

Pastor Mark Well, howdy, Pastor Mark Driscoll here. I am really excited to bring you a 10 part sermon series on the life of Joseph, titled Trusting God in Troubled Times. This is a crazy, hillbilly, redneck saga with a lot of baby mama drama, starting in Genesis 37. So if you've got a dysfunctional family, you ain't seen nothing yet. And God shows up and is good to everyone, which gives hope to us all.

Speaker 2: It all started when Joseph it was his birthday and his dad wanted to give him a nice coat for his birthday.

Speaker 3: They were so jealous, they threw him in a pit and sold him off to slavery. Pharaoh had a dream and decided that he wanted Joseph to interpret his dream, and was put in a high position inside of the Egyptian empire.

Speaker 2: Joseph was in charge of all the food during the famine, and later his brothers came to get food. They all figured out that Joseph was their long-lost brother and they all had a feast together.

Pastor Mark All right, we kick off the Joseph series today. If you've got a Bible go to Genesis chapter 37, it's the first book of the Bible. I don't know the last time you went on a road trip, I know a lot of people here this time of year, man, it's go to fly, go to San Diego, go to Rocky Point, go to Sedona. When you're on a road trip, you're just trying to get there. And so you move pretty quick and you sort of get snapshot of the scene along the way, but everything's just coming by fairly quickly until you finally reach the destination that you're traveling toward. Then you pull over, everybody gets out and you enjoy that place. Previously you've driven by a lot of other places, Genesis is like that. It's a fast moving road trip.

The first two chapters of Genesis are about the creation of the heavens and the earth, which is a lot to do in a few pages. The first 25 chapters cover about 2000 years. So it's moving pretty quick. Then everything transitions and changes. It's like Moses, the author, in Genesis 37 slams on the brakes, pulls over and then everybody gets out. And we're examining in great detail the life of one man named Joseph. So we'll spend some 10 weeks together from Genesis 37 to Genesis 50, if you want to be reading ahead, looking at the life of this man Joseph. And I want you to know that as we're reading it, it's not a biography. It's a testimony. And there is a bit of a difference. A biography is how someone who doesn't know God tells the story of their life. A testimony is how someone who does know God tells the story of their life.

And usually where they are similar is at some point tragedy strikes, the bottom falls out. You find yourself in the proverbial pit and everything looks hopeless and bleak and dark. You feel abandoned and betrayed. And how will they overcome the obstacles? Then a biography tells the tale that this is how I overcame my obstacles. This is how I pulled myself up by my bootstraps. This is how I conquered those obstacles in my life. Therefore, I am the hero of my life. So when we have movies or television stories or books that are written, that are biographical in nature, the hero of the story is always the person who fixes their own life. Conversely, a testimony is about how God is the one who saves us,

about God being the one who gets involved and pulls us out of the pit. He's the one who redeems us. And he's the one who turns all the evil to good.

He's the one who overcomes the obstacles so that God gets the glory and we get the joy. But we're not the hero of the story, he is. Joseph is not a biography about how he overcame his odds. It's a testimony about how God delivered him. And the point is this, all of us at some point are going to find ourselves in this proverbial pit, this place of difficulty and darkness and distress. And God wants you to have hope, because God ultimately wants your life to be a testimony about his deliverance in your situation. That's the big idea behind the storyline of Joseph. So, we're going to look at today, overcoming four family flaws. How many of you come from a flawed family? Amen. We all come from a dysfunctional family. And I don't care how messed up your family is, your family's not as messed up as this family.

This family is really messed up. All the way back in Genesis, the second wedding is a guy marrying his sister. Now we're in Jerome, Arizona. It's very arty, eccentric, some hillbilly folk that are very creative. There's a guy who likes to camp, his name is Noah. He passes out drunk and naked at the KOA campground, awkward hillbilly moment. It's a difficult family. And then it continues forward with what the theologians will call baby mama drama. There's a lot of that... It's in the Hebrew. There's a lot of that in the story line. So this is a messed up family. And sometimes when you hear about the [inaudible 00:05:03], they go, these are the people who got it right. For sure, these are not the people that got it right. And every family has its flaws and it shows us how to overcome family flaws.

Family flaw number one is poor architect in Genesis 37, 1 through four. We begin, Jacob, that is his daddy. He's also called Israel, that's Joseph's dad. Lived in the land of his father, sojourning in the land of Canaan. These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph being 17. So at this point, what do you think of Joseph? Think of a high school, junior or senior. How many of you... Just get a 17 year old in your mind. High school kid. Just learning how to drive. Doesn't have a beard, but has two hopeful whiskers. In that weird transition where in one moment their voice sounds like their dad, the next moment, their voice sounds like their mom. That's 17. Amen. He's 17. That's where he's at. Was pastoring the flock, so they're shepherds, with his brothers. He's got a big family. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, the fathers' wives.

