



DATE: January 18, 2009

TEXT: Genesis 39:1-10

TITLE: "Genesis XXII: The Working of God I"

We continue to study the book of Genesis and specifically the story of Joseph. Allow me to summarize where we are in the story of Joseph. Last week we saw that Joseph was the favorite son of his father Judah. We saw that he flaunted that position in front of his brothers and they hated him. We saw the brothers throw Joseph into a dry well and then sell him to a band of Ishmaelites and report him dead to his father. They carried him into Egypt.

The theme of this chapter and the next chapter is very clear. God works in individuals and they grow in faith with the Lord. Over the next few weeks. I will share 8 or 9 lesson on Gods working in the lives of individuals. Again and again in our text we read the words "**The Lord was with (Joseph)** We are going to see the working of the Lord in the life of Joseph and the working of the Lord in our lives as we walk in faith with the Lord. This morning I will share 2 lessons of God working in the lives of believers.

**Lesson # 1** God works in the lives of believers by providing blessings. *Gen. 39:2 states*

**The LORD was with Joseph and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. 3 When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, 4 Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned.**

Our text this morning begins with Joseph being carried to Egypt and sold to Potiphar, a leader of Egypt. He became a slave in the house of Potiphar. It was soon apparent that he was very gifted in leadership. It was also apparent that the Lord was blessing him. He rose in influence becoming a chief steward in the house of Potiphar. He was a slave... but he was blessed. Truthfully, life was pretty good. It appears that he was in the house of Potiphar for about 10 years. Potiphar noticed two very important things in Joseph. He noticed his skills.... and he noticed his faith.

When the Lord is blessing us do others notice these two attributes in us? Do our co workers notice our skills and do they notice our faith? *Col. 3:23 states*

**23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,**

Truthfully, one of the hardest time for us to grow in our faith is during times of blessing.

When life is good... when there are no struggles in life, it is easy to get spiritually lazy and to take

the blessings of the Lord for granted. Let me say... I am talking about me.... and I believe I am talking about many, many others. *Hebrews 10:24 gives this command*

**24And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.**

This text talks about obedient habits. Specifically this text talks about the habit of meeting together... I believe in worship and bible study. Habits are most important when we are in a time of blessing. Do you have the habit of reading the Word of God seeking the voice of God in your life? It needs to be a habit that you can not live without.

In a previous church I had a man who went blind in his older age. But this man had a habit of reading the bible every day for 50 years. When he could no longer read... he would just recite from memory the hundreds of passages he knew by heart. Not always word perfect... but it did not matter.... it was the Word of God. His habit in times of blessing carried him through his time of struggle.

Is obedient expectant prayer a habit you have? Do not expect to be able to powerfully pray during a crisis if you have not learned to powerfully pray in times of blessing. Prayer must

be a habit.

Have you noticed that in times of crisis people come to church. After 9/11 church attendance rose...for about a month... and then it returned to normal. During times of illness of loved ones people come to church... and that is good.... but in 9 times out of 10... after a few weeks, they don't continue to come. The habit of worship must be developed when we are in times of blessing.... then it will be strength in times of struggle.

We all want times of blessing. We want these times to last as long as possible.... but we must be honest..... they never last forever. Grow in your faith during these times of blessing in order to better face the times of struggle.

**Lesson # 2** The Lord gives us times of temptation for us to grow in our faith. In the story of Joseph we read this time of temptation... *Genesis 39 6b-10*

**Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, 7 and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!" 8 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. 9 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?" 10 And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.**

Day after day Joseph was tempted with adultery. Day after day he had to resist this temptation.

First, notice this about temptation... we will be tempted in our areas of strength more than our areas of weakness. Joseph was a hunk. He was “well built” and he was ‘handsome.’ We live in a day and age that is saturated with sexual temptation. I mean saturated. Think how many times a 15 year old boy or girl has seen the act of intimacy on T.V. suggested. How many times is it between a husband and wife? What is the lesson taught?

Think of the T.V. commercials all of us are exposed to advertising products to enhance a persons sexuality. Try explaining those commercials to an 8 year old.

Internet pornography is the # 1 income producing item on the net. The percentage of our teens exposed to internet pornography is incredible.... but you don't need the internet... have you been flipping through your cable channels recently and suddenly there is almost total nudity on T.V.... I mean basic cable.

Acceptable clothing today for our teens would be considered dress of prostitutes 10 to 15

years ago... but teens must wear what is acceptable. I know I am getting old.... but indecent is still indecent. And the latest fad is for teens to text nude pictures of themselves to other teens.

My point is this... we live in a day of constant temptation. I talked about sexual temptation... but we also face the temptation of greed and financial security at all cost. We face the temptation of isolation and ignoring the needs of the world around us. We face the temptation of lowering the value of life in abortion and shuffling our elderly out of sight and mind. We live in a world of Temptation.

Notice the plan of Joseph to resist temptation. It's a great, great plan

First, he remembered his obligation to other people. Joseph remembered his obligation to his master. Most every time we chose sin we hurt another person. Adultery causes pain. Even for an unmarried person... there is a future spouse to remember. Greed hurts another person. Anger hurt another person. Indifference to poverty hurts many other people.

An important step to overcoming temptation is to overcome selfishness. Life is not about ourselves.

Second, remember that sin is an offense against God. These are the words of Joseph...

**How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"** To fall to the temptation is to offend God. I realize we live in a day and age that God is often discounted from the equation.

He is often not considered in decisions. But we are Christians. We realize every action we take is accountable to God. *Col 3:4ff states*

**When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. 5Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6Because of these, the wrath of God is coming**

I love that first phrase... **"Christ, who is your life..."** We never desire to offend those whom we truly love. We love Christ.. Let us please our Lord. And also we are reminded that judgement does indeed take place. Let us not offend God.

Allow me to finish this lesson by sharing two other scriptures with you. First *James 1:2*

**2Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.**

God uses temptations to develop and grow our faith. The Second text is *1 Cor 10:13*

**No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.**

We face temptation to grow our faith... and God empowers to overcome that temptation.

If we have developed the habits of obedience during the times of blessing. If we have allowed the Holy Spirit to empower us to overcome our selfishness, we have the ability to resist the temptation that we are facing. REPEAT The temptation then becomes part of our growing experience. Yes, as Christians we can claim victory over lust. Yes, as Christians we can claim victory over greed. Yes, as Christians we can claim victory over anger. Yes, as Christians we can claim victory over impatience. We can claim victory... until we are tempted again.

The story of Joseph is our story. The Lord is with us. We are his children. He works in our lives. We have seen today how He works in our times of blessing... and we have seen today how he works in our times of temptation. Truthfully the times often overlap. The Lord is working in the lives of his Children... that is in the lives of you and me.

AMEN