CHAPTER 3
Joseph: From Slave to Deputy Pharaoh
Genesis 37, 39, 41-48, 50

THE STORY

Introduction
Personal betrayal hurts deeply. That is the situation where Joseph found himself in the chapter we will look at today. Joseph’s life is a profound example of how God can use even our trials for good.

I. Joseph is sold into slavery by his jealous brothers.
Genesis 37

What do we learn about Joseph?
- Joseph is 17 years old. He is the 11th son of Jacob.
- Joseph was born into a very dysfunctional family.
- Joseph was his dad’s favorite son.
- Joseph was a dreamer. He had dreams about his brothers and parents bowing down to him.

Joseph’s brothers hated him and they plotted to kill him. Genesis 37:20
Joseph is sold to Ishmaelites who take Joseph to Egypt.

II. Joseph is put into prison while in Egypt.
Genesis 39-41

THE STORY
Joseph is sold as a slave to an Egyptian official named Potiphar. “The Lord was with Joseph!” Genesis 39:2
God blessed Potiphar because of Joseph. Potiphar’s wife lied about Joseph and told her husband. Joseph is thrown into prison. “But the Lord was with Joseph.” Genesis 39:21

There are no barriers to where God can work or what he can do if we will trust him. Following Jesus does not mean that life will be easy or free of problems. God is preparing a man that he can use to build a nation and change the world.

III. Joseph is promoted to Deputy Pharaoh in Egypt. Genesis 41

Pharaoh had a dream that troubled him and none of his wise men could interpret it. The cupbearer remembered Joseph from prison. (Genesis 41:9) Pharaoh calls for Joseph to come and interpret the dream.

Joseph replies, “I cannot interpret it, but God can.” Genesis 41:15-16
- Egypt will have 7 years of bountiful harvests.
- Egypt will have 7 years of lean harvests (famine).
As a result, Joseph is put in charge of all the land of Pharaoh.

IV. Joseph is reunited with his brothers and he forgives them. Genesis 42-50
When Joseph’s brothers arrive in Egypt, they bow down to Joseph, but they don’t recognize him. Joseph recognizes his brothers, but he does not take revenge.

Joseph understood the “upper story”. It was God who sent me here ahead of you. Genesis 45:4-8
“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” Genesis 50:20

When we understand the upper story it changes us. We look at our life and circumstances differently. God was at work building a nation and Joseph was God’s agent in that. Joseph would live to the age of 110 and see his children and grandchildren.

Conclusion
What do we learn from this chapter of the story?
• God is at work in the details of our life to accomplish his purposes.
  "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28
• When we understand the upper story, it frees us from bitterness and enables us to forgive those who sin against us.