

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

MARCH 7 - 11, 2022

SERMON SERIES

March 6 - April 3

What God Intends for Good

LIFE
OF
JOSEPH

MONDAY

Genesis 39:1

Integrity—Despite Our Past

Having read the amazing story of Joseph as a young boy, the hatred of his brothers, the deep love of his father Jacob, and the choice made between death and slavery, this first verse of Genesis 39 appears almost anti-climactic: “*Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt.*” Through the actions of his own family, Joseph had been exiled to a foreign land, a different culture, a new language, and the potential for a long and lonely life as a slave in a stranger’s land. But Joseph knew God and faithful contentment despite external circumstances.

I often wonder how I might have felt in these circumstances. How unjust! How unfair! What did “I” do to deserve this? Has God forgotten me, or is He too busy to care about me? Our past life—and it is our own story because no two lives are exactly the same—can easily become a fork in the road of life to making a choice of life “owes me” or God is with me yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

As we read in this chapter, Joseph definitely took the “high road,” trusting God. There are biblical narratives on struggles or questioning conversations with God that we read in the life stories of Jonah, Jacob, Elisha ... But Joseph carried on with excellence. We read,

“The LORD was with Joseph so that he prospered” (v. 2). Joseph took the choice to honor God through a life of integrity despite his past!

To expand, the English word *integrity* evolves from the Latin adjective *integer*, meaning “whole or complete.” It is generally explained as “an undivided or unbroken completeness” or “a state of being complete or whole.” Joseph made a conscious decision not to be broken, not to be separated from God, to excel showing others that the LORD was with him, and to be a witness to us today that it is not what we have experienced that defines our integrity, but how we reflect the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, our perfect model of integrity. Is this how others would see you today?

QUESTIONS

Have you ever felt “unjustly treated,” perhaps even momentarily “forgotten by God”? Would others see you today as, like Jesus, a “perfect model of integrity”?

PRAYERS FOR GTI HOPE

Glenkirk is bringing the light of literacy and the message of peace to the Madiya people in Maharashtra, India. This three-year project started in November 2021 with a 10-month all-encompassing literacy program for 450 men and women. Pray for protection for the students and teachers, for ears that hear and for an abundant harvest.

TUESDAY

Genesis 39:1-10

Integrity—Despite Our Circumstances

Joseph's rapid change in circumstances would have been the perfect script today for a new Netflix or Oscar-winning mega movie. Joseph is successful (v. 3), he is favored (v. 4), he has power (v. 4), he had "lead actor looks" (v. 6), he was in charge (v. 8), and he wins our hearts when he refuses to compromise his walk with God (v. 9).

It is hard to believe that this is the same Joseph who was stripped, thrown into an empty cistern, reluctantly spared by his own brothers, who then sold him as a slave to foreign traders. What a huge change in circumstances! It would be easy to imagine Joseph now trying to convince himself that he deserves a little fun—that the world owes him! In fact, we may even have empathized with him if he planned a little pity party—"enjoy today because the past has been really horrible."

But as the character of Joseph is revealed, we discover that this is not who Joseph is. Even in the unexpected and remarkable circumstances of a new and prosperous life, he was emphatic regarding not sinning against his God. Joseph was a man of deep conviction, unwilling to compromise, a man of integrity. **Integrity** means following your moral or ethical convictions and doing the right thing **in all circumstances**—even if no one is watching you.

It would have been easy for Joseph to submit to the seduction of Potiphar's wife. There was no local community to judge him, his father thought he was dead, and his brothers had disowned him. It was just him—no one was watching. However, despite these circumstances and without mentoring, advice, or counseling, Joseph did the right thing. Joseph never wavered in his absolute conviction that God's way was the right way and his way.

Circumstances can easily deter us from a life of integrity. Circumstances can, in fact, be Satan's greatest weapon in preventing us from growing in the knowledge of our Savior, Jesus Christ. The quiet whisper of "nobody is watching" or "no one will ever find out" are the voices of seduction when our walk with Christ is tested. Several generations later, David prays this word to the LORD: *"May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope, LORD, is in You"* (Psalm 25:21).

QUESTIONS

How do you uphold your integrity before God in all circumstances?
How will your day look different accordingly, despite your circumstances?

PRAYERS FOR GTI HOPE

COVID pandemic and restrictions have decreased Scripture distribution and in-country revenue of GTi HOPE's Indian partner. Religious gatherings on weekends are discouraged to contain the spread of the virus (although large Hindu festivals have continued to take place). Pray that both supply and demand for Scriptures returns to normal levels.

WEDNESDAY

Genesis 39:10-23

Integrity—Despite Our Humanity

Joseph, by all accounts, was an intelligent man. Although we are reminded several times in the Scriptures that the “*LORD was with him,*” he was still a man living each day just like you and me. And probably, just like you and me, Joseph felt that he was entitled to recognition, rewards, and pleasure—after all that he had been through in his short life.

Day after day he is approached by Potiphar’s wife, and yet Joseph refuses “*to go to bed with her or even be with her*” (39:10). Even after being “*framed*” there is no vengeance or defense from Joseph as he is placed in prison. Joseph rises to a leadership position and was successful “*because the LORD was with [Joseph] and gave him success in whatever he did*” (v. 23). In prison he interprets the cupbearer’s dream. Afterward, in his humanity Joseph asks to be remembered by mentioning himself to Pharaoh that he might be released from prison (40:14). Then for the first time Joseph recounts his past and states his innocence (v. 15).