That's too many, amen. How many of you ladies go, that's a S. There should be wife, no wives. It's really awkward when you go to the baker, you're like, "We would like a wedding cake and we would like a groom and we would like four brides, so it's going to need to be a big cake." If your honeymoon is so big that you need an SUV with a third row, you have a poorly architected family. Amen. Just throwing it out there, something to pray about. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. So he is like a tattletale. Dad, I saw the brothers. How many brothers are there total? 12, and one daughter. 12 sons, one daughter. Now Israel, that's his dad. He's called Jacob and Israel. Here's the

telling line, loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he was the son of his old age. Favoritism.

He loved one son, he didn't love all his sons. This is a generational problem that will cause problems for generations. And he made him a robe of many colors. Now it's public. Imagine it's Christmas, your dad's got 13 kids. He's like, I got you a present. The other 12 kids are like, what? I didn't get you anything. How about a knife to stab the other kid? Can we have a knife? That's what's going to happen in that family. Amen. 13 kids, one gets a present. That's not good. Hey, I brought home one ice cream cone. Really? I'm going to pay for one of your college. One of you gets a car. One of you gets a birthday cake. What about the other 12? Don't love you. This is a problem. When his brother saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.

Isn't it curious? The father favors one son and the other children don't hate their father, they hate their brother. It's amazing. You can grow up in a home that is poorly architected and it sets up sibling rivalry and jealousy. And the children will not even consider that it's the architecting of the home by the parents that creates the problem. Instead, they fight and hate one another. And they don't even consider the failure of the father. Here's the big idea. Your family lives in a home that was architected. My dad was a construction worker, and then he broke his back hanging a drywall. So he went back to school and he became a building inspector. He would go investigate construction and make sure that it met code requirements. And I asked my dad one time. I said, "Dad, what's your main goal?"

He said, "Life and safety is always the issue." It's just all about life and safety. Making sure that if people occupy a building, that they are safe there. That's why we have architects. That's why we have codes. That's why we have inspectors. That's why we have builders, so that when you move into a home, it's not going to fall down on you. People would not move their family into a home that was advertised like this on Zillow. For hundreds of years, a family has squatted on this land. And at some point, grandpa threw up a tent and somebody else threw on an extension. A couple hundred years ago, a guy practiced electrical work and threw in some lines. Somebody dug a whole and called it plumbing. And we'd like to sell it to you. Would you like to live in it? Answer, no. There was no plan. There's no architecting. There's no code. This is not safe. It was just one generation after another doing whatever they thought would be a good idea. And there's no integration.

There's no organization. There's no architecting. Here's what happens. We would never move our family into a home that was not architected, but will live generation from generation in a life that is not architected. There's no plan. What are you doing with sex? We don't know. What are you doing with money? We don't know. What are you doing with church? We don't know. What are you doing with relationships? We don't know. What are we doing? We're just doing whatever's seems good to us at the moment. And there's no comprehensive plan. And sometimes we feel pain in our life, because we don't have a plan for

our life. That's the big idea. And that is the situation here in this family. They have problems that have been brewing for generations. Oh boy, I'll give you three of them. Perversion, passivity, and preference. First of all, is perversion. Dad married two sisters. How many of you are married? How many of you ladies have a sister? How many of you glad that your husband didn't also marry your sister? Awkward, amen.

He wanted to marry one sister and he got tricked, so he ended up marrying the other sister. Then he had to wait and marry the sister that he really loved. Now he has a wife that he loves and a wife that he hates. Now the problem is, the wife that he hates is the one who's fertile, keeps having the babies. The wife that he loves can't have babies, so then the wife that he loves gets a concubine, which is Old Testament for living girlfriend. Hoping that she will give him babies. Then now there's an arms race. The other woman goes, "I can get a concubine too." And now he's got four women all trying to get pregnant by him. Some of you guys are like, "That sounds good." No, it doesn't. That is not a well architected family.

That's a problem. That is a massive crisis waiting to happen. And it's perversion. It's perversion that is generational. You're looking at great-grandpa, all the way back to Abraham, he slept with multiple women. This is a family problem historically, and here it manifests itself in something called polygamy. Now, let me say this. How many of you are... You don't have to raise your hand, but how many of you are blended families? Blended families can be godly and wonderful and beautiful. But imagine what your blended family would be like if you didn't get divorced, you just kept adding wives and children to the family. Can you imagine that? Can you imagine the master bedroom with a lot of bunk beds? That's awkward. That's this family system.

How many of you, you're doing the math in your head and you're like, "If we didn't get divorced and we just kept adding wives and children, can you imagine the rivalry, the jealousy?" Who's going to be the one that is the head of the next generation. Who's the one that gets the inheritance and the family name, all of this drama and trauma. Let me lean over the plate and take one for our team. Marriage is supposed to be between one man and one woman. I just deployed the airbag, I'll take the head on collision. That's fine. It's between one man and one woman. And anything that deviates from that, deviates from God's intended and best. We live in a world that has redefined marriage, and as a result, I think that we will see polygamy legalized in my lifetime. Probably in Arizona in like 15 minutes. Not to tell you why, but I'm just throwing it out there.

