

NOON BIBLE STUDY: GENESIS 39

LAST WE WERE IN GENESIS WE READ THE WILD STORY OF JUDAH AND HIS DAUGHTER IN LAW, TAMAR. BEFORE THEN WE READ THAT JOSEPH, THE FAVORED AND 11TH SON OF JACOB HAD BEEN SOLD INTO SLAVERY BY HIS BROTHERS AND TRAVELED TOWARD EGYPT. JACOB IS TOLD THAT JOSEPH IS DEAD AND MOURNS FOR A LONG TIME. WE KNOW THERE IS MORE TO THE STORY BUT JACOB DOES NOT. HARD TO IMAGINE HOW HE FELT. WE REJOIN JOSEPH, WHO HAS NOW ARRIVED IN EGYPT AND HAS BEEN SOLD AS A SLAVE. HIS AMAZING JOURNEY IS JUST BEGINNING.

GENESIS 39:1-6 - JOSEPH IN POTIPHAR'S HOUSE

JOSEPH'S FIRST DESTINATION AS A SLAVE IN EGYPT IS IN THE HOUSE OF POTIPHAR, WHO THE TEXT TELLS US WAS THE "CAPTAIN OF THE BODYGUARD" FOR PHARAOH, THE RULER OF EGYPT. THIS WOULD SEEM LIKE A BAD SITUATION IN GENERAL (AND BEING A SLAVE IN A FOREIGN LAND CERTAINLY WAS), BUT RIGHT FROM THE BEGINNING WE SEE A FEW THINGS THAT WOULD HAVE ENCOURAGED THE SOUL OF JOSEPH.

FIRST, GENESIS 39:2 SAYS "THE LORD WAS WITH JOSEPH". WHAT COULD BE BETTER?! SECONDLY AS A RESULT OF THE LORD'S PRESENCE WITH JOSEPH, JOSEPH IS FAVORED IN THE HOUSE - EVENTUALLY BECOMING THE OVERSEER OF THE CAPTAIN'S ENTIRE HOUSE! BECAUSE OF THIS GOD BLESSES POTIPHAR'S HOUSE TREMENDOUSLY AND POTIPHAR ASSOCIATES THIS BLESSING WITH JOSEPH'S PRESENCE THERE.

39:6 SAYS THAT JOSEPH WAS HANDSOME AND WELL BUILT. SIMILAR LANGUAGE WAS USED ABOUT HIS MOTHER RACHEL, THE FAVORITE WIFE OF JACOB (GENESIS 29:17). NICE TO KNOW, BUT IT SETS US UP TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.

GENESIS 39:7-10 - POTIPHAR'S WIFE

POTIPHAR'S WIFE BEGINS LUSTING AFTER JOSEPH AND PRETTY DIRECTLY INVITES HIM TO HAVE SEX WITH HER. REMEMBER, EGYPT WASN'T A NATION UNDER THE FEAR OF THE LORD. THESE ARE THE SORT OF THINGS THAT HAPPEN IN THAT SETTING. JOSEPH IS HANDSOME, THE REASONS FOR BLESSING UPON THE HOUSE, AND PROBABLY AT HOME MORE THAN CAPTAIN POTIPHAR. A PERFECT STORM FOR INFIDELITY AND FORNICATION.

HOW EASY WOULD IT HAVE BEEN FOR JOSEPH TO GIVE IN TO THIS TEMPTATION. HE COULD HAVE PROBABLY DONE THIS WITHOUT ANYONE KNOWING. HE COULD HAVE DONE THIS WITHOUT TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE WOMAN - AFTER ALL - SHE WAS THE ONE INITIATING. HE COULD HAVE RATIONALIZED THIS AS JUST "DOING HIS JOB" AS THE WOMAN IS THE MISTRESS OF THE HOUSE HE IS A SERVANT IN. AND JOSEPH IS A YOUNG MAN, WITH HORMONES AND EMOTIONS OF LONELINESS SURELY FLOWING THROUGH HIS HANDSOME BODY.