Integrity is when your character aligns with your convictions. Despite being falsely imprisoned and forgotten by his fellow prisoners, Joseph does not show any blame or harshness to Potiphar, Potiphar’s wife, or the cupbearer. Joseph’s character, his conviction to please and

walk with God, was aligned with the character he displayed to the world. He was a man who walked uprightly and on the straight path in his belief in God.

There are several definitions of integrity in the dictionary, but these three themes are consistent. First, *integrity* is “the condition or quality of being complete; undivided or unbroken; wholeness.” Second, *integrity* is “an unimpaired condition.” The third theme is “moral soundness or uprightness.” Joseph aligns with all three themes. Despite being a normal person like us, he remained unbroken, unimpaired and upright in his response to several injustices.

How do we respond to injustices? Do we shout our innocence from the “mountain top”? Do we plan on how to force the issue when our plans are thwarted? Do we feel revengeful when people fail to meet their promises or commitments? These are responses that almost every person has almost every day of the week. And yet Joseph, with all his trials, responded differently, responded with integrity that obviously pleased God. Perhaps there is a lesson in Joseph’s response for us even today.

QUESTIONS

How do you respond to “injustices” toward you?

PRAYERS FOR GTI HOPE

Pray for the planning of 109 literacy projects that are scheduled to start in April 2022. For this 545 literacy teachers need to be trained for literacy classes involving 16,350 men and women. Pray for safe travels for the field staff of GTi HOPE’s partner as well as representatives from local ministries.

THURSDAY

Psalm 15:1-5

Integrity—Despite Our Own Self-interest

How often, sadly, do we see people rising to positions of influence and power, only to serve their own interests rather than the interests of others? This must have been a huge temptation for Joseph, since he could have had some justification for feeling that this was “payback time.” He had suffered so much, been deprived of so much, been falsely accused and imprisoned, but, at last, here he was in a position of authority over a whole land. Self-interest would have been an understandable response to this elevation.

Yet we see none of that in Joseph’s life. He clearly recognized that his ability to interpret dreams was not because he is clever or smarter than those around him, but because “*the LORD was with him.*” Therefore, any praise needed to go to the God whom he served and any authority that he was now given needed to be used far beyond his own interests. What an example this is to so many leaders—in all spheres of life—who see such situations much more selfishly than Joseph did.

Instead, Joseph continued to live as we have seen him do up to this point. He used the knowledge given to him by God through the interpretation of Pharaoh’s dream to propose courses of action that would benefit the people of a land that was not his own. At this stage

he did not yet know that his own family would soon stand before him, at his mercy, begging for food to survive the famine in their land—but he was ready for that, too. Time and again he showed that his integrity was in place.

This is such a challenge to us to ensure that our standards don't shift according to our circumstances. If we have decided to serve the Lord wholeheartedly, then, just as His standards don't change, neither should ours—no matter how much influence we have or power we wield in the world.

David reminds us of what it means to have this Christ-like integrity (Psalm 15). We are to walk blamelessly, be righteous, speak truth, do no wrong to our neighbor, honor those who fear the Lord, keep our word, and not change our mind. Joseph had integrity. What about you?

QUESTIONS

Can you recall times where you exhibited “Christ-like integrity”? Is this your regular mode or a particular challenge?

PRAYERS FOR GTI HOPE

Pray for the training of church leaders who are learning to effectively share the message of peace and to bring hope to individuals, families, and communities. Pray for the theological trainers, the associated churches, and the students. Pray for open ears, formation of many home fellowships, and an abundant harvest.

FRIDAY

Genesis 40

Integrity—Reflecting Jesus

As Christians we are often challenged to “be like Jesus” in our responses to people and circumstances. Remember the popularity of “What would Jesus do?” or “WWJD” from the great book, *In His Steps*, by Charles Sheldon. Some people even wear wristbands with WWJD as a constant reminder to live like Him.

Our study this week has been in the life of Joseph, who certainly did not know the name of Jesus, yet there are striking parallels between his life and that of our Lord, simply because he lived with such integrity. Consider the following:

- Both were sorely tempted, yet without sinning (Genesis 39:7-12; Matthew 4:10)
- Both were falsely accused (Genesis 39:16-18; Matthew 16:59-60)
- Both gave no defense (Genesis 39:19; Isaiah 53:7)
- Both were unjustly sentenced (Genesis 39:20; Luke 23:4)
- Both were condemned alongside two transgressors (Genesis 40:3; Luke 23:32)
- Both blessed one transgressor (Genesis 40:9-19; Luke 23:43)
- Both desired to be remembered (Genesis 40:14; Luke 22:19)

Now before we get too carried away at how remarkable this seems to be, we should remind ourselves that this kind of likeness to Jesus should be the norm rather than the exception for us too. We are to have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16), be the aroma of Christ to our world (2 Corinthians 2:15), show God's power through our weak jars of clay (2 Corinthians 4:7), and let our light shine in good deeds so that praise will accrue to our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

Joseph was a remarkable man with a life of integrity, bearing witness to what can be done when we are completely sold out to God and His purposes in the world. We need to “*go and do likewise*” (Luke 10:37).

QUESTIONS

How would your average day look differently if, like Joseph, you lived it totally sold out for God?

PRAYERS FOR GTI HOPE

Pray for courage and perseverance in the face of increasing persecution in much of India. Pray for pastors, church leaders, literacy teachers, students, and ministries. Pray for safety and protection, for open doors, and for softer hearts among the persecutors (Matthew 10:16). Pray for wisdom and grace.



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