

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, throw 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. If you've got a Bible go to Genesis chapter 39, and we're looking at the testimony of Joseph, and his testimony includes, today, three particular tests. And as you're opening God's word, get in your mind's eye, envision someone who's a teenager. Do you know someone who's a teenager? Can you think of someone who's a teenager? And if you're a teenager, this is really easy, but think of someone who's in high school. That's the age of Joseph. He's actually 17 years of age when he is sold as a slave and taken to Egypt for a life of slavery, 17 years of age.

He's a young man who grew up in a very complicated family. His dad married two sisters, which is too many. Amen. That's too many. How many of you are glad that you're not married to your husband along with your sister, that awkward... Lot of baby mama drama going on in Genesis, especially in this family. In addition, that wasn't enough. They picked up two concubines. Now you've got four women mothers all living in the same house, and they have 13 children, 12 boys, one girl.

Dad does what no parents should do, he picks a favorite. He chooses Joseph out of the 13 children as his favorite. And he makes this very public by putting a coat of many colors on his son so that everyone knows, there's the favorite. Well, what this leads to is jealousy and rivalry in the family. The boys grow up really hating their brother because of their father's favoritism toward him.

What happens is they are away from home working for the father's business, tending to the father's flocks, maybe some 50 or 60 miles away, and Joseph is home with his dad, and dad tells him, "You need to go investigate the boys, see how they're doing, and basically go do a performance review on their work." So Joseph makes the trip, shows up in his coat.

The brothers see him coming and start seething. They're absolutely furious and jealous. And they devise a plan where they will sell him into slavery, they will falsify that he has died, they'll let their poor dad, for 20 years, grieve and mourn and even get up and weep and cry at the funeral. These are very deceptive men.

And at the age of 17, Joseph is betrayed by his brothers, sold for the price of a slave, and taken to Egypt.

It says in Psalm 107, excuse me, 105 versus 17 and 18 that he was taken with iron shackles around his neck and his ankles. Think of a high school kid, junior or senior, literally chained and then taken to Egypt. He's gone from freedom to slavery. He's gone from the promised land to the nation of Egypt. He's gone from speaking Hebrew to speaking Egyptian, a language he does not know. He's gone from a place where only his God was worshiped to a place that all gods are worshiped, essentially, except for his God. There are no believers. There's no Bible teaching of any sort or kind.

He goes from his father's house to being a slave in the house of another man. He is in this dire difficult distressing situation. And all of this is his testimony. I told you last week, a biography is how people who don't know God tell their life story, this is how I overcame my obstacles, this is how I conquered those things that were against me. A testimony is giving credit to God, this is how God delivered me, this is how God was with me and for me, this is how God saved me.

Joseph's story is a testimony, but every good testimony has got three tests, and we've got three tests today. But you got to see it as a kid who... it's like taking an Amish kid and dropping him in Syria or North Korea or Iraq or Vegas, some place that he probably shouldn't be and isn't exactly sure how to conduct himself. That's the story of Joseph. He's now away from home in a big city. He lived a rural life. His family is not there. No one knows him. He can reinvent his identity. He can do whatever he wants insofar as behavior goes.

And you're going to read his story starting in Genesis chapter 39 verse one. His first test is the test of success. Now, Joseph had been brought down to Egypt and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had brought him, bought him rather, from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. There's a lot there.

If you've ever been to a used car auction, the car rolls up. Right. We have the Barrett-Jackson auto auction every year around the corner. I don't know if you watch it or been there or watched it on TV. Car rolls up, everybody bids, highest bidder takes it home. They did that with Joseph. It's an auction. Up he stands, there's Joseph, everyone's bidding, he's shackled and chained, high school student, traumatizing, amen, I mean, traumatizing.

Potiphar, some guy he doesn't know, keeps putting his paddle up, wins the auction, and they take him off the auction block and he's going to go be that guy's slave. He's now property. He has no legal rights. He is the property of this man who purchased him for the highest amount in the public bid.

Here's the key. This is the key to the whole story of Joseph. The Lord was with Joseph. It says this four times in Genesis 39, chapter 39 versus two and three, and also chapter 39 verse 23. Four times God was with Joseph, God was with

Joseph, God was with Joseph, God was with Joseph. It's the presence of God that makes all the difference. It's the presence of God that makes all the difference. The Lord was with Joseph and he became a successful man. And he was in the house of his Egyptian master.

His master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord caused all that he did to succeed in his hands, so Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him or served him, and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. 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. If you are a believer, God goes with you, and wherever you go God's presence goes with you to be a blessing to those who have you in their presence.

Let me say this, it's a blessing to have you here today. Thank you for coming. You're a blessing to have. When Joseph went, he was a blessing to have. It's always a blessing to receive God's people. It goes on to say, the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in his house and field, so he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him, he had no concern about anything but the food that he ate.

Well, who's this guy, Potiphar? It tells us that he is a governmental official. So there is Pharaoh who rules over this mighty empire of Egypt and Potiphar is like secretary defense, Department of Defense. Think a guy with bars down his sleeve, furrowed brow, buzz cut, cigar hanging out. He's that guy. He's a military guy, right? He's the "Mad Dog" Mattis of that day. That's who he is. He's that guy. He's the tough military leader, man's man, guy's guy, leader of leaders, raises up young leaders.

And it says that he is impressed with Joseph, which is a big statement, because any man who raises up young soldiers gets to see the best and brightest, and he realizes that Joseph is exemplary because God is with him. And what's curious is, Potiphar is impressed with Joseph's performance and God's presence, but ultimately he doesn't have any interest in Joseph's God. He just likes what God does. He doesn't care who God is.