CAN WE BE HONEST ABOUT THIS. THESE ARE THE EASIEST TEMPTATIONS TO FALL INTO - THE ONES NO ONE ELSE KNOWS ABOUT. THE ONES THAT ARE DONE IN SECRET, WHERE THE CONVICTION THAT COMES FROM OTHER PEOPLE BEING AROUND IS NOT PRESENT. NO ONE WOULD HAVE KNOWN IF HE STARTED THIS AFFAIR WITH POTIPHAR'S WIFE. NO ONE WOULD HAVE KNOWN WHY JOSEPH WAS IN HER BEDROOM THAT DAY. AND IT'S POSSIBLE THAT NO ONE IN SIN-SATURATED LAND OF EGYPT WOULD HAVE EVEN CARED IF THEY DID KNOW!

WE SEE IN JOSEPH A "DIFFERENT SPIRIT" ONE THAT IS WILLING TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT, EVEN WHEN NO ONE IS LOOKING. A MAN WHO IS WILLING TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT, EVEN IF HE IS THE ONLY ONE. AND A MAN WHO IS WILLING TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT, NO MATTER THE CONSEQUENCES. THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THIS CHARACTERISTIC IS HIS LOVE FOR GOD AND A ZEAL FOR GOD'S GLORY. WHAT IS HIS REPLY WHEN APPROACHED BY POTIPHAR'S WIFE, CLEARLY A WOMAN IN HEAT, DAY AFTER DAY (39:9-10)?

GENESIS 39:9B - "HOW THEN COULD I DO THIS GREAT EVIL AND SIN AGAINST GOD?!"

YOU SEE THE HARDEST TEMPTATIONS ARE THOSE THAT NO ONE ELSE KNOWS ABOUT. BUT IN THIS CASE - JOSEPH WOULD HAVE KNOWN. AND SO HE SAYS NO. NOTICE THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN QUITE SOME TIME THAT A CHILD OF ABRAHAM, WHEN FACED WITH SEXUAL TEMPTATION ACTUALLY MAKES THE *RIGHT* CHOICE! SOMETHING IS DIFFERENT ABOUT JOSEPH.

WE ALSO LEARN FROM THIS RECORD A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE NATURE OF SIN AND THE TEMPTATIONS OF THIS WORLD. THE DEVIL AND THE EVIL SYSTEMS OF THIS AGE ARE RELENTLESS. POTIPHAR'S WIFE WAS GOING TO LIE WITH JOSEPH IF IT WAS THE LAST THING SHE DID. SHE PURSUED HIM DAY AFTER DAY. JOSEPH HAD TO RESIST DAY AFTER DAY. JOSEPH COULD NOT REST THINKING THAT BECAUSE HE HAD OVERCOME THE TEMPTATION ONCE, THAT HE HAD OVERCOME THE TEMPTATION FOR GOOD.

GENESIS 39:11-18 - POTIPHAR'S WIFE'S FAKE NEWS

POTIPHAR'S WIFE ISN'T HAPPY ABOUT BEING REJECTED DAY AFTER DAY AND SO SHE TRIES AND TRAP JOSEPH AS HE WORKS ALONE IN THE HOUSE ONE DAY. AS JOSEPH RUNS AWAY SHE GRABS HIS GARMENT AS HE GOES. THE SPURNED WOMAN THEN USES THIS CLOAK TO CREATE A FAKE STORY TO GET JOSEPH IN TROUBLE.

GENESIS 39:19-20 - POTIPHAR RESPONDS. JOSEPH IN JAIL

WE KNOW JOSEPH IS INNOCENT BUT POTIPHAR AND HIS MEN ARE GOING TO SIDE WITH HIS WIFE OVER THE TESTIMONY OF A HEBREW SLAVE. AFTER ALL, SHE HAS HIS GARMENT IN HER HAND! POTIPHAR IS ANGRY AND DISAPPOINTED IN JOSEPH AND SENDS HIM TO JAIL FOR THIS ALLEGED ASSAULT.

GENESIS 39:21-23 - THE NEXT STEP IN JOSEPH'S JOURNEY

JOSEPH IS THROWN OUT OF POTIPHAR'S HOUSE AND INTO PHARAOH'S JAIL. HE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG, YET IS NOW A PRISONER. BUT THE LORD IS STILL WITH JOSEPH - SO DOES IT MATTER WHERE HE IS?! NOW IN THE JAIL, THE FAVOR OF THE LORD REMAINS UPON JOSEPH AND HE QUICKLY RETURNS TO A PLACE OF AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY. KIND OF REMARKABLE TO THINK ABOUT. JOSEPH IS IN JAIL AT THE REQUEST OF THE CAPTAIN OF PHARAOH'S BODYGUARD, AND SOON IS IN CHARGE OF THE PLACE! THE FAVOR OF THE LORD SUPERCEDES YOUR TITLE, YOUR LINEAGE, YOUR STATION AND YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES.

