

Beloved
5 B's--part 2
The Life of Joseph
January 12, 2014

DAY 1: God's Love Beats "Epic Failure"

1. Last week we studied "**Broken**." This week we'll study "**Beloved**." The bottom line of the Christian life is not:

- Trying harder to do better
- Being more "religious" - better bible reading, prayer, sharing my faith, etc.
- Making spiritual progress
- Getting a foothold in a new area of obedience
- Feeling close to God

2. Put a checkmark next to any of the above that typically are your "real" measuring sticks for how you're doing.

3. Last week we saw that Joseph failed in every one of those measuring sticks, yet, he grew closer to God, more devoted to Him, when he realized that God had not abandoned him. In spite of Joseph's epic failure, God simply loved Joseph, and wanted to use him in a mighty way. The bottom line is God's grace, not man's efforts!

How do these sentences strike *you*?

- Are they easy or hard for you to read?
- Are they easy or hard to accept? If hard, why do you think that is so?
- Can you see yourself pinning your real hopes on them?

Genesis 39:1 Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. ² The Lord was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master. ³ His master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord caused all that he did to succeed in his hands.

4. After we fail spiritually or morally, it's easy to walk around as "undeserving." We hang our spiritual heads, mope around, joyless. Do you sense that is what Joseph did? Why or why not?

DAY 2: God's Love Beats Circumstances

1. There's not a week that goes by that I don't fight a battle with "the Mopies."

It's pretty easy to send ourselves into a tailspin. It doesn't have to be loss of job or loss of a marriage. It can be as simple as an unresolved conflict, trying to crawl out of debt, or missing out on the last round of promotions. What things have sent you into a tailspin, depression or made you "mopey?"

2. Joseph finds himself in Egypt, a foreign land, a foreign language, away from family, friends, farm, and the rosy future he imagined he would have in the Canaan. Oh, yeah, I forgot: he finds himself without his freedom, a household slave in another man's house.

Genesis 39:4 So Joseph found favor in Potiphar's sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. ⁵ From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had, in house and field. ⁶ 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.

3. You sort of have to read between the lines for this next question. What attitudes do you sense coming out of Joseph in these verses?

4. Why do you think he was not in a tailspin or mopey?

5. In today's and yesterday's verses, how many times did Moses write that "the Lord" did something?

6. Go back and underline what "the Lord" **did** in both passages (Gen. 39:1-6)

7. What point is Moses trying to make for us?

8. What is your take away from this passage?

DAY 3: God's Love Beats Temptation

1. The last passage ended this way: "Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance."

Uh oh...

Let's look at what comes next!

Genesis 39:7 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 yourself, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

2. List every reason Joseph uses to "just say no."

3. Do you think Joseph knew this was coming? (Look at the first part of verse 7)

4. Do you think Joseph had thought through what he would say?

5. His answers can be put in the following categories:

a. Character. "What kind of man do you think I am?"

b. Loyalty. "What kind of man would backstab someone who had been so generous and kind to him?"

c. Trustworthy. "My master has trusted me with everything important to him. What kind of man would I be to violate that trust?"

d. Morals; a matter of right and wrong, or better yet "good and evil."

e. His relationship with God. "How can I sin against God?"

6. What strikes you about Joseph's responses?

7. What do you think were his deepest "drivers," reasons to do what was right?

DAY 4: God's Love Beats Man's Sin

1. Yesterday we saw how Joseph battled temptation. We pick up where we left off...

Genesis 39:10 And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her. ¹¹ 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, ¹² 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.

2. How did Joseph handle repeated temptation? Look for at least four measures.

3. Sometimes, people will throw their worst at us. Read what the "woman scorned" did...

¹³ And as soon as she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled out of the house, ¹⁴ she called to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to laugh at us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. ¹⁵ And as soon as he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried out, he left his garment beside me and fled and got out of the house." ¹⁶ Then she laid up his garment by her until his master came home, ¹⁷ and she told him the same story, saying, "The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to laugh at me. ¹⁸ But as soon as I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment beside me and fled out of the house."

4. Have you had someone betray you? Jot down a few brief thoughts of what happened.

5. How did that betrayal affect you?

6. When Potiphar came home, his wife threw Joseph under the bus...

Genesis 39:19 As soon as his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, "This is the way your servant treated me," his anger was kindled. ²⁰ And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison.

7. What would be your mental and spiritual state?

8. What would you need to remember in order to stay rooted in "Beloved"? (God's love)

DAY 5: God's Love Beats Depression

1. In one sense, Joseph's life went from "bad" to "worse," at least as most people would look at it. Let's pick up the story, looking to see Joseph's response, and God's!

Genesis 39:21 But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. ²² And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. ²³ The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because the Lord was with him. And whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed.

2. People living in what they consider "dire straits" ask the question, "Where is God?" Well, let's ask that question. Where was God?

3. Five times in these three verses, Moses records something of what the Lord did. Underline all five.

4. Which of the things God did are "repeats" from previous episodes?

5. Which are new?

6. What do you think is the significance of one of the new ones: the Lord "showed him steadfast love?" Why here? Why now?

7. You'll often hear Christians talk about knowing God's love "in my head, but not in my heart." What does it take for God's love to become "real" to us?

8. When we judge our life by the measuring stick of feelings or circumstances, God's love will remain "in our head," not our heart. The problem is not God's love; it's a wrong measuring stick.

9. I believe Joseph had a new measuring stick: "I am part of God's story. I have a role to play. He is the director and star of the show. My job is to shine the spotlight on Him in everything I do. My life matters to Him, and because it matters to Him, my life matters, period."