

GOD WAS WITH JOSEPH

Genesis 37:1 - 41:57

Key Verse 39:2

"The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master."

We thank God for our blessed Genesis Bible study, through which we get to know the Creator God and the God of promises. Jacob was a man of obedience who pursued the spiritual blessings. Although he struggled a lot with his own strength for love and riches, he had to acknowledge, however, that all this could not give him peace. In times of crisis, he struggled with God until he was changed from a self-centered Jacob to a fighter for the promise of God, Israel. God helped him to return to his Bethel and live with clear repentance and a new identity as one of the patriarchs. Let us return to the promise of God and be used as blessing bearers for the spiritual revival in Europe.

Joseph is the fruit of Genesis in many ways. He was a man who lived by faith and was used for a great salvation by God. God gifted Joseph with dreams and helped him in the midst of various unbearable troubles and sorrows. God led Joseph through many ups and downs. When he absolutely trusted in the Almighty God in every situation and lived by faith in the promise of God, he was finally exalted by God and used for his salvation work. Our God is good. All the time, he is good. Let us learn from Joseph to hold on to God's dreams in all circumstances and to live with God in every situation, absolutely trusting His best guidance.

I. Joseph's Dreams (37:1-36)

Chapter 37 describes the story of Jacob's family. Jacob had returned to the life of his

fathers' pilgrimage. But even here there were heartbreaking incidents. At this point, Joseph was 17 years old. He was the 11th of 12 sons and the first son of the the dead Rachel. Joseph was different from his brothers. Although he only was an assistant shepherd with his older brothers, he had a strong sense of justice and told his father many things that were said about the sons of Jacob.

His father loved him and made a beautiful and colorful robe for him. But his brothers were hostile to him because of it. They were supposed to be good shepherds and loving brothers and sisters to their younger brother, taking care of him and encouraging him. But instead, they regarded him as a competitor and could not say a single kind word to him.

Let's read verses 5 to 7: "Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: 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."

Joseph had a dream, through which God showed him what he would do in his future. He saw his sheaf rising up while all the other sheaves were bowing down to him. This indicated that God would use him as a leader in the future. Joseph did also have another dream in which the sun, moon and 11 stars bowed down to him. It seemed that he was overambitious and arrogant towards his sib-

lings that they should all honor him. His father rebuked him harshly that he was exalting himself. But he kept the words in his heart.

In this passage we learn that Joseph was a man of dreams. His dreams were not random night dreams or human ambitions. Joseph had a dream from God that revealed God's great hope and vision for his life. God gave him these dreams for him to always remember and especially in the time of darkness to hold on to the hope of God. Joseph kept these dreams in his heart even in the midst of all difficulties. Later, when his brothers fell down before him to buy wheat from him, he realized how God had fulfilled his dreams.

God does not want us to live ordinary and irrelevant lives, but to dream God's dreams and be used preciously in His work of salvation. Apostle Paul was a man of dreams. He had a dream that a man from Macedonia called him to come and help them. He also had a dream that he could go as far as Rome. God led Paul according to his dream and used him to bring the Gospel to Europe and even to the capital of the Roman Empire.

M. Dr. Samuel Lee had a dream through the world mission command of Jesus that the poor Korean students could not live as beggars but could live a giving life and serve the world mission. God worked according to his dream and sent out more than 3000 young people as missionaries for world mission through UBF. M. Dr. Peter Chang had the dream of rebuilding the spiritual walls and of the spiritual revival in Europe through the next generation. God worked according to his dream and especially through the Campus Mission and the Global Leadership Empowerment Forum (GLEF) which is raising up our shepherds and our next generation as global spiritual leaders.

God wants to encourage and challenge us here to live with God's dream. Through the study of Ezekiel 37:10, we were allowed to dream God's dream of spiritual revival. God wants to make the spiritually dead bones of the young students alive through the Word of

God and raise them up as a great army of God. In the midst of the pandemic, we were allowed to dream the dream of God's mighty work through the fellowship of studying the bible and the fellowship of life, and to experience God's work in our next generation. God has given each of us His word of promise. Therefore, we may accept God's great dream of being used as spiritual leaders and influential Bible teachers for this generation. Regardless of the situation, let us always dream the great dream of God, hold on to God's promise, and be used for the work of spiritual revival in Europe, even to the M-world.