A LOT TRANSPIRES IN THIS SHORT CHAPTER. JOSEPH ARRIVES AS A SLAVE, BECOMES THE OVERSEER OF AN IMPORTANT EGYPTIAN HOUSE, GOES TO PRISON AND THEN RISES TO LEAD THERE TOO! THE NEXT SCENE IN OUR STORY TAKES PLACE IN THIS PRISON, AND WE WILL SEE WHAT THE LORD IS UP TO AS WE READ ON. BUT WE WILL PAUSE FOR NOW AND REFLECT ON SOME IMPORTANT AND TIMELY LESSONS FOR OUR LIVES.

THE STORY OF JOSEPH IS ONE OF THE BEST ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE TRUTH OF ROMANS 8:28

ROMANS 8:28 - AND WE KNOW THAT GOD CAUSES ALL THINGS TO WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THOSE WHO LOVE GOD, TO THOSE WHO ARE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE.

IN REAL TIME WE ARE WATCHING JOSEPH HAVE A LOT OF BAD THINGS HAPPEN. HE'S ATTACKED BY HIS BROTHER. HE'S THROWN IN A PIT. HE'S SOLD TO MIDIANITE TRADERS. HE'S BROUGHT TO EGYPT. HE'S SOLD IN EGYPT AS A SLAVE. HE'S IN A HIGHLY SEXUALLY-CHARGED TEMPTATION ENVIRONMENT DAY AFTER DAY. HE'S FALSELY ACCUSED OF THE VERY THING HE NEVER SUCCUMBED TO. HE'S THROWN INTO JAIL. A LOT OF "BAD STUFF". MANY "BAD DAYS".

YET AS WE READ THE STORY FROM A BIRD'S EYE VIEW, WE CAN SEE WHAT IS REALLY HAPPENING. THOSE OF US THAT KNOW THE FULL STORY OF JOSEPH'S LIFE SEE THAT GOD IS WORKING. WE SEE THAT ACTUALLY HIS SELLING INTO EGYPTIAN SLAVERY IS SO HE CAN BE IN POTIPHAR'S HOUSE SO HE THEN GO TO JAIL AND THEN MOVE INTO PHAROAH'S HOUSE AND THEN SAVE HIS FAMILY. IF HE DOESN'T GET SOLD INTO SLAVERY, THE FAMILY DOESN'T GET SAVED. IF HE DOESN'T GET FALSELY ACCUSED BY POTIPHAR'S WIFE, THE PROMISES OF GOD DON'T GET FULFILLED. IF HE DOESN'T GO TO PRISON, HE DOESN'T GO TO THE PALACE. WE SEE THAT FROM THE BIRDSEYE VIEW. IT MAKES SENSE WHY EACH PIECE OF THIS PUZZLE IS PLACED WHERE AND WHEN IT IS.

SO THE QUESTION FOR US IS WHY DON'T WE HAVE THE SAME PERSPECTIVE ON OUR LIVES? WE HAVE A BAD DAY, WE GO THROUGH A DIFFICULT TIME AND OUR LIVES FALL APART. WE WONDER WHERE GOD IS. WE ARE FILLED WITH CONFUSION WHEN THINGS DON'T WORK OUT THE WAY WE WANTED/HOPED. WE LOSE FAITH WHEN WE DON'T "SEE" WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON. WE GET ANXIOUS. WE GET ANGRY. WE MOPE AROUND. WE BECOME GRUMP-BUTTS (AS WE CALL IT IN MY HOUSE).

WHY? WHY CAN WE SEE IN JOSEPH THE BIGGER PICTURE AND SEE THE WORK OF GOD AND INSTANTLY CITE ROMANS 8:28 AND KNOW THAT ALL HIS TROUBLES AND ALL HIS TRIALS WERE BEING WORKED OUT TO A GREATER PURPOSE FOR GOD IN HIS LIFE AND THEN OUR OWN LIVES WE AUTOMATICALLY ASSUME THAT'S NOT WHAT IS HAPPENING?