What we also see in the story is Joseph. And let me just say this, he's an honest and godly politician. Okay. So you can add that to the list of God's miracles in the Bible, right? Here's an honest and godly politician. How many of you don't even think that this is possible, to have an honest and godly politician?

Okay. I'm not going to talk a lot about politics, because you already got the nervous eye twitch. Every time you watch the news you throw up in your mouth. I know what it's like. I know what it's like. But we get this impression that all politicians are corrupt and no one anywhere loves and serves God in political arenas.

Well, what we're going to see is that he serves a political leader named Potiphar. Later in the book, you'll see that he actually serves under Pharaoh. He has a political governmental office, and he is a man of tremendous integrity. God finds

creative ways to get his people into strategic positions of power and influence even in political realms.

And here's the thing, if you read the story of Joseph previously, you'll know where we're going today. He's falsely accused, falsely tried, falsely convicted for some things that he didn't do. So his public reputation was that he was a godless, evil and, vile man, but the truth is that none of that was true. Here's the point. Don't believe everything you read, especially when it comes to those who are in leadership, politically, specifically. Joseph is a good man doing a good job with a bad reputation. In addition, he is very successful.

Some of us, our test will be through failure. I believe sometimes the hardest test is the test of success, because when you fail people comfort and console you, when you succeed people criticize you. When you're down, people try to pick you up, when you're up, people try to tear you down. True or false? Okay. Some of you, it was easier when you didn't have any money, it was easier when you didn't have any power, it was easier when you just clocked in and clocked out.

Now that you're at a management or leadership position in your company, you find that that is more complicated. It's the test of success. God has appointed some of you for leadership, some of you for influence in the marketplace, in ministry, and in addition, he will entrust to some of you great affluence and wealth. You're going to see that ultimately with the generosity of Joseph.

And sometimes the test is the success test. Do we feel self indulgent, do we feel entitled, do we forget God, all of a sudden we find security in our position, our prominence, our prestige, our possessions, or do we seek God's presence for that which gives us our security? That's the story of Joseph.

Another observation on him as a leader, he's always in the second chair, he's never in the first chair. So, in his father's business, his dad was in the first chair, he was in the second chair. Now he is going to work in Potiphar's house. Potiphar's in the first chair. Joseph's in the second chair. A little later in the book, he'll work for Pharaoh. Pharaoh's in the first chair. Joseph's in the second chair.

Sometimes we think, if I could just be the senior leader. You don't have to. If you're godly, and God's presence goes with you, and you're a good steward of all that God entrusts to you, and you make the most of the opportunities that God provides for you, you can have significant impact from the second chair.

Even today, the Lord Jesus, does he sit in the first chair or the second chair, today? Second chair. He's at the right hand of the father. The father sits in the first chair. Joseph is not the president. He's the vice president. Right? He's not the company owner. He's the CFO. He's not the one who is leading the company. He's managing the company. That's what he's doing.

Another thing I want to tell you is that the majority of your ministry happens in the marketplace. See, Joseph is not a priest who's in the temple. He's not a pastor who's in the church. He's a political financial leader who's in the marketplace. He's in the marketplace. His boss is an unbeliever. All of his

coworkers are unbelievers. All of those who are under his authority that he manages, they're all unbelievers. The country he's in is all unbelievers. It's the secular, secular marketplace. Most of ministry happens in the marketplace. When you go to work, that's your ministry. That's your ministry.

And Joseph has this posture of a missionary. I need you to understand this. This is sorely lacking among believers here in the valley. This is one of the great omissions, as I've had the honor of serving here. Most people come here thinking that they're here to get a fresh second start in life, or they're here to get some sun, or they're here to golf, or they're here to get a pool, or they're here to have a better opportunity for their family, or they're here to live on permanent vacation. Okay. Here's why you're here. You're here to be a missionary.

Audience: Amen.

Pastor Mark: Missions is not just what happens around the world. It's what happens across the street. People here don't know the Lord Jesus Christ yet, and God sends you out into the marketplace, and when you're there, you need to take the mindset of a missionary.

A missionary doesn't ask, "Why is this hard?" They assume it's going to be hard. A missionary doesn't ass... they don't complain when they face demonic attack. They assume they're going to get demonic attack. A missionary does not grumble when things cost money and they have to contribute generously, because that's what missionaries do.

All of God's people need to have a missionary mindset. And you take that missionary mindset into the marketplace. So when you're there, it's how I conduct myself in business, do I bill fairly, do I show up on time, do I do my job well, do I honor those in authority over me? If I bill for hours, are those accurate billing records or am I like Judas stealing that which does not belong to me?

And as we operate with integrity in the marketplace, then your ministry is in the marketplace because you're a missionary in the marketplace. You need to understand that. This is, I believe, one of the things that Joseph understands. He doesn't act like the Egyptians. He doesn't think like the Egyptians because he knows that Egypt is his residence, but ultimately, the kingdom is his citizenship.

And what he says is, "As I conduct myself in business, as I conduct myself in politics, I am representing the kingdom of God here in the nation of Egypt. They will not convert me to their lifestyle. I will bring them the presence of God." That's his ideology. That's his understanding. That needs to be yours and mine. Fastest growing city in America, fastest growing county in America, one of the least church cities in America, and the marketplace is the place for the missionaries to do their ministry by operating with integrity. That's the example of Joseph.

In addition, I would say that his success is really two things. It is spiritual and practical. On the spiritual side, as I told you, four times in chapter 39, it says that God is with him. That's God's presence. So two big themes that run through the

story line of Joseph. Number one is God's providence over his life. Number two is God's presence in his life.

You need to understand that God is both. He's transcended and imminent. That God is, in providential ways, working through and over the life of Joseph. So him being brought to Egypt and the timing of what will soon be a famine and the relationships that he has and the people that he bumps into, so to speak, all of that is under God's providence. God has a plan.