How did his brothers react to Joseph's dreams? Verse 11a says that his brothers became very jealous of Joseph. Instead of seeing God's hope and plan through his dreams, they envied Joseph because they wanted to be king themselves and be honored by others. Envy is a bad advisor. Their envy later developed into hate for their brother, and out of hate came murderous thoughts. Cain's problem had been envy toward his brother Abel and eventually caused him to become a cold-hearted murderer. Saul envied David because he seemed to be more successful and began to persecute him. One day Jacob sent his son Joseph to check on the brothers who were grazing cattle in Shechem. Joseph obeyed his father. He was responsible and searched for his brothers until he found them in Dotan. But hatred against Joseph was bubbling up in the brothers. When they saw Joseph coming from afar, they mocked him, "Here comes that dreamer!" (19) Then they made a murder plan how to get rid of him. First, they stripped him of his beautiful robe and threw him into an empty pit. Although they heard his crying and shouting, they sat down and first ate with delight. When a caravan of Ishmaelite craftsmen passed by, on their way to Egypt, they seized the opportunity and sold their brother as a slave, so that they even made a profit out of it. How cold-hearted and inhuman was their behavior, with which they destroyed the life of their brother.

In order to trick their father, they ripped the beautiful robe and dipped it in goat's blood, so that he would think that Joseph had been killed by a beast of prey. Jacob fell into deep sorrow, so that he did not want to live any longer, nor did he allow himself to be comforted by the 11 remaining sons.

Here we see the terrible consequences of sin. When Joseph was mistreated, he became terrified. He had to be separated from his father and live in a foreign land as a slave without rights. Jacob was plunged into deep sadness and sorrow, from which he did not come out even in 15 years. However, not only for the others, but also for the brothers themselves, their sin had very serious consequences. They had thought that the world would become very beautiful if they did not have to see their brother anymore. But in fact, they could never forget their sin. From now on, they suffered from a guilty mind. When they themselves were troubled, they immediately suspected that it was the just punishment for their sin against Joseph.

This teaches us that sin is not a small thing, but it rather has very serious consequences, both for us and for others. Sin is more than a misconduct, it is a huge power that grows more and more, making us its helpless slaves. From envy came hate and from hate came murder. Human trade is also a terrible sin, especially when it comes to one's own brother.

Quite a few wars were started because of envy and greed, so that countless people were put into deep suffering. Even the war in Ukraine within the brotherhood between Russians and Ukrainians was based on the envy of some who did not want to acknowledge their search for security and future. Korach had become a rebel because of his envy of Moses, who was eventually punished by God. Instead of being envious of Joseph, the brothers should repent, believe in God's great love for them, and begin a new spiritual life. God may help us to no longer be misled by the lie of sin, but to accept God's love through repentance and begin a happy spiritual life.

II. God was with Joseph (38:1 - 41:57)

After being sold by his envious brothers, Joseph was taken to Egypt, where he was placed in the house of Potiphar, the chief of Pharaoh's bodyguard. It was a heartbreaking, fatalistic experience for a teenager. But Joseph was not filled with resentment or hatred in the foreign land. Let's look at 39:2: "The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master." Even as a slave, Joseph lived before the eyes of God and trusted in his best guidance. Thus, all his wounds were healed by God and he became a man to whom all things prospered. From a human point of view, Joseph had lost everything. But God was his heavenly Father, and by trusting in God he found everlasting happiness and was able to serve diligently even in Egypt. He did not live like a slave but like a leader before God, so Potifar trusted him and eventually appointed him as a manager over his whole house.

However, when Joseph thus came into the position of leadership in Potifar's house, he was confronted with a hard temptation. Potifar's wife had her eye on him and wanted to seduce him to sleep with her. It is said that many Egyptian officials were eunuchs, so their wives did not always follow strict moral standards. Perhaps she liked the young and handsome Joseph. For Joseph, who was a young man with strong hormones, it must not have been easy to resist such daily temptations. He could have followed his desire or even achieved an escape from slavery in this way. But let's look at Joseph's response in 39:8, 9: "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. 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?" Joseph had gratitude for the grace that had come to him in Potiphar's house. He considered it primarily a sin against God. However, Satan does not give up so easily. One day, the woman seized the

opportunity when no one else was in the house and wanted to seduce Joseph. But Joseph tore himself away from her, leaving his robe in her hand, and rushed out. Desire is never rational, so the only way to help is to consistently flee from it, so it will flee from us as well.

The temptation of Satan is a spiritual reality for every believer. We can learn from Joseph that he did not let sin control him, but fought against it spiritually. In the time of temptation, we must remember the Word of God and struggle with it spiritually. Especially for young people, it is quite difficult to overcome temptation. But we may say clearly, as Joseph did, "How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" Instead of letting sin control us, we may consciously put our limbs at God's disposal as weapons of righteousness.

But now the woman's lust turned to anger. Because she could not have Joseph, she wanted to punish him. She claimed to her husband that Joseph had wanted to rape her. Joseph was not heard. He was innocently sent to prison, which also held Pharaoh's prisoners.

Joseph had heroically resisted temptation. But his reward was only that he was innocent in prison. Joseph could have been bitter. But amazingly, even here he proved himself to be a responsible man. He lived before God and was able to gain the trust of the overseer soon. 39:21 says, "The Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden." Even the two noble ministers who ended up in prison were entrusted to him. He ministered to them and helped them interpret their dreams. He hoped that the cupbearer would help him get out of prison. But his human hope was disappointed, because after he was released, he forgot about Joseph again.