WHEN THERE ARE TROUBLES AT WORK, WE DON'T THINK, MAYBE GOD IS MOVING ME TO A NEW PLACE FOR HIM. WHEN WE HAVE RELATIONSHIP TROUBLES, WE DON'T THINK THAT GOD IS USING THEM TO MAKE US MORE LIKE CHRIST. WHEN ONE DOOR CLOSES WE DON'T THINK THAT IT'S BECAUSE ANOTHER ONE IS OPENING. WHEN THINGS DON'T GO ACCORDING TO OUR PLAN, WE DON'T THINK IT'S BECAUSE THEY ARE INSTEAD GOING ACCORDING TO GOD'S.

SURE, THERE ARE BAD THINGS THAT HAPPEN IN OUR LIVES BECAUSE WE ARE STUPID OR AS A CONSEQUENCE TO SIN. BUT WE PROFESS STATEMENTS OF FAITH THAT SAY GOD IS KING OVER THE EARTH AND THAT JESUS HAS ALL AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN AND EARTH. WE SING SONGS LIKE "*O NO, YOU NEVER LET GO, THROUGH THE CALM AND THROUGH THE STORM*" AND "*YOU MAKE ALL THINGS, WORK TOGETHER FOR MY GOOD*" AND "*EVEN WHEN I DON'T SEE IT YOU'RE WORKING...*" BUT WE DON'T BELIEVE A WORD WE'RE SAYING OR SINGING WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO IT SOMETIMES.

EMBRACE THIS STORY IN YOUR SOUL TODAY. STOP FORGETTING THAT THERE IS A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF YOUR LIFE TOO - ONE THAT ENDS WITH GOD WINNING AND ALL THINGS BEING WORKED TOGETHER FOR YOUR GOOD. OBVIOUSLY THIS DOESN'T MEAN THAT ALL THINGS ARE ONLY GOOD - BUT IN THE END, THE PART OF THE STORY THAT REALLY MATTERS AFTER ALL - THEY ARE WORKING OUT FOR GOD. AND WHY? BECAUSE GOD LOVES YOU AND HAS CALLED YOU ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSES.

SO YES, TODAY, THIS WEEK, THIS MONTH, THIS YEAR, WHATEVER MAY BE CONFUSING, DIFFICULT, TRYING OR TROUBLE-FILLED. BUT THERE IS MORE TO YOUR STORY THAN THIS MOMENT. THERE'S ANOTHER CHAPTER, THERE'S A PAGE TO TURN TOMORROW WHERE WE UNDERSTAND THE "WHYS" FOR ALL THE UPS AND DOWNS OF TODAY.

THROUGH JOSEPH'S STORY, WE SEE THAT GOD IS ALWAYS WORKING FOR HIS WILL AND PURPOSE TO BE DONE. THAT'S THE THING TO KEEP YOUR HEART AND MIND FOCUSED ON, AND THAT'S WHERE JOSEPH'S WAS. WHEN PRESENTED WITH MOMENTARY PLEASURE, AN EASY WAY OUT, OR A CHANCE TO JUST LIVE FOR HIMSELF HE SAID **NO** - *HOW COULD I DO THIS GREAT EVIL AND SIN AGAINST GOD.* SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE PIT AND THE PALACE JOSEPH RESOLVED IN HIS SOUL TO LIVE FOR GOD NO MATTER WHAT HIS DAY BROUGHT.

AND SO YOU AND I WALK IN OUR OWN JOURNEY SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE PIT GOD HAS PULLED US OUT OF AND THE PALACE HE IS PREPARING FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JOSEPH AND US, IS THAT WE KNOW WHAT OUR FUTURE HOLDS (HE DID NOT!).

YOU MAY NOT BE TEMPTED TO HAVE SEX WITH YOUR BOSS' WIFE TODAY BUT THERE ARE TEMPTATIONS CALLING YOUR NAME TODAY AS WELL. RESOLVE IN YOUR SOUL RIGHT NOW, TO NOT LET THE DIFFICULTIES OF THIS JOURNEY MAKE YOU THINK YOU "DESERVE" TO TAKE A BREAK FROM LIVING YOUR LIFE FOR THE GOD. YOU MAY NOT SEE HIS HAND OR HIS PLANS, BUT HE IS ALWAYS AT WORK. HE'S WORKING TO MAKE ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER NOT JUST FOR YOUR GOOD, BUT FOR HIS.