Let me say this about your life. God has a plan for you. God has a plan for you, and you live by faith, not by sight. You do what is right in the sight of God waiting to see the plan of God.

Joseph, at this point, he doesn't know how this is all going to work out. All he knows is that he wakes up every day and tries to do what is right in the sight of God. That's what the older theologians would call living coram Deo, living in the face of God, in the presence of God, in relationship with God. It's waking up every day and saying, "Lord, I'm your servant. What do you have assigned for me today?" And then marching forward with integrity and humility to do whatever God has for your destiny. That's how Joseph operates.

So part of it is God's providence over his life. We don't see God's providence usually through the windshield but through the rear view mirror, right? As you're looking forward, you're like, I don't know what the plan is, Lord, but you look back on your life you say, "Oh, that wasn't happenstance, circumstance, or chance. That was God's providence. He had a plan that has led me to this place." And then faith says, I continue forward with him to see what he has next for me. That's God's providence.

And then there's God's presence. It says that the Lord was with Joseph. That's why he could be a good missionary in the marketplace. God's presence goes with God's people. God is present with him as God is present with you. And it's that ministry of presence that makes all the difference. Sometimes we think, if I could just get the absence of my troubles, I would be fine. Even if you have the absence of troubles you are not fine, unless you have the presence of God. It is the presence of God, not the absence of trouble, that makes life worth living.

Audience: Amen.

Pastor Mark: How many of you really appreciate the ministry of presence? You know why, this is why when the holidays come we travel, because we want to be in the presence of those we love. This is why we will make great efforts to not just text, call, email, but also be in the vicinity of those that we love.

I'm in the middle of a little travel season in and out and working on some stuff, and when I'm on the road I just look forward to getting to my wife. I like her. I didn't accidentally marry her. This was all very intentional. I find that I am just emotionally happier and more joyful and calm just being with my wife. So, for me, when we're separated, I don't really like that. When we're together, I really

like that. And if she'll hold my hand, I really, really like that. And if she'll rub my 18 inch neck, I really, really, really like that. It's the ministry of presence.

When Gracie and I were first married, she was a doer. She was always working. Hardest working person I've ever known. And I would sit on the couch and she would just be working. I said, "Babe, you got to come sit."

"No, I got to do this, I got to do this, got to do this, this."

And I finally had to tell her, "Honey, no, you just being present with me is a ministry. Right now I don't need you to do anything. I just need you to be with me."

How many of you have been in a room with someone that you really loved and cared about and they were negligent, they were distracted, they were on their phone, they were watching TV, they weren't paying any attention? God feels like that all the time. God is always present with his people, and we're stressed, we're anxious, we're distracted, we're struggling. We don't talk to him. We don't engage him. We don't invite him. We don't acknowledge him.

Joseph lived in the constant presence of God. Joseph lived in the constant presence of God. And as a result, it was the presence of God that allowed him to walk with integrity and humility and to follow his destiny. How are you doing it? Living in the presence of God.

And let me say this as well. So that's the spiritual. One of the reasons that Joseph was successful was very spiritual. He lives in God's presence. He's talking to God. He's seeking God. He's worshiping God. He's following God's leading for his life. The other is very practical. He just works hard and is honest and does a good job. Right. He shows up on time. He stays late. He doesn't steal.

And in that day to get a slave who was a good employee was very difficult, because there's no real incentivizing of a slave, no retirement plan, no benefits, no bonus check, no percentage of the waterfall. You don't get anything for being a slave. So slaves tended to be notoriously lazy. They would steal from their master. They would undermine their master. They were not contributing in a positive way unless they were punished or lived in threat of fear.

Joseph is the opposite. It says that Potiphar, who's a guy who's got a lot of responsibilities, probably got land... He's got a large estate, family, investments, crops, livestock. I don't know what all he has in his portfolio, but Joseph manages everything, and he is absolutely attentive to detail. And it says that Potiphar only had one thing on his desk every morning, the dinner menu, and once he checked the boxes for what he wanted for dinner, everything else was taken care of.

How many of you would love to hire that person? You're like, really? "Okay, what do I have today?"

"One thing, what do you want for dinner?"

"That it?"

"Yeah."

"Huh. Glad my day's done. That's amazing. You're doing a great job."

He trust Joseph with all of his wealth, all of his business, all of his family, all of his household, all of his estate, all of his public responsibilities and his private responsibilities.

How does Joseph do this? It's very, very practical. He's good at what he does. He works wholeheartedly unto the Lord. The Bible says in Colossians that as we work, we should work not just for our boss, but for our boss's boss, that ultimately we serve the Lord.

So, when you go to work, you need to know that on top of the org chart is the Lord, on top of the accountability structure in your organization or the chain of command, at the very top is the Lord. And even when your boss isn't looking, your boss's boss is looking. Even when your boss doesn't know, your boss's boss does know. And your goal is to hear "Well done good and faithful servant." from your boss's boss, which calls God's people in the marketplace to perform and execute at a higher level of integrity than anyone else, because ultimately we'll give an account to the Lord Jesus.

And so what we see here is his success is really based on two things, God's presence, it's very spiritual, and very practical, his ability to live responsibly. And let me say, if you're here and you're an employer, you know exactly how amazing these people are. And if you're someone who is looking for a career opportunity, it starts with personal integrity. These kinds of people eventually find themselves in leadership positions.

Now, the question is, how do we practice the presence of God? Some of you don't know. Some of you don't know. The most famous book ever written on this issue was written by a man named Brother Lawrence. He wrote a book, it's now a classic, *Practicing The Presence of God*. He was a man in the 17th century in France, in a monastery, who spent most of his adult life in a kitchen cooking meals and cleaning dishes. He was not an author. He was not a speaker. He was not a politician. He was not a business leader. He was a humble monk who lived in the presence of God and lived in loving relationship with God.

