

HEROES OF THE FAITH

Sunday, July 30, 2017
Pastor Don Denyes

Introduction to Genesis 39

The Christian life is fundamentally about living in God's presence. When Adam and Eve first sinned in the Garden of Eden, their greatest punishment was not being kicked out of the garden itself, but to be separated from God. Likewise, when Cain murdered his brother, he too suffered greatest punishment when he went away from the presence of the LORD (Gen. 4:16). The redemption of humanity, then, is about God restoring His presence and favor to the same people who sinned and rebelled against Him. This will all come to a climax when Jesus returns and God Himself dwells in our midst once again (Rev. 21:3).

In the story of Joseph, we see a single instance of that redemption being played out. Despite suffering the effects of living in a fallen world, Joseph was able to experience God's presence. It did not come by way of a flashing light and sound of trumpets, but it came by way of suffering—first as a slave, then as a prisoner. Yet, in all these things Joseph was able to really commune with God—the greatest good of all.

Context

Genesis 39 resumes the story of Joseph following an interlude about one of Joseph's older brothers, Judah (Gen. 38). In that story, Judah's character is marked by deception, infidelity, and sexual incontinence. Joseph's story, in contrast, is one of fidelity to God and earthly master, other's being deceived to his detriment, and finally, sexual continence demonstrated through resisting temptation. This contrast between the two brothers demonstrates God's faithfulness in continuing the course of redemption through broken people and broken circumstances. In this way, God is shown to be the only One through whom it is possible to be saved.

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

“Prison Has Its Perks”

Read Genesis 39

- I. God was with Joseph when he...
 - a. Served in Potiphar’s house
 - i. Time: Oppression
 - ii. Perspective: Sovereignty
- II. God was with Joseph when he was...
 - a. Sought by Potiphar’s wife
 - i. Time: Temptation
 - ii. Perspective: Holiness

How to Handle Temptation

- Recognize sin offends God
- Remove any opportunity
- Run, if need be!
- Rely on God’s promises

- III. God was with Joseph when he...
 - a. Suffered in Potiphar’s prison
 - i. Time: Frustration
 - ii. Perspective: Hope

Discuss

- 1) In the same way that God was “with” Joseph uniquely among those in his time, God is also “with” those who are in Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit (see Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5). Why, then, is it so difficult to “sense” or “experience” God’s presence on a day-to-day basis?

- 2) Pastor Don began the sermon by stating that God sees everything—even what is done in secret. Does this truth comfort you or make you anxious? Why?

- 3) What season of Joseph’s life (oppression, temptation, frustration) do you most resonate with right now? Why?

- 4) Read Matthew 4:1-11. What do you notice about the way Jesus faced temptation? What can we learn from Him as we face temptations in our own lives?

- 5) Perhaps you’re not going through the same kinds of difficulties that Joseph did in his life, but there are certainly people you know who are. What can you do to encourage them to persevere in the midst of their trials and suffering?