Joseph's life seemed to keep going worse. From a favorite son to a slave, from a slave to a prisoner, and finally to a forgotten prisoner in jail. But spiritually, it was God's best love for him. God trained him because He

had a great plan for him. People who suddenly come to a high position are easily overwhelmed by pride and self-confidence. But God had been preparing Joseph for at least 13 years until he became a humble person who depended completely on God.

We may learn here that God trains those whom He wants to use preciously in His work of salvation. Usually we think that the blessed life consists in everything going well as we imagine it in our imagination. But in fact, it is not like that for any of the great servants of God in the Bible. Rather, God shapes his people by giving them various training until they become useful to him. David, for example, had to suffer persecution from Saul for a long time before God could use him as a king and a good shepherd for his people. Moses was first trained in the desert for 40 years until he could be used as a leader for God's people in the Exodus. Nelson Mandela spent 27 years of his life in prison because of apartheid policies in South Africa. But he did not give up on his dream. He eventually became the first black president of South Africa and worked for reconciliation between white and black people. Joseph also received God's training for humility and servant life until he could finally rise to be the 2nd man in Egypt and be used for the salvation of a great nation. In the time of trial, we like Joseph may believe in God's unchanging faithfulness, for then we can overcome all temptations and afflictions and even be used by God as sources of blessings for others.

God is training us through various tribulations because He has a dream to use us for the spiritual revival in Germany and Europe and even to the M-world. We have already experienced various waves of persecution. From the beginning of the missionary work until today, many false accusations have been made against the disciple making ministry. But M. Peter did not complain to God. Rather, he did his best to raise up the next generation as leaders trusting in God's guidance. Now he moves on and struggles to dig numerous new fountains of the living Word of God.

When a young man made a clear decision to leave sin and offer his whole heart and life for God's salvation work in Germany, he had to experience abandonment, and many false accusations that were raised against him. It is God's best love for him that sets him up as an outstanding spiritual leader for His revival work. God gives a young woman his precious training during her preparation time for high school graduation, praying to God in the midst of various challenges, putting on spiritual discipline, and experiencing the God of Mark 11:22.

Let's look at chapter 41. The Pharaoh had two dreams that troubled him very much. 7 fat cows had been eaten by 7 lean cows and 7 fat ears of corn had been eaten by 7 scrawny ears of corn. None of the Egyptian sign interpreters could interpret the dreams. Then the Cupbearer remembered Joseph and he was brought before the Pharaoh to interpret his dreams. Joseph said, "I cannot do it, but God will give Pharaoh the answer he deserves." He explained then to Pharaoh that he had dreamed the same thing twice. There would be 7 years of abundance, but after that would come 7 years of scarcity and hunger that would eat up all plenty. From this historical vision, he concluded that during the abundant years, people should store up stocks of grain to tide them over the 7 years of famine.

Pharaoh appointed Joseph as chancellor of Egypt. He called him the "father of the land". He received full power to regulate everything according to his insight. When he was elevated in this way, Joseph did not seek revenge or wealth. Rather, he immediately set to work to prepare the land for the coming time of famine. He devoted himself to the task with diligence and devotion, laying up vast stores of grain in all the cities. These helped the Egyptians survive during the famine years and his own family eventually benefited as well.

Joseph teaches us to live with God in every situation. Joseph had experienced God's promise through two dreams and absolutely held on to it. He believed that God would

guide him according to this promise and exalt him in his time and use him as a leader. Because he believed in this almighty God, he did not fall into despair or depression, rather than helplessness, but trusted in God and did his best in every situation. He did not live with the spirit of a slave or prisoner, but he lived before God. This was recognized by Potifar or the bailiff, even later Pharaoh, so that they entrusted him with much and gave him responsible tasks.

A young woman led her life very fatefully because of the violent life of her father, but especially because of her own sin. Through Bible study, she experienced the love of God, who always led her best, both for the marriage and in the graduation of her studies by the people of God. Now she is always cheerfully testifying the best guidance of God for her life.

Living with God does not mean thinking of oneself or one's own advantage, but fulfilling God's purpose.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a spiritual leader who did not seek the better conditions in America, in the time of crisis, but returned to Germany to be with his sheep and to serve the work of God in the greatest difficulties and even persecutions. We may trust that, just like Joseph, God may guide us in the best way, even in the time of difficulties, and use us precious for His work of spiritual revival and for world mission. God is good. All the time he is good.

We may live with God because God is with us and leads everything to His best. We experience many challenges, but we may prepare the environment where God can do His revival work. God encourages us to hold on to God's promise and His great dream and trust in His best guidance in our lives. May God help us to live with God like Joseph, so that He may fulfill His dream through us and use us for His spiritual awakening in Germany and Europe and raise us up as a great army of God for the world mission.