He didn't like to be fussed about, so he didn't really say much. Someone came to basically interview him, and he thought it was a private interview, and he was just trying to serve them like a pastor. So he talked a little bit about living in the presence of God, and he kept a few statements that he called maxims, almost like Proverbs that he kept in his journal. And after he died they found them and published them under his name, *The Practice of the Presence of God*.

He was not a man who was seeking to teach, was not seeking to publish, was not seeking to, in any way, get any credit. He just was living in the presence of God in the kitchen. And he says that much of living in the presence of God is

done in what he calls common business. Vacuuming, God is with you. Doing the dishes, God is with you. Driving to work, God is with you. Folding your clothes, God is with you. Paying your bills, God is with you. Putting gas in your car, God is with you. The common things.

And he has this remarkable line. I'll read it to you. He says, "Nor is it needful that we do great things." A lot of times we think, God, I want to do great things, and God says, "Do little things greatly."

Audience: Amen.

Pastor Mark: Do little things greatly. We can do little things for God. He said, "I turn the cake that is frying on the pan out of love for him."

They say, "How do you worship God?"

He said, "Well, when I'm making pancakes, I'm making pancakes in the presence of God out of love for God, and I wait for the pancake to get golden brown, not burn, and then I flip it as an act of worship to God. I'm going to do a good job with that pancake." And then as the other monks would eat the pancake they would say, "Praise the Lord. Thank you, Brother Lawrence, for flipping the pancake."

This world could use more pancake flippers. Right? People who say, "I'm a good plumber. I unclog the drain in the presence of God and I bill fairly."

And we would all say, "Amen."

Audience: Amen.

Pastor Mark: Right? Amen. I will fix the car that is running poorly and I'll charge exactly what it costs, and I will not add my expenses, and as you drive away you say, "Amen. Praise the Lord." Life with God is usually not one big thing. It's a million little things. Brother Lawrence tells the story that sometimes when the food is cooking and he had a few moments to spare he would kneel down in front of the stove and just spend a few moments praying and singing to the Lord.

And for him the kitchen was like the Holy of Holies, and as he was cooking dinner or he was cleaning dishes he was doing so in relationship with God, out of love for God, in the presence of God. Living in the presence of God is all about the relationship, that God is with you, and you're acknowledging his presence in all that you do.

Audience: That's good.

Pastor Mark: So this reminds me a little bit of the Lord Jesus. We think about his three years of public ministry, preaching, sermons, water skiing without a boat, casting out demons, the big things. Before those three years of big things he had 30 years of little things. He worked as a carpenter with his dad. So he's in the wood shop, he's making tables and chairs and bookshelves and whatever else they were

making. And as he did those things, he did so in the presence of the father and the presence of the spirit. He did so in relationship with God out of humility.

And let me say this, Jesus' ministry didn't start when he started preaching. It started back in his dad's wood shop where he did a good job as a carpenter. All of life for the Lord Jesus was ministry. The first 30 years was largely private. The last three years was largely public. This is how life works. If God has anything public for you to do, you'll be prepared for it on how you live in the presence of God privately. It's your private life with God that prepares you for public life for God.

That's the story of Joseph. He has a private life. He's a slave. Nobody's paying attention to this guy. It's all very private living in the presence of God, and it prepares him to serve God publicly, because he spent time with God privately. Whatever God has for you, being in his presence prepares you for that destiny.

The second test that comes... Let me say this. You're going to be tested to live in the presence of God. I didn't intend to say this, but I feel inclined. I usually hand Grace my phone. She's in the front row usually with me. This is more present in your life than God. You seek this for answers more than God. You worry about what this says about you, particularly on social media, more about that than what God says about you. Even if you're enjoying God's presence, if this rings, this becomes your first priority. This is not a bad thing, but it's a bad god.

Audience: That's right. Come on.

Pastor Mark: And if it's the center of your life, you're going to be very unhealthy. If this is what is taking the majority of your time and energy and focus, you will be distracted from the presence of God. This actually can keep you from never spending time with God. There's another blog to read. There's another social media post to follow. There's another thing to like or unlike. There's another video to watch. There's another person to contact. There's another bit of bad news to be distressed about.

At some point you need to say, other things for a bit need to be absent so that God can be present.

Audience: Amen.

Pastor Mark: Okay? And I'm saying that not all the things that distract you are bad, but God is your first priority, and spending time in his presence prepares you for all of your other responsibilities. Okay.

And there's always going to be a test. I didn't intend to share any of this. Last night I was feeling a little anxious and frustrated so I told Grace, "I'm going to take the top off my Jeep. It's actually pretty nice out at night. I'm going to go for a drive just to be with the Lord and enjoy some fresh air and talk to him." And it wasn't long and a guy pulled in front of me and I had to slam on the brakes and I go sideways and I almost died. Okay.

And I thought, well, okay, this is how I'm supposed to learn to be in God's presence. As I'm locking up the brakes and saying, "Really, Lord? Really, I came to be with you and you put this guy in front of me." Apparently, that was a test of, would I respond out of the presence of God, okay, would I say some things that I couldn't repeat in the sermon, would I do some things that are in the Old Testament?

Every time you seek to be in God's presence there is going to be a test. Amen. There's going to be a test. Okay. The second test is the temptation test. Genesis 39, 6 through 10. He is going to be sorely tested in the way that we all get tested.

Now, Joseph, it says, was handsome in form and appearance. It also says that about his mom. His mom was a beautiful woman, and he was a good looking guy. And some of us wish we were attractive until we see what happens to attractive people, then we're pretty glad for how we look. Just sharing a little insight from my Bible study this week.

