

## ***Genesis 39:6-12 Flee From Sin 9/23/18***

*So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him he had no concern about anything but the food he ate.*

*Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. <sup>7</sup>And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me." <sup>8</sup>But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. <sup>9</sup>He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" <sup>10</sup>And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.*

*<sup>11</sup>But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house, <sup>12</sup>she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house.*

(Pastor prays)

The Bible is as current as today's headline stories, and in front of us is a boiling sex scandal involving a young intern and a powerful well-placed leader.

As you read this story, you immediately feel the lessons of morality dropping from the page, lessons that remind us to be more careful with what we say and who we are with, lessons about being honorable and respectful and aware.

My goodness, to think about what you are doing or saying. A picture on Snapchat, a comment on Facebook or a text can have poisonous, long-lasting dangers. That's one lesson. You can read this story and cultivate the lessons for yourself about morality and, specifically, sexual morality. But morals aren't enough and morals aren't the point. Your morals are a reflection of your heart, and the heart is *always* the issue.

In this story, Joseph's moral actions are the reflection of what he treasures most. That most treasured possession guides our moral actions, and part of what I want to do today is to convince you of what Christianity is — the treasuring of Christ above all things and all people. Last week we decided that Christ is the blessing. I'd like to expand on that today and say...

## **Christ is the Blessing and Sin is the Enemy**

I'd like to do a little of what I've done before and walk through the passage for a few minutes and point out some things. Then I'll offer five lessons from the text. Let's look at it together. What are some lessons for believers?

### **We Must Be Hyper-Vigilant**

Let me show you what I mean. Put the last part of verse 6 and the first part of verse 7 together and you know that trouble is brewing. Verse 6 tells us Joseph is an impressive young man. He's not just a really hard-working man. His work is successful but, on top of that, he's built like a government mule and has striking good looks.

We need to be aware of Joseph's background. He was kidnapped, stripped, abandoned, sold like an animal and branded as a slave. It's been a while since somebody looked at him like Potiphar's wife is doing. Verse 7 says after some time she gave him a very clear look. She was obviously and overtly looking at him, the kind of look that you would notice. It was an uncomfortable, objectifying look that tells him she wants more than just another glass of tea. It's where men and women who are believers, especially in our day, must be hyper-vigilant.

Remember what Peter wrote in 1 Peter 5: 8: *Be sober-minded; be watchful.*

*Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.* A hyper-vigilance that stems from the inestimable value of the blood of Jesus at the cross. If you are a Christian, Jesus' blood is shed for you. You are not your own. Paul writes you were bought at a price. Worship God with your bodies. Be hyper-vigilant of what you see, hear, who you are with and where. Be careful of social media.

### **We Must Learn Contentment**

Let's go back to the scene. Look at her proposition and his speech. Let's look at verse 7-9. *And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me." 8 But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. 9 He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything*

*from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"*

Potiphar's wife makes quite a proposition. It's almost a command. But when you read verse 8 and part of 9, you get a sense of Joseph's settled attitude. Joseph looked at what he had, all that God had done, all of the provisions that God had provided and rejoiced in it. You see here is a vicious problem. Most of us look at what we *don't* have and we are upset over our lack instead of being grateful for what we *have*. We are often resentful for what we *don't* have. You know that coveting is a gateway sin. It leads to all the others, and the greatest defense against coveting is contentment.

The Apostle Paul spoke to this in Philippians 4:12-13 . *I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. <sup>13</sup> I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*

He didn't think he could score the winning run, leap tall buildings, or win the lottery. Paul wanted people to know that it's through the person and work of Jesus, His life, His death on the cross, His ascension, and our union with Him in faith. What he is saying is that true contentment is found through Jesus. And when you are satisfied in the purity of Jesus, you're not hungry for the trash of this world. We must be hyper-vigilant. We must learn contentment.

## **We Must Understand the Nature and Danger of Sin**

You can see and even feel this in Joseph's speech, especially the latter part of it in verse 9 when he asks rhetorical questions. To explore the fullness of this rhetorical question, I'm going to borrow some of James Montgomery Boyce's most basic thoughts. Let's break the question down.

The first important word is "I." How can I do this great wickedness? I who have known the one true God... I who have benefited from His grace... I who have been taught the difference between right and wrong... I who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus. How could I *do* such a wicked thing? Especially after all God has done *in* and *for* me. How could I do this?

The next important word is “do.” How can I *do* this great wickedness. As long as temptation is in the mind, there is still hope for victory. Temptation in itself is not a sin. In fact, Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:13. *No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.* You see, it's the *doing* that's the sin. If I do, I have sinned and the battle is lost. If I do, I have denied my profession of faith. I have denied Christ.

That last phrase in verse 9—how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? It's important, especially in regard to sexual sin, that we recognize that it is sin and it's terrible. That last phrase, a sin against God, and that's really the bottom line isn't it? That sin is against *God*. It's what David prayed in Psalm 51. Against you and you alone, oh God, have I sinned. And the only hope for forgiveness is found at the cross of Christ. We must be hyper-vigilant. We must learn contentment. We must understand the danger.

## **We Must Learn Not to Dance With the Devil**

Let's pick up the story and notice the relentless pressure and aggression. She's trying to wear him down. It worked with Samson. You'll notice in verse 10, not only would he not *lie* with her, he wouldn't be *beside* her and *avoided* her. In verse 11, his duties put him in a bad spot, and in verse 12 it happens: she catches him. This is a unique scripture. Proverbs 5-7 says the woman seduces with words, but man defiles with force. Her attack is unique and catches him off guard and he did the only right thing: he broke away. He left his garment and fled. Man, sometimes the only option is outright running away. Get out. Take me home. Call parents. Stop the car. Put an end to it. Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:22, *So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.* I want to close this message with one last thing we need to learn.

## **We Must Learn the Joy of God's Grace**

Remember, Joseph is a foreshadowing of Christ. He points to Jesus, and Hebrews reminds us of something so beautiful about Jesus. Hebrews 4:15-16 says, *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in*

*every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.* Grace at the cross of Jesus. You don't actually know how amazing God's grace is until you have felt the weight of sinning. And that's what the cross of Jesus is about. The Lord's Supper helps us to remember. Christ died for our sins and, because of that, we are forgiven and receive grace.

*(Pastor explains The Lord's Supper and prays)*