What happens in polygamy is, one man takes multiple wives. That's oftentimes the way that it goes. Because we don't have a biblical definition of marriage, I believe that almost anything is now possible. I'll give you my brief riff on why polygamy is not God's best and ideal and why it's sinful and sad. Some people will come and they'll say, "Well, there's polygamy in the Bible." There's murder in the Bible, but I'm not for it. There's a lot of bad things that happen in the Bible, and they're sins to be repented of, not things to be multiplied. Where it begins in Genesis one with the first marriage, which is God's pattern and

precedent for patrimony. The way that it works is, there's a man, there's a woman, they get married. That's a marriage. Quoting that, Moses says, Jesus says, and Paul echoes, "A man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife." Not his wives, his wife. The first person in the Bible to practice polygamy was a godly... Excuse me, an ungodly guy named Lamech, way back.

He's a very godless man who takes multiple wives. So the whole pattern comes from a godless man. Furthermore, when Jesus comes, he is like a groom, the church is like his bride. And Jesus only has one bride. He's not saving multiple religions. He has a relationship covenantally with his people. Leaders in the church are to be one-woman men. The husband of one wife. That's the pattern and precedent. And in addition, just practically, it causes lots of pain, lots of conflict, lots of trauma, lots of drama. That's what happens when there is perversion, particularly when it comes to polygamy. And what happens is, this is a generational problem. So Joseph's great-grandfather was a guy named Abraham. Abraham got two women pregnant. They had two sons. From them, came two nations that today dominate geopolitical conflict. Those who are Jewish and Christian will trace their roots to one of his sons.

Those who are Muslim will trace their roots to the other son. And the conflict is, which one is the son who should be the son of the promise? Abraham practiced sexual perversion, had children, sons with two women and favored one over the other. So perversion and preference, it's a generational problem. His son had fidelity to his wife, had two sons, but they played favorite with their kids. So it goes Abraham, Isaac. Isaac and his wife have Jacob and Esau. What happens with Jacob and Esau? One is sort of dad's, the other is kind of mom's. Esau's the tough guy. He lives in carefree. He drives a Harley, he doesn't wear a helmet. He carries a side arm. He has tattoos, and he's a part-time cage fighter. That's Esau. It's all in the Hebrew. Trust me, I did my homework. That's Esau. So, dad really likes Esau.

Now Jacob, he lives in Scottsdale in a condo. He drives a MINI Cooper and he has a pastel set of polo shirts that he always pulls the collar up for before he goes dancing. So his mom... It's in the Hebrew. Trust me, I did my homework. So his mom really likes him. He's mama's boy, and the other son is daddy's boy. Well, this leads to conflict in the family because of favoritism. Abraham, Isaac. Go to Jacob. Jacob has four wives, 13 kids, 12 sons, one daughter. As a result of perversion and preference, the generational crisis continues. Because they're not architecting their family, rather, according to God's wisdom. There is perversion in this family. And what happens for the dad, Jacob, he doesn't really have the moral high ground raising 12 sons. So if the boys are sexually sinning, what's dad supposed to say? "Guys, sleeping with multiple women is bad." They're like, "We've got four moms. We have bleachers in our living room, that's how many mothers we have."

What happens is, you're going to see at Genesis 38, if you read ahead. One of his sons goes out and sins sexually, he doesn't really say anything. Ruben, one of his other sons, sleeps with one of his concubines. I mean, reality television started in Israel. That's what I'm saying. It is crazy. But what's dad going to say? "Don't

sleep with the girls I'm not supposed to be sleeping with." It's not really a strong argument. Dad has lost moral authority, because he has a pants' problem. You guys, write that down. If not, your wife has already written it down for you. First problem, with a poor architecting in this family is perversion. Second is passivity. He's a passive dad. Passivity starts all the way with our very first father, Adam, in Genesis three. It says that Adam and Eve were the first parents, mother and father.

Satan comes, has a conversation with Eve, deceives her, leads her astray. She partakes of the forbidden fruit, Genesis three, that she hands some to her husband who was with her. Question, men, what did Adam say or do when Satan attacked his family? Nothing. He said nothing, he did nothing. That's passivity. That's a problem. There are sins of commission, where we do things we should not do. There are sins of omission, where we don't do what we were supposed to do. He was supposed to speak, he didn't speak. He was supposed to, he didn't act. He was supposed to fight the enemy. And as a result, he sat idly by and watched the enemy lead his family.

Jacob is a passive man. He doesn't say or do much. I'll give you one example. Genesis 34, some chapters previously, he has 12 sons, one daughter, her name is Dinah. She's in a town called Shechem and she is sexually assaulted and raped. What does dad do? Nothing. What does dad say? Nothing. I'll never forget the time I met with a father, I've told you the story before, but something similar happened to his daughter. She was very angry and upset. And I was meeting with them, and he said, "I don't know why she's mad at me, I didn't do anything." I said to him, "That's the problem." That's Jacob's problem, he's a passive man. As a result of him being passive, his sons escalate and become overly aggressive. I've got three boys and I can tell you this.