Verse seven, and after a time, his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, she's super subtle, "Lie with me." This is a very brazen, bold woman. This is like the Proverbs 5:7 gal, and it says her house has steps that go all the way down to hell. You're like, "Where are we going?"

"Just come on down, Johnny." No.

"It's getting very warm down here." Yes. Right? Her steps go right to hell.

But he refused. Wow. How many guys, the only reason you haven't committed adultery is no one's asked. Let's just be honest. Okay. We'll edit that, but that's helpful insight right there. Nobody asked. I don't know if it's holiness or it's lack of opportunity. Okay.

But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of... My master has no concern about anything in the house and he's put everything that he has in my charge. He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except for you, because you are his wife." Joseph said, "Let's get this straight. You're his wife. I'm not your husband. He's your husband."

"How then can I do this great wickedness," he uses Bible language, "and sin against God?" And as she spoke to Joseph day after day he would not listen to her to lie beside her or to be with her.

Okay. Here's Potiphar's wife. We don't know her name. It's curious. We know Joseph's name. We know Potiphar's name. We don't know his wife's name. She's the wife. That's the role she's supposed to be in. She's not acting like it. Is she a safe person or a dangerous person?

Audience:

Dangerous.

Pastor Mark: Dangerous. I was expecting the ladies to be a little louder and quicker. She's a dangerous person. The Bible believes in equality, and that is that both men and women are equally capable of being naughty. Okay. In our culture, we would say if a guy does this he's just really bad guy, and if a gal does this, she's just really liberated. No, they're both bad. This is a very brazen, very aggressive, very dangerous person. It happens to be a woman. Sometimes it's also a man. It can be any of us.

On the continuum, there are people that are very safe. Joseph is a very safe person. He's trustworthy. She's a very dangerous person. To go near her is to be approaching harm's way. She's like a grenade with a pin pulled. He's trying to figure out how not to engage, because if you engage, you will end up causing destruction in your own life. That's this woman. And she is very aggressive.

Now, what's curious, Joseph is legally her slave, but she is the one who is a slave and he is the one who is free, because she is a slave to her lust. She has no control. He is free to say no. So, though he is a physical slave, he is spiritually free. Though she is physically free, she is spiritually a slave to her own corrupt desires.

Audience: That's good.

Pastor Mark: The worst thing is not being in a bad position. The worst thing is being in a bad position and being out of control. And here the Holy Spirit gives him self control, so he's the one who's free. That's the story of Joseph. In addition, she aggressively pursues him day after day after day.

Now, some of the commentators I read, they're like, "Well, why would Joseph not just stop going to work?" When you're a slave, you don't get to do that. You can't fill out a form in HR, I'm being sexually harassed. You can't do that. Right? You can't get an attorney and say, "I'm suing the company for this mistreatment." You're a slave. You're a possession. And it was expected that slaves would perform sexual favors for their masters. This is part of the job description.

Every day he has to go to work, and there is that gal. She's got the crazy eyes, and she's chasing him around the cubicle. Okay? And every day he's trying to avoid this very difficult situation.

Earlier in Genesis chapter three it says that God created Adam and Eve and he gave them permission to enjoy all of his creation with one exception, and that was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It was forbidden fruit. And it says that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the forbidden fruit, was in the middle of the garden. What that means is Adam and Eve every day had to walk around it. Here's what you need to know. Sometimes the temptation is in the middle of your life, and the forbidden fruit is something you need to walk by every day.

Audience: That's good.

Pastor Mark: Every day Joseph has to walk around this woman. He has to make a self conscious, intentional effort to not engage with this woman.

What about Joseph? Well, just think through this story. He's handsome. At this point in the story he's probably in his 20s. He's single. He's a virgin. He hasn't been to church in years because there are none of God's people there. No one knows what he's doing. He can get away with whatever he wants. She's very sneaky and going to keep a secret. And if he does what she wants, he probably gets rewarded, gets a bonus, gets taken care of.

I mean, he gets to rule Potiphar's house and sleep with Potiphar's wife? For most guys, this would be a dream scenario. For him it's a nightmare. It's a nightmare.

Joseph comes from a family where the men don't act with integrity, sexually. Let's just do a little history. His great grandpa, Abraham, had kids with two women. As a result, we still have geopolitical conflict on the earth. So thanks, Abraham. Right? What about his brothers? Were his brothers really self-control guys? No. His brother Ruben slept with one of his dad's concubines, and in Genesis 38, the previous chapter, his brother, Judah, slept with a gal he wasn't supposed to sleep with. So his family, not real big on self control.

What about his dad? Was his dad a high self control guy? No, 13 kids, four women. Where does Joseph learn this? Well, he learns it from the word of God and also from his grandfather, Isaac, who was faithful to his wife. Sometimes grandparents, you have a significant example to set for your grandkids.

Audience: That's right.

Pastor Mark: You have a significant role to play in their life. The only man in his life that was faithful to his wife was his grandpa, but now Joseph is going to follow in the example of his grandpa and not his dad or his brothers or his great grandfather.

Here's what I want to tell you. You need to know the answer before you take the test. Life is a classroom. Every day is a test. You need to know the answers before you take the test. Some of you are students, you're middle school, high school, college, and you know, they tell you, the test is coming. You do your homework, you get ready so that you can pass the test. Life gives us certain tests. They're part of our testimony. Your testimony is based upon how you take the tests.

This is a test for Joseph. It's a test of temptation, and he has the answer before he takes the test. So he shows up to work every day, and what he doesn't say is, "I don't know what I'm going to do with that woman tomorrow. I'll make up my mind when I get there.", because his answer would probably be different. Instead, he decides, before I take the test, I already know the answer, the answer is no. You need to know your answer before you take your test.

