

Genesis: From Creation to New Creation

Genesis 39:1-23

"Flee From Temptation"– August 27, 2023



Introduction

Advertisers would like for us to believe that if we just try their product, order from their store, or participate in their activity that we will find happiness and contentment. But the happiness is temporary and does not provide the contentment for which our souls long.

If life goes according to your plan - the right school, job, mate, house, etc. - you might say that you are blessed. Yet when plans fail, relationships fall apart, dreams are shattered or illness lingers, you may not feel blessed. This chapter of Genesis will challenge the world's shallow view of contentment. There is something better - a contentment that is beyond the reach of outward circumstances. There is One upon which we can fasten our hope.

At first glance, we may think that this chapter is about avoiding sexual temptation. That lesson IS there, but the main point of the text has to do with God's presence. (Vs. 2, 23) Whether up or down, God's people have hope, because God is with them.

Sermon Outline

1. Scene One: A light in a dark place Vs. 1-6
2. Scene Two: Tested by fire Vs. 7-20
3. Scene Three: Walking by faith Vs. 21-23

Read & Discuss

1. Read vs. 1 – 6

Here, we pick up where chapter 37 left off. Joseph would have been aware of God's promise to his great-grandfather. ([Genesis 12:3](#)) This promise was passed down to Isaac and Jacob. He enjoyed Jacob's favoritism. His father had given him a position of authority over his brothers, and God had given him dreams about a future authority. He would have considered himself blessed. How would you define blessing in your life? Are there circumstances in your life that have caused you to feel blessed?

His jealous brothers took matters into their own hands to get rid of Joseph. Ultimately, they sold him into slavery. He was taken to Egypt and sold as a slave. He had been betrayed by his brothers and was far away from home. You might presume that God was angry with Joseph, but we see God **was** with Joseph. Are there circumstances, struggles, or trials that you have experienced that have left you wondering if God was angry with you or that God had abandoned you?

Joseph's life was extremely hard, but it didn't mean that God had abandoned him or that God was angry with him. God's plan was not derailed. Joseph flourished. He didn't complain; he worked hard for Potiphar. Ultimately everything rested in the hands of a sovereign God, not in all Joseph did. Potiphar noticed this. ([vs. 3](#))

Christian workers will shine in the midst of a dark place, blessing coworkers and bosses when working hard and following God's commands. Does your life look the way you thought it would look? What if God has you, as His child, in your current trial to bless the people around you?

2. Read vs. 7 – 20

Potiphar's wife was used to ordering Joseph around. She ordered him to sleep with her. She did it day-after-day to wear him down. He **was** tempted with sex, but also with the possibility of losing his job/position if he didn't. Have there been times when you have been tempted to compromise your beliefs because of the threat of dire consequences?

Sometimes, Potiphar's wife would be a bit more subtle. Temptation can come that way to us to justify sin. But Joseph didn't listen to her. What is different about Joseph? How does he overcome temptation? Notice three things:

- Joseph entered the room knowing right from wrong. The Christian ethic is based on what the Creator says to us in His Word. Are you standing on the rock of God's word? Are you confident about what God's Word says is right and wrong? If not, you are vulnerable.
- Joseph didn't compromise in the small things. Sometimes the best approach to temptation is to NOT have a conversation with it. Just flee. ([Proverbs 4:14-15](#)) Are you flirting with the line of sin? Are you trying to see how close you can get to the line?
- Joseph loved God more than what temptation offered. We are lured and enticed by our desire. ([James 1:14](#)) To overcome temptation, we have to put off the old man, but it also comes down to loving and valuing God more than what temptation offers. It starts with a heart change. ([John 3](#); [Ezekiel 11:19](#)) Then, we must cultivate a relationship with God by praying, listening to God in His word, gathering with His people, disciplining each other, and obeying God - walking in the light that we know.

Potiphar's wife didn't give up, but Joseph fled. This wounded her pride, so she fabricated a lie that Joseph assaulted her. Normally, the punishment was death, but Potiphar must have believed that Joseph was innocent, so he threw Joseph into prison. Things had been looking up, but now he was in prison, shackled. He had done what was right. Where was God in this? When we do the right thing, there are times that we may think that God owes us. We may not say it aloud, but we may function that way. When our expectations are not met, our hearts are put on display. (Like the Prodigal son's brother in [Luke 15:25-32](#)) Are there ways that you are doing the right thing for selfish reasons?

3. Read vs. 21 – 23

Where was God? He **was** with Joseph. Joseph was betrayed by his brother and sold into slavery. The Lord was with Joseph. ([vs. 2](#)) Working as a slave in Potiphar's house, the Lord caused all that Joseph did to succeed. Then he was falsely accused and thrown into prison. The Lord was with him, showing him steadfast love. ([vs. 23](#))

This may not be our initial assessment, and Joseph may have wrestled with this as well. There was no narrator telling Joseph how it would all turn out. God was using this to transform Joseph into a wise leader who would save the lives of many. Nothing was wasted. God was using it. Joseph would be in a position to save people during a coming famine.

Worse than any physical famine, our sin leaves us in a spiritual famine. The wages of our sin is death. Joseph points us to Jesus who enters our spiritual famine as the Bread of Life. ([John 6:35](#)) Out of love for us, Jesus went to the cross to atone for the sin of the world so that we could call God our Father and know for certain that He would never ever abandon us. Jesus rose from the dead completing our redemption. This is the gospel - the good news. God in Christ calls everyone to turn from their sin that leads to death and come to God who gives life. Have you trusted in Christ today?

This text is a reminder for us to continue to trust and obey God and to not to judge the loving kindness of God by our circumstances. When our world is falling apart, it is natural to want something to hold on to, but instead of some-thing, He gives us Someone. We must cling to the truth of what God promises us and proves to be true in Jesus. ([Hebrews 13:5-6](#)) Are you holding on to Jesus today? Do your current circumstances cause you to doubt God's presence, care and love for you? God is with you. He loves you. He will never abandon you. Trust Him to carry through. What promises in God's word have helped you through dark times?

Prayer of Response

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand*, *believe*, *desire*, or *do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come. If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at fbcum.org

Next week's sermon text: we turn to Genesis 40:1-23 "Enduring Faith"
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