I need to lovingly lead my sons and help them raise up to be good, godly men. And if I am very passive, the boys can overcompensate and be very aggressive. How many of you have seen this? What happens then is, in Genesis 34, when Dinah is raped, dad say, and does nothing. The boys say, "We're going to take care of this." The brothers roll into town. They trick all of the males in the town, and then they slaughter every man in the town. It's a mass murder. Passive dads can raise overly aggressive sons. Both of which are ungodly in extreme opposite directions. Part of the problem is perversion, part of the problem is passivity. And then part of the problem is preference. He's got 13 kids, but he really likes one. He has 12 sons, but he really favors one. And he makes it public. He gets a coat of many colors and puts it on his son so that his son struts around like a peacock. And everybody knows, there's the one that he loves.

Some of you grew up in homes where your dad and mom played favorites. It may not have been this clear, but it may have been like this. Well, your dad's favorite, your mom's favorite. That should not exist in a Christian home. Some families they'll say, "Well, we were dad's kids and they were mom's kids." What that is, is factions in the family. That's divisions in the home. Jacob breeds this by preferring one child over another. This doesn't mean that as a parent, you won't connect with certain kids easier than others. Maybe you connect with one kid

because they have the similar interests of you or similar personality, or they remind you of your spouse and you really love your spouse. There'll be other kids in your family, if you're a parent or God blesses you with children, or a grandparent. Grandparents, don't play favorites. Parents, don't play favorites.

It means that you may need to put in additional effort to love equally. I know families were literally, you get a car at 16, you don't. We'll pay for your college, not yours. We're going to take care of your kids when they're born and be good grandparents, your kids are on their own. It's favoritism. Sometimes this even shows up in the will. I've been at some tragic occasions where the whole family sits down, the will is read. It's like, Johnny gets everything, Sally gets to cry. You're like, "That's not a fair deal." It's favoritism. Some of you grew up in those homes and you're carrying that pattern and precedent forward, because you're living in a life that was constructed by your parents, your grandparents, your great-grandparents. It wasn't architected by the word of God.

How is your family of origins architected? How is your current family architected? Sometimes we, again, feel the pain in our life because we don't have a plan for our life. And living here for two years, if I could just give a few observations as a newbie to The Valley. There are a lot of people here who don't have an architecting plan. I've talked to families, they're like, "We love Jesus, we just don't go to church." Why? "Our kids play sports." So the plan is, we don't go to church because our kids play sports. Is that the plan? I think baseball's a great sport, a bad religion. I have three sons who play baseball. I know it's complicated. We've got five kids. Half the time I feel like an air traffic controller trying to put it all together. I know life is complicated. When it gets hot here, June, July, August, September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April.

People just... They're like, "We don't go to church, we don't pray, we don't read our Bible, we don't give." Why? "It's hot out." You live in The Valley, it's always hot out. So what is like... It's a hundred, I'm a known Christian today. I'm not a Christian until it's in the eighties. That's a bad plan. That's a really bad plan. There's some people like, "I don't read my Bible till we're on fire." Well, you should read it before you're on fire. It's helpful. It just weird things here in The Valley. People are like, "We came here to retire." You don't retire from being a disciple of Jesus.

Audience: Amen.

Pastor Mark All right. Both of you said amen, I hope your numbers grow and this becomes a movement. Just weird plans. I ask people all the time, well, what's your plan? "We don't have a plan for our kids, we don't have a plan for our money, we don't have a plan for our... We don't have any plan." And the old adage is true. When you fail to plan, you plan to fail.

Audience: Amen.

Pastor Mark

Here, this family's just poorly architected. One dad, two wives, two combines, 13 kids, 12 boys, one girl, jealousy and rivalry, perversion, sexual sin, preference. This is a problem. Here's what I'm saying is, sometimes the pain in your life started generations before you were even born. Number two, family flaw number two, rejecting God's will. God comes to this family and says, "Here's my will." And they're like, "No, we vote no." Genesis 37, 5 through 11. "Now Joseph had a dream." God's going to speak to him and reveal something to this 17 year old kid. And when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. It doesn't say they started to hate him, they hated him even more.

This problem has been brewing since they were little kids. And the parents should have seen this coming. They hate Joseph and it's getting worse as they get older. This problem is escalating. Now Joseph has a dream about God choosing him to be a leader, and there's a debate among the commentators as to whether or not he should have said anything. Let me just say, sometimes there's things that God tells you that are not for everybody. This may have been something good for him to keep to himself. We could debate that. He said to them, "Hear this dream that I have dreamed." Hey family, I have good news. Let's call a meeting. I had a dream. "Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field." This is all foreshadowing of grain growing in Egypt. "And behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright." And he's a little brother. "Behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf." It was weird, I saw you guys worshipping me. That was interesting.

How many of you don't want to worship your brother? How many of you don't want to worship your little brother? His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us?" You're the little brother, when do you get to be the boss? "Or are you indeed to rule over us? So they hated him even more for his dreams and his words. Then he dreamed another dream. And he told it to his brothers and said, 'behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and the 11 stars were bowing down to me.'" I think I'll be ruling over the universe. How many of you, if your little brother told this, you would find a pit to throw him in? That's where this is going. "But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, 'what is this dream you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?' And his brothers were jealous."