Audience: That's good.

Pastor Mark: Okay. That's the story of Joseph. Now, how does he do this? Well, he literally runs from temptation. First Corinthians 10:13 says, "God is faithful. He'll not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation, he'll provide a way of escape." So when the temptation comes, you look for the way out. God provides a way out.

Second Timothy 2:22, "Flee the evil desires of youth." First Corinthians 6:18, "Flee from sexual immorality." And today we would say, "Well, Joseph is a young professional, he's handsome, he lives in a big city, he's trying to find himself, they're two consenting adults, who are we to judge?" And God would say, "I'll judge. That's wrong. That's adultery. That's wrong." God expects his people to practice chastity before marriage, fidelity in marriage.

Joseph knows this and he abides by this, and why he does this is quite remarkable. He looks at the woman who knows what she's wearing, and he has this conversation with her. He says, "First of all, how could I possibly betray your husband? I am loyal to your husband. He has entrusted everything to me. I will not betray him."

Finding people who are loyal is incredibly difficult. Most people only serve their own interests. In this moment, if he continually refuses and rebukes this woman, he could find himself as a slave in a very dangerous, difficult, and distressing situation, but what he does is he says, "How could I betray, not be loyal to your husband," and then he says, "and do this wickedness and sin against my God?"

It's not your God. You don't worship the same God as me. But that is my God. And my God says no. I live in the presence of God. I live in ongoing constant relationship with God. It doesn't matter, ma'am, what you would ask of me, it is what he commands me. That is what matters to me.

Joseph is an exemplary young man. And I would say all of you young professionals, read Joseph, study Joseph, all of you young men, learn from Joseph. That's why he gets so much attention in the Bible, because there are so few men like him.

Audience: That's right.

Audience: Come on.

Pastor Mark: He is a man of tremendous integrity because he lives in the presence of God. Loyalty, fidelity to God, loyalty, fidelity to those who are in leadership positions over you. What he's not worried about is the consequences. He's more worried about his relationship with God. And what he is doing with this woman is he is saying, "We are residents of Egypt, but I am a citizen of God's kingdom."

It is very important that you know who you are. Once you know who you are, then you know what to do. He's not an Egyptian. If he was an Egyptian he would worship their God and sleep with this woman. But he's not an Egyptian. He is a citizen of God's kingdom. You and I need to know that all of the cultures of the earth eventually invariably come to an end, and the kingdom of God endures

forever, that this is our residence, that is our citizenship, and our king has sent us here into the marketplace as missionaries with a ministry to represent the values of our king and kingdom.

So when it is cheating, the answer is no. When it is stealing, the answer is no. When it is adultery, the answer is no. And when they ask, "Why do you not do what we do?", "It's because I am not from where you are. My citizenship is in another place. My king rules over a great kingdom. And I am here to represent him. I am here to see you converted. I am not here to be converted."

Joseph comes to convert Egypt. He does not allow Egypt to convert him.

Audience: [inaudible 00:44:16].

Pastor Mark: You, my friend, if you are a child of God, you need to understand that the marketplace is the place for you as a missionary to do your ministry. And when you are there, you bring the presence of God, you bring the kingdom of God, and you live for the approval of only one, only one. That's the story of Joseph.

Now, let me say this as well about temptation. Every one of us has areas where we are more vulnerable. For some of you it's food, sex, power, fame, money, comfort, whatever the case may be. Joseph faces his temptation. Secondly, temptation and sin are different. Sometimes when God's people are tempted, they automatically feel defeated. Temptation is an opportunity to either run to God's presence or run from God's presence.

There is a difference between temptation and sin, and sometimes when believers are tempted, they automatically feel defeated. There is a difference. How do I know this? Because Hebrews 4:15 says that Jesus was tempted in every way, as we are, yet without sin.

Whatever you're tempted by, you can go to the Lord Jesus, you can come into the presence of the Lord Jesus, and the Lord Jesus would say, "I understand that temptation my dear friend. I have walked the earth. I have felt that temptation myself. And I said no. And I will empower you to say no. I know exactly what you're feeling, and I know how to get around that which is tempting you." That's the goodness of the Lord Jesus.

Some of you, when you're tempted, you need to understand that in that moment you will either turn your face toward God and seek his presence, or you'll turn your back on God and run from his presence. Joseph is seriously sorely tempted, repeatedly. And every time he runs to the presence of God. And when you run to the presence of God you run away from the temptation.

He cannot pursue Potiphar's wife and God at the same time. He's going to run into her presence or run into God's presence, and every time he runs into God's presence, and as he does, he turns his back on the temptation. Let me say this about temptation. Temptation is ultimately a diversion from your destiny.

God has a destiny that he has articulated for Joseph. He had a dream where he is ruling and reigning and he has authority and others are under his authority. This is God's destiny for Joseph. Potiphar's wife is a diversion from God's destiny. God has a destiny for you. I do not know what it is. I know that if you're a believer, ultimately, his eternal destiny for you is in his grand and glorious kingdom.

Audience: Amen.

Pastor Mark: That he has a great destiny invariably for you. I don't know what your earthly destiny entails, but I know that when temptation comes, it is ultimately, my friend, a diversion from your destiny.

There's an old preacher, some years ago, he was teaching on this section of scripture and he had a great illustration I'll borrow and share with you. Apparently, there's a place off the coast of North Carolina. It's a small narrow straight, and it was a passageway that was very difficult for wood boats, a number of years ago, to navigate through. So you have to be very careful, otherwise, you would be shipwrecked.

