the land produced plentifully. 48 Joseph collected all the food produced in those seven years of abundance in Egypt and stored it in the cities. In each city
he put the food grown in the fields surrounding it. 49 Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure.

50 Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On. 51 Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh[^5] and said, “It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father’s household.” 52 The second son he named Ephraim[^1] and said, “It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering.”

53 The seven years of abundance in Egypt came to an end, 54 and the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had said. There was famine in all the other lands, but in the whole land of Egypt there was food. 55 When all Egypt began to feel the famine, the people cried to Pharaoh for food. Then Pharaoh told all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph and do what he tells you.”

56 When the famine had spread over the whole country, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout Egypt. 57 And all the world came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe everywhere.

We decide the names of our children because we think it sounds cute, or we know and value someone who has the same name. Or, we choose to NOT name our children based on prior experience with a person with the same name. To the Hebrews a name was not a label, or a tool to distinguish one person from another; a person’s name was viewed as equivalent to the person himself. A person’s name signified their person, worth, character, reputation, authority, will, and ownership.

What was significant about the names of Joseph’s sons?
DAY 5

JOSEPH’S “ROBE” OF FORGIVENESS

Because of the length of the story of Joseph’s reconciliation with his brothers and family, I am going to highlight the “exciting” parts. If you would like to read the whole story, read Genesis 42-45.

Today, we will highlight some verses in chapters 42-44, but primarily focus on chapter 45.

Chapter 42 begins with Jacob sending his sons to Egypt to buy grain to save his family from starvation. This journey would be about six weeks round trip, a huge undertaking because they had to take all the supplies they needed at least for the trip there. It was also a dangerous trip because of them being foreigners – they could be arrested and enslaved.

When they finally make it to Egypt, we are told in verse 7 that they don’t recognize Joseph, but that he recognizes them.

What is his request of them in Genesis 42:18-20? What is their reaction?

What is Joseph’s response in verse 24?

When the brothers return with their youngest brother, Benjamin (also a son of Rachel – like Joseph) what is his reaction? (Genesis 43:29-30)

More drama ensues as the brothers leave to go home with their second amount of grain. As they leave Joseph’s house, he has one of his servants put a cup in with the grain in Benjamin’s bag to make it appear that Benjamin had stolen it. Next, he sends the servant after them to accuse Benjamin of stealing the silver cup. The punishment will be for him to become Joseph’s slave.

The other brothers plead with Joseph to not do this or their father will die and they would be responsible for causing his death from a broken heart. At this pleading, Joseph reveals himself to his brothers. GENESIS 45 Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still living?” But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.

4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come close to me.” When they had done so, he said, “I am your
brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

“So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. Now hurry back to my father and say to him, ‘This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don’t delay. You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me—you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.’

“You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is really I who am speaking to you. Tell my father about all the honor accorded me in Egypt and about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly.”

Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.

WOW! What an ending to a crazy, drama filled life! This story had deception and violence and slander and slavery and lust and abandonment and power and heartbreak and terror. But, it ultimately ended in forgiveness.

Did Joseph’s brother’s deserve forgiveness?

What do you think of this statement? “Unforgiveness is like eating poison while waiting for the other person to die?” Have you seen that to be true in your life or in the life of someone you know?

Often when we forgive, the other person doesn’t deserve it, or sometimes doesn’t even ask for it. But, do we really deserve God’s forgiveness?

Does forgiveness eliminate consequences for sinful behavior?

Is there someone you need to forgive? Spend time praying about what is holding you back, then ask God to help you in extending forgiveness to that person. Forgiveness is a choice that we often have to renew – tomorrow, next week, next month, next year. Satan would love for us to become bitter. Love pursues forgiveness.