Favoritism causes jealousy in a family. "But his father kept this saying in his mind." Two things here. One, we see God choosing. To use theological language of the Bible, he is electing Joseph. He is predestinating Joseph. He has a destiny chosen in advance for Joseph. That's the whole point of the revelation through the dream. Here is your destiny, I am choosing you. You are elected Joseph to lead. His brothers hate the whole concept of God choosing him. There are still people that hate that concept. They still don't like that idea that God picked somebody, so as a result, they choose to work against God's choosing. But he is the one whom God has chosen. And in so doing, it is a pattern and precedent where typically the older would rule over the younger, but on occasion, for reasons that are known oftentimes largely to himself, God chooses the younger to rule over the older.

We've already seen this in Genesis with two brothers. Able ruling over Cain, Isaac over Ishmael, and Jacob over Esau. In each occasion, it's God choosing to work through the younger brother, not the older brother. Number two, they know God's will, they just don't like it. Sometimes people will say, "I don't know God's will." And sometimes God's will can be hard to determine. But I would say, oftentimes what happens is, we know God's will, we just don't like it. Any of you ever had that experience? If you're breathing say yes. Sometimes it's as clear as reading the word of God. When we want a clear word from God, we open the clear word of God. And there are certain times we read the Bible and we're like, "I don't like what that says." It's not that it's unclear, it's just that it's unpopular.

Forgive them, nope. Be generous, not going to happen. Consider others, have you met them? We read the book and we're like, "I don't like what it says." Sometimes it's that we don't know God's will, oftentimes it's that we know God's will and we don't like God's will. God has made his will clear through two dreams that Joseph had. Now what we end up with is Joseph being chosen by God for a destiny and the brothers fighting, not just against Joseph, but against the will of God. They're rejecting the will of God. And this family has been doing it for generations. Kids out of wedlock, adultery, all kinds of perversion, rebellion. This family has a lot of baggage and a few carry-ons. They have some issues. And here they are rejecting the clear will of God. Leads to the third family flaw, factions in the family. You can see how this works. It's poorly architected, they reject God's will, and then it ends up with factions.

So here is Joseph and his dad, they're one team. Here's the 11 brothers, they're another team. Do you know what division means? Two visions. Joseph has a vision for his life, his brothers have a vision for his life. There are two visions that is division. Two visions is division. And as a result, there are factions in the family. Verse 12, chapter 37. "Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem." Back to Genesis 34, this is the area where their sister was raped and they murdered all the men. I don't know about you, if I was going to send my sons out 50, 60 miles from home to go find some grass for the flocks, I would not choose Shechem. The scene of the massacre, seems like your boys could be in danger. "And Israel," his name is also Jacob, "said to Joseph, are not your brothers pastoring the flock at Shechem?"

So the boys are all in the field. And this is a tough job, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You're feeding the flock, you're sleeping with the animals. You're outdoors. It's a climate probably not dissimilar to this. This is a rugged lifestyle. Where's Joseph? He's home with dad, sleeping in his bed, hanging out with four moms who are taking care of everybody. He's living at camp cupcake and his brothers are out sleeping in the desert. So dad says, "You should go check on the boys." Again, dad is passive. He doesn't go build this relationship with his sons, he sends his youngest son to go do basically a performance review on his brothers. It's the family business. How many of you have been in the family business? And right now you get the nervous eye twitch and the PTSD kicks in, because you realize that this is your life. I apologize. We'll keep going. "So he said to them, 'go now, see if it is well with your brothers and the flock and bring me words.' He sent him to the valley of Hebron."

"He came to Shechem and a man found him wandering in the fields. And the man asked him, 'What are you seeking?' 'I'm seeking my brothers,' he said. 'Tell me, please, where are they pastoring the flock.' The man said, 'They have gone away for I've heard them say, let us go to Dothan.' So Joseph went after his brothers and found at Dothan. They saw him from afar, and before he came near, they conspired against him to kill him." Hey guys, here he comes. Dad's not here. This is a good time to kill him. "They saw him from afar and they plotted to kill him. They said to one another, 'Here comes this dreamer.'" God gives him a dream and here come the dream killers. "Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him and we will see what has become of his dreams." This is brutal.

Jealous, hostile factious family can be the most brutal of all. "But Ruben heard it. He rescued him out of their hands saying, 'Let us not take his life.'" Ruben is the guy who slept with his dad's concubine. When you're the guy who sleeps with the same girl that your dad is sleeping with and you're like, "This is immoral." It's officially immoral. When Ruben's conscience kicks in... Ruben lives on the wrong side of the line. Ruben's like, "Yeah, I'm dating the same girl as my dad, but this is over the line." Well, then it's official. This is official. This is your friend who will do anything for a dollar, and is the drunk party animal that can't find their pants on any Saturday. And they're like, "That's just wrong." It's official, it's wrong. That's Ruben. All right, I thought it was funny. Anyways. Doesn't matter.

Okay. "Ruben said to them, 'she no blood, throw him into the pit here in the wilderness.'" Verse 22, "Do not lay a hand on him, that he might rescue him out of their hand to restore him to his father. So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the robe of many colors that he wore." It's that symbol and sign of favoritism from the father. "They took him and threw him into a pit." This is probably shaped like a bottle. It's where they would put water out in the wilderness. And as a result, once you're dropped in, you can't get out. "The pit was empty," otherwise he would've drowned, "there was no water in it. Then they sat down to eat." How brutal is this?