These guys came along, they were called the wreckers, and they realized, when evening came and when the channel got dark, that they could put a lantern on an old horse and have that horse walk up and down the bank of the waterway, and as boats pulled into the inlet and they were trying to figure out where to go in the dark cover of night, they would see the lantern and they assumed that was another ship.

And so they would steer toward the lantern, run aground, and in the morning the wreckers would come out, loot the ship, take all the lumber, and they did this about 2,000 times. They wrecked about 2,000 boats. They plundered about 2,000 boats. Apparently, you can go to North Carolina and some of the homes that were constructed with the lumber taken from the ships, still standing. You can go on a little tour and see what the wrecker's built.

Potiphar's wife is a home wrecker and her temptation is a destiny wrecker. You need to know that temptation is a destiny wrecker. It's a false opportunity to be gutted and looted. And he follows God's destiny for him. He does not get diverted by the wrecker.

Now, let me say this. Some of you have already ran your ship up on the rocks. The temptation has diverted you from God's destiny for you. And the question is, what... Now, I have good news. In fact, the word gospel means good news. Joseph's little story is part of a big story. The whole story of the Bible, the story of Jesus.

Joseph is a little picture of the big story of Jesus. Like Joseph, Jesus was sent by his father. He was chosen with a destiny. He was despised, abandoned, betrayed, thrown in a hole by his brothers who stripped his cloak off of him, and that ultimately he got out of his hole and he forgives and he blesses. The story of Joseph is part of the big story of Jesus.

So here's what I want you to know. For those of you that the temptation test is coming, you failed, you failed, right? You've been shipwrecked. Jesus comes, number one, he takes the test for you and he passes, no sin, and then he forgives you. And then he wants you to live in relationship with him and get you ready so that next time you can take that test again and you can pass it. Here's the good thing about Jesus, he takes the test for you, and then he helps you pass the test the next time that it comes.

I'll never forget. I was a little kid in school, and I did pretty decent in school, and I took one test and I blew it and I was just devastated. My teacher came to me and said, "You need to take that test again. You need to study really hard and get ready. I think you can pass it if you take it again. I'm going to let you take it again."

Some of you, there are tests in your life you have failed, you have failed, you have failed, you have failed. Jesus passed the test. He didn't give into that temptation. He wants you to live in his presence in a relationship with him. And then when that test comes he's going to help you to take that test and pass it so that you can continue with the destiny that he has for you. This is why we love Jesus so much. Amen.

Audience: Amen.

Pastor Mark: Apart from Jesus, all there is is a life filled with shipwrecks and looting and plundering. And with Jesus, there is an opportunity to be forgiven, to be set sail back toward God's destiny for us. And as the test comes, we say, "Oh, I've seen that before. I am not following that temptation. That will wreck my destiny."

The third test that he faces is the injustice test. Genesis 39:11 through 23. But one day when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men were there in the house... This is ominous. He goes to work, ah, there's one person there, Potiphar's wife. You're a slave. You have to do what you're told. This is an unjust situation. She caught him by his garment. She's so aggressive. Now she's literally ripping his clothes off him, how many 20 year old single virgin guys haven't been to church in years are not going to pass this test, he's going to pass this test, saying lie with me.

But he left his garment in her hand, fled, got out of the house. He's running for his life. And as soon as she saw that he left his garment in her hand and fled the house she called to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought among us a Hebrew," bringing up his God, "to laugh at us. He came in to lie with me and I cried out with a loud voice." Here's what she's saying, "He tried to rape me."

Did Joseph try to rape her? No. No. This is not true. If you're a grown man, two of the worst things somebody could say about you, if they're not true, is you abused a child or you assaulted a woman. Right men? Joseph had one sister. Her name was Dinah. Back in Genesis 34 she got raped.

He's a virgin guy who loves the Lord, and now he's publicly convicted as a rapist. How many of you guys at this point say, "I give up on God."? I do the right thing, and the wrong thing happens. I obey God, and I get falsely accused of being a rapist. God, I tried you, your way doesn't work, I'm done with you. I did what I was supposed to do, how come you don't do what you're supposed to do?

"As soon as he heard that I lifted up my voice," verse 15, "and cried out, he left the garment beside me and fled out of the house." Then she laid his garment by her until his master came home. And she told him the same story.

So she's just waiting for her husband to come home, oh, you'll never guess what happened, Joseph tried to rape me and here's his coat. "The Hebrew servant whom you brought among us came into me to laugh at me." You hired him, husband. You're the tough guy, military general. You're supposed to defend your wife. Is this an evil woman? This is an evil woman.

Audience: Yes.

Pastor Mark: "But as soon as I lifted up my voice and cried he left his garment beside me and fled the house." 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.

Now the four star general is furious. Steam's coming out of his ears. She knows how to work him. And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison. Joseph went to prison for not sleeping with a guy's wife, the place where the King's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison.

All hope is lost. It's doomed. Nope. But the Lord was with Joseph, got to go to prison, and showed his steadfast love, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. He's going to get another job. Here's Joseph in prison. His family's far away, everyone, everything is far away. God is very near. It is not the absence of trouble but the presence of God that we need.

Audience: Amen.

Pastor Mark: Okay. God is present with Joseph and shows him love. If you would've walked up to Joseph's cell, "How are you doing?"

"Good."

"You're in solitary confinement."

"Actually, I'm not. The Lord is with me."

"How are you feeling?"

"I feel very loved."

"What are you talking about?"

It's the presence of God that is more important than freedom, than a reputation, than family. It's the presence of God. God loved him. See, sometimes we think that if we're suffering God doesn't love us. It's in our suffering that God comes to love us.

Audience: That's good.