Take your brother like, we hate that guy, throw him in the pit. Here's Joseph 17 year old kid. He's down in the bottom of the well, "Hey guys, funny. They are not going to get me out." At first, you think this is a really bad joke. How many of you, you had one of those tormenting siblings? They'd lock you in a closet, or hold you down, or tie you up. Few hands raising. I apologize for that. And you're thinking, okay. They're not playing. This is not a joke. This is not to scare me. They're trying to kill me. These are my brothers. He's down in the pit, crying, screaming, probably freaking out. The brothers are on top of the pit. What are they doing? Eating lunch. These are heartless guys. Just sit down and eat lunch while you hear, please. He's calling them out by name. Judah, Ruben, please. Come on guys, please. One of you. No, this is a faction. There's Joseph and there's his brothers. There's division in this family.

As he's weeping, they're eating. Verse 25, "And looking up, they saw caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead with their camels bearing gum, balm and myrrh on their way to carry down to Egypt." So these are people who are doing trade

and they're heading down to this godless nation of Egypt. "Then Judah said to his brothers, 'What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not our hands be upon him for he is our brother, our own flesh.' And his brothers listen to him." He said, "You know what? If we just kill him, we get nothing. If we sell him, we get some money. Lets at least get something for this kid." Selling your own sibling into slavery to be taken away from the family, into the nation of Egypt, which doesn't worship the same God. 17 year old kid. As they drew Joseph up and lift him out of the pit, he's probably thinking, "Oh good, my brothers are getting me out."

No kid, we just got you out to sell you. You're like a used car, we struck a deal for cash and you're off to Egypt. "They sold him to the Ishmaelites for 20 shekels of silver." That was the going price in the day for a slave. "They took Joseph to Egypt." This is Cain and Abel all over again. But the dad contributed to this problem. He favored one son over the others. I'll tell you how it worked. I'll show you actually how it worked. We've got a prop. So here's Joseph. Joseph is sent by his father to go do a performance review on the brothers. Here comes Joseph. Joseph is... If you're a single guy, I'll give this to you, because then you will find a woman because they can't ignore this. This is like a peacock in full plumage. So what happens is, dad tells Joseph, "Hey, the boys are out in the fields, go do a performance review. Check on the boys." Joseph walks out, what's he wearing? The coat. Probably not the best wardrobe choice. Amen?

Audience: Amen.

Pastor Mark The brothers see him coming, obviously. They see him coming, and they think to themselves, he is the favorite and that coat shows everyone that dad loves him and he doesn't love us. They strip him of his coat. They throw him in a hole and they devise a plan where they will slaughter a goat and they will dip it in blood. Then they will come back and lie to the father and tell him that his son is dead. I've got my fourth point. Should I take the coat off or leave the coat on?

Audience: On.

Pastor Mark On? You're my wife, really? Okay.

Audience: [crosstalk 00:38:49].

Pastor Mark Gosh. It doesn't fit in the middle, it's a situation. Okay, let me do this. I feel like the fresh preacher of Bel-Air. Anyways, just made that up. So the fourth point, here's a little story that I've got to tell about a bad family in Shechem. All right. Family flaw number four is a family secret. I feel so self-conscious. This is a little flamboyant for me. Oh boy. So this will hurry the sermon up though, because I don't want to do this for long. Family flaw number four, a family secret. You could see sort of the... It's terrible. I should have put on the back like a Jersey, dad's favorite. That's what I should have put on the back. So poor architecting the family, rejecting God's will, factions in the family leads to a family secret. Here's the family secret, Genesis 37. "When Ruben returned", verse 29, "to the

pit, saw that Joseph was not in the pit. He tore his clothes and returned to his brothers and said, 'The boy is gone, where shall I go?'"

"Then they took Joseph's robe, slaughtered a goat, dipped the robe in blood. And they sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father and said, 'We have found this robe, please identify whether it is your son's robe or not.'" How sick is this? They take the coat, they dip it in blood, they bring it back to dad. Oh dad, something terrible as happened to Joseph. We couldn't find him, all we could find was his coat. Dad, we hope it's not his coat, we pray it's not his coat. Dad, here it is. Is this his coat? And then dad realizes that's his coat, my son must be dead. These 11 boys are going to keep this secret for 20 years, lying to their dad, watching him weep every day. "He identified it and said, 'it is my son's robe, a fierce animal has devoured him. Joseph is, without a doubt, torn to pieces.' Then Jacob tore his garments, put sack cloth on his loins and mourn for his son many days." When's the last time you went to a funeral.

Imagine at the funeral, parents are devastated. Kid is dead. Everybody's crying. And a bunch of the family members are like, "He's not dead, but we'll fake it." Oh dad, we're so sorry. They get up and give testimony at the funeral, we loved our brother, we miss him so much. Everybody's like, "Oh, he is dead." They're just like, "No, he is not, we got 20 bucks for him." This is a family that keeps secrets. These boys, again, keep the secret for 20 years. "All his sons and his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, 'No, I shall go down to Sheol, that is the grave, to my son mourning.' Thus his father wept for him. Meanwhile, the Midianites had sold Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard." Let me hit two things. Number one, there's a difference between coveting and vengeance.