Pastor Mark: The keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in prison. How many guys in prison don't get a set of keys, right? This is the only guy in the history of the world the warden's like, "You're so good, here are some keys. Keep all these guys in line." This is crazy, right? I mean, today, this would be mattresses on fire, this would be bad. Joseph's like, I'll run the prison, you can trust me, I will run everything in a way that glorifies God and acts with integrity, and I will not escape, you can give me a set of keys and I'll run the prison.

Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. He runs the prison as a prisoner. Here's what I'm saying. Your boss ain't that bad. Your job ain't that bad. 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.

There are three kinds of people in this world, wise, foolish, and evil. Potiphar's wife, wise, foolish, or evil?

Audience: Evil.

Pastor Mark: Evil. Potiphar, wise, foolish, or evil? Foolish. He believes his evil wife. Joseph, wise, foolish, or evil?

Audience: Wise.

Pastor Mark: Wise. When you're dealing with foolish and evil people, that's no excuse for you to be evil or foolish. You still need to be wise and live with integrity in the presence of God, because your job is to bring God's presence to foolish and evil people, that they would come to know and love your God, that your God would bless you in their presence, and that you would bring God's blessing with you because foolish and evil people really need the Lord.

That may be why you're there, not because God is punishing you, but you are a missionary and he sent you. And when there's only evil and foolish people, God needs to send somebody who's wise to bring his presence and to articulate his loving affection.

Audience: Amen.

Pastor Mark: Joseph is a victim. That word gets used a lot today, and it can diminish those who are truly victims. He is going to rise up as a political leader, and you can imagine the press and the social media for the rest of his life, convicted rapist, Joseph. It doesn't matter what people put on you, just don't let it in you.

Audience: That's brilliant.

Audience: That's brilliant. Yes.

Pastor Mark: It doesn't matter what they put on you. Don't let it in you. This is not true. Joseph knows that one day he'll be vindicated in the presence of God forever. And he's in good company. Other good men have been in prison. Joseph goes to prison. John goes to prison. Paul goes to prison. God comes to the earth. We throw him in jail. Jesus goes to jail. Jesus is falsely accused. They say that he is a demon possessed alcoholic who doesn't even know who his father is because his mother slept with so many men. Is any of that true?

Audience: No.

Pastor Mark: No. If they put it on you, don't let it in you. It doesn't matter who they say you are. It matters who He says you are.

Audience: [inaudible 01:00:22].

Audience: Amen.

Pastor Mark: That's what Joseph knows, and he experiences the love of God. What you need if you're going to live a life like Joseph, you need to live patiently in God's presence, patiently in God's presence. He's not going to see his dad or his brothers for 20 years. He's going to spend some time in prison. Patience in God's presence. Patience in God's presence.

Let God vindicate you. Let God deliver you. Let God. Let God. He's not fighting. He's serving. And he lets God do all the fighting. The little story of Joseph is part of the big story of the Bible. It's the big story of Jesus.

Joseph and Jesus both continually rejected temptation as young men. Joseph and Jesus both rule as second in command. Joseph and Jesus were both betrayed by someone close to them. Joseph and Jesus both had their garments ripped off them. Joseph and Jesus were both wrongly accused of wrongdoing. Joseph and Jesus were both wrongly convicted of a crime. Both Joseph and Jesus were thrown into jail. Both Joseph and Jesus experienced God's favor and love and blessing. Joseph and Jesus both lived in God's presence and history has vindicated them.

My dear friend, what is Joseph doing right now? What is Joseph doing right now? He's enjoying the presence of Jesus.

Audience: Amen.

Pastor Mark: Jesus is alive and well, and Joseph's faith has become sight. And right now Joseph is gazing upon the Lord Jesus Christ in all of his glory, and he doesn't regret living for God's approval in vindication. And so my friend, we are here today to be in God's presence. We're here today to enjoy God's presence, to

remind ourselves of God's presence, and to prepare us as we leave here to be ministries and... ministers rather, and missionaries in the marketplace.

So I'm going to invite the band forward at this time, and I'm going to pray for us all. I'm going to ask you to put your hands up, close your eyes, bow your head.

Holy spirit, we invite you to be present with us. Holy spirit, we know that you are present. We know that the Lord Jesus is right now seated at the right hand of the father. But Holy Spirit, you are God's presence with us. You are the presence of God among us. Holy spirit, you come to be with your people. You come to encourage your people. You come to refresh your people. You come to encourage your people. You come to convict your people. You come to instruct your people. You come to save your people.

You come to, in every way, remind us that it doesn't matter what they put on us, it's the one who lives in us, that we, Lord God, enjoy the presence of the Holy Spirit, that Lord God, you go where we go, and that Lord God you know what we feel and you see what we need. And more than anything, God, we need not the absence of trouble, but we need an understanding of the presence of our God.

Holy spirit, please fill this room, please fill these people, please fill this moment with your presence so that we might fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith who, for the joy set before him, endured the cross scorning its shame and right now is seated at the right hand of the father. Lord Jesus help us to live in preparation for the day when, like Joseph, we see Jesus face to face, when we are in the presence of Jesus forevermore. Lord God, as that is our destiny, we right now ask for your presence to be in us, with us, through us.

And for those, Lord God, who have taken their life upon the rocks and they feel like they've been gutted and they have been looted, I ask right now that Holy Spirit you would absolutely convince them that they're forgiven, that the Lord Jesus took that test and passed it as well, and that right now he is in the midst of preparing them to head back out to sea and to face the storms and to pass the tests as he goes with them and for them and works through them.

Holy spirit, we thank you that you are with us, we thank you that you'll never leave us nor forsake us, we thank you that one day, like Joseph, we will see Jesus. Please allow us to live by faith until that moment seeking your presence in Jesus' good name. Amen.