Coveting is a win-lose, where you have something, I wish I had it. So I covet it and I'm trying to figure out how to get it from you so that now you win, I lose. I want it to be the I-win-you-lose, that's coveting. Vengeance is we both lose. If I can't have what I want, nobody can have it. I know one guy, just comes to mind, some years ago. He had a difficult marriage. Him and his wife were in the middle of a divorce, so he set his house on fire. When they asked him why, he's like, "Well, if I can't live there, she can't live there." Who wins there? We both lose. What they wanted was the love of their father. They knew that their father would not love them, so rather than coveting, hoping that he would love them too. They decided, then if he's not going to love us, he'll have no one to love. We're going to get rid of the one son that he does love. This is the sickness of the human heart.

That we can reach a point where it's like, I don't care if I hurt as long as you hurt, I don't care if I lose as long as you lose, I don't care if I pay as long as you pay. This is family vengeance. Sometimes you see this in divorce cases where the kids become hostages in the negotiation. This is where you see people do horrific things to close family members. It's just all vengeance and lose-lose. That's where this family is at. And what'll happen is, we could look at that moment, but we need to look at the generations preceding it and saying this has been in motion for a very long time. And the same is through in your life and in mine.

Number two, some people and some families are overt, others are covert. Overt, how many of you grew up in an overt home? You didn't have to guess what people were thinking. They told you with a tremendous amount of volume.

It was very clear. You're like, I didn't have to read any minds or lips. I had to endure it. We all knew what they were thinking. Those are overt families. If it's a poker game, the overt are those who come, they say, "Okay, here's all my cards face up on the table, there's my hand." That's what I'm thinking, that's what I'm feeling, that's what I'm wanting. The covert people, it's poker game, they hold all their cards. You don't know what they're thinking, they've got a poker face and no tell. You don't know what they want, you don't know what they're feeling, you don't know what they're hiding. They're sneaky. These are people that it doesn't come out until it's much later. It's amazing that some families are dominated by a secret that they keep for a very long time. As a pastor, I've been at the death bed or the funeral of certain families. I'll never forget, many years ago, as a young pastor, I was talking to a guy.

He was like, "My mom was on her death bed, I went to say goodbye. And she told me that my dad's not my dad, she had an affair." He's like, "I don't know who my dad is." I was like, "Did your dad know?" "Yeah, my dad knew. Everybody knew, they just didn't tell me." Covert, secretive family. I knew another guy on his dad's death bed, he goes to say goodbye to his dad. And there's a couple of girls that are about his age there and they're all crying. And he is like, "You seem very emotional, why are you crying? This is my dad, how do you know him?" And they're like, "He's our dad too. We're your sisters. Your dad had two women and two houses and raised two families. The women knew, and our mom told us, but your mom never told you." What? It's a torpedo to the soul. It's the family secret. And the family secret is, we don't tell anybody. This can start when the kids are little.

Don't tell your mom, don't tell your dad. This is just between us. Siblings, don't tell mom and dad, this stays in the family. This a family matter. Covert, secretive, family secret. That's exactly what's going on here. And Jacob has reaped this in his own life. When Jacob's dad was an old man, it came time for his dad to choose between him and his brother, Esau, for the family blessing. If you know the story, Jacob is the trickster. His dad wants to give the blessing to his brother, Esau. Him and his mom... They're a factious family, so him and his mom devise a plan. Your dad's a blind, old guy and he is going to give away the family blessing. So pretend like you're your brother and sneak in there and trick him for the family blessing. That's exactly what Jacob did. He tricked his father, and then he raised his sons who trick him.

The Bible says, "Do not be deceive, God will not be mocked. You will reap what you sow." Unless there's repentance, you reap what you sow. This can be negative or positive. For Jacob, it's very negative. The trickster who tricked his dad, got tricked by his sons as their dad. How many of you at this point are discouraged? Let's close in prayer. Take a second offering, bring up the band and sing. There's no good news yet. Because this is a biography, it's not yet a

testimony. It's a story of people's lives and God hasn't shown up yet. You keep reading the story, God does show up. And I'll give you some encouragement. First of all, the Bible is the most honest book ever written. How many of you were in third grade when they were like, "Write out your family history." You didn't write it like this.

You didn't write it like, "Well, we had a secret and a lot of baby mama drama and grandpa was a little freaky." You didn't write it like that. We tend to not be as honest as the Bible, but the Bible needs to make the bad news be as bad as it is so that the good news can be as good as it is. The story of the Bible is good news. And the good news is that family isn't going to save you. Just so you know that. Some people are like, "I don't know why my family doesn't make it better, why it makes it worse?" You just have a biblical family. Your family makes it worse, that's a biblical family. And the Bible's the most honest story that's ever written. And the Bible has a bunch of little stories and they're all part of one big story.

The big story is that there's another father named God and there's another brother named Jesus. And that Jesus is sent by the father as Joseph was sent by his father on a mission to come to us. And like Joseph's brothers, we hate him and throw him in a pit called a tomb. That ultimately he gets out of that tomb, and as you read the rest of the story of Joseph, he becomes a king and a ruler who brings salvation in life to many because he is able to forgive those who have wronged him. So the little story of Joseph is part of the big story of Jesus. Jesus teaches this when he comes, a little while later he says in John five, arguing with the religious leaders. He says, "You diligently study the scriptures thinking that in them you'll find eternal life. You fail to recognize that these are the scriptures that testify about me."

What Jesus is saying is you don't know the Bible unless you know me. After he dies for our sins and rises as our savior, on two occasions, at the end of Luke's gospel, Jesus holds a Bible study and he walks them through the whole Old Testament and he points everything to himself. That would've included the story of Joseph. The story of Joseph is a little story that points to the big story of Jesus, that we need a new father, we need a new brother and we need to be adopted into the family of God if we're going to make any changes in our family legacy and lineage. God loves to brake dysfunctional family systems. And here's the good news, God even works through broken and dysfunctional families. I'll give you a verse, Revelation 21, 12. It's talking about the kingdom of God at the end of time. You and I, if we belong to the Lord Jesus, we will get there.

Before we enter into the New Jerusalem, this great city that God has created, we'll pass through something called a gate. There are 12 gates, it says in Revelation, and inscribed on each gate is the name of one of these sons. I'll read it to you. Revelation 21, 12. "It had a great high wall with 12 gates and on the 12 gates, 12 angels. And on the gates, the names of the 12 tribes of the son of Israel." You know what's going to happen when we walk into heaven, we'll be like, "The New Jerusalem. What? The Ruben gate. What? Are you kidding me? He was a naughty boy, how come he gets a plaque?" Amen?

Audience: Amen.

Pastor Mark And God's like, "You're a naughty boy, you can come too." here's the point, apart from forgiveness and God's grace, nobody gets in. Because of forgiveness and God's grace, there's an opportunity for us to pass by. And sometimes we read the Bible, we say, "Oh, those heroes of the faith." I'll tell you right now, these are not all-stars. These are not moral all-stars, these are regular sinners like you and me who were chosen by God, forgiven of sin and given much grace. And the fact that their names are on those gates just reminds us all, we're all here because of Jesus, we're not here because of us. So let me close with this, before we partake of communion, show some of the correlations between Joseph and Jesus. Joseph and Jesus were both sons loved by their earthly and heavenly fathers. Joseph and Jesus were both chosen to be the first born son. Joseph and Jesus were both sons chosen and sent by the heavenly father to save and rule.

Both Joseph and Jesus were shepherds, and Jesus is the good shepherd. Both Joseph and Jesus had a family that did not believe in their destiny. Joseph, rather, and Jesus were both hated by jealous brothers. Joseph and Jesus were both sold for pieces of silver, the price of a slave, 20 and 30 pieces of silver respectively. Joseph and Jesus were both stripped of their clothing. Joseph and Jesus both wear a robe dipped in blood. Revelation 19, 13 says when Jesus comes back, he too will have a robe dipped in blood. Joseph and Jesus were both thrown in a hole, Jesus in his tomb. Joseph and Jesus were both taken to Egypt as young men. Joseph and Jesus, both were separated from their father. Joseph from his earthly father, Jesus from his heavenly father when he died on the cross in our place, for our sins. Joseph and Jesus, both forgave those who sinned against them. Joseph and Jesus, both bring life and grace to a multitude after they get out of their pit. And lastly, right now, Joseph is worshipping Jesus.

Audience: Amen.

Pastor Mark And you and I are going to do the same. Father God, thank you so much that the good news of the Bible is that we get a new father. That we get a new brother, that we get a new family, that we get a new destiny. Lord God, thank you that you love this family, it gives hope for all families. Thank you that you work through these sons, it gives hope to all of us who are your sons and daughters. Thank you, Lord God, for 10 weeks that we will have to study the life of Joseph. I pray that everyone would read it and study it and consider it and discuss it and learn from it. And Lord God, I pray that as we learn of the story of Joseph, we would see it as a testimony. How we, like that family, apart from your grace, your forgiveness, your involvement, your provision, your renewing, we would find ourselves just repeating the same cycles of sin and folly and favoritism and death.

But Lord Jesus, you raise up men to be patriarchs, you raise up women to be matriarchs. You bring in to certain folly and family systems, you start new family lines and lineages and legacies. And Lord God, I pray for us all today, a bit of hope, a bit of encouragement, as well as a bit of sobriety and honesty as we consider where we've come from, where we are at and the destiny you would

have for each of us. So that, Lord God, our life could be a testimony of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and what he does when he intersects and transforms a life and a legacy. So Lord, as we come to partake of communion and we remember the broken body and shed blood of Jesus, our brother, who was thrown in a hole but came out to love us. Forgive us and reconcile with us. And we thank you for the little story of Joseph, because it reminds us of the big story of Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Audience: Amen.