

These were his brothers. Yes, his father sent him to bring back word of how things were going. But it wasn't a spy mission, he wasn't worried. He was doing what his father wanted. He was doing the right thing. Before he knew it his brothers were grabbing him. They threw him into a cistern, basically a hole in the ground. They sold him off to some passing people. He was doing what was right and they still mistreated him because of it.

That's just the back story on how Joseph got to Egypt in the first place. Brothers Joseph thought he could trust sold him into slavery. That pattern, Joseph doing what's right and still suffering mistreatment is on repeat in his life. Do we feel like that same pattern is on repeat in life? People we trust mistreat us. Society we thought should operate one way gets turned upside down to operate completely opposite. We do the right thing and still we suffer, maybe even just for doing the right thing.

Joseph's story as it continues in the first lesson is tailor made for us at this time in history. It seems like doing the right thing gets as much grief as doing the wrong. In the face of ever growing temptations to give up and give in to wrong doing, along comes this story of Joseph. It reminds us that God wants us to...

**Do what is right  
Don't sin against the Lord  
The Lord is still with you**

Good looks can be both a blessing and a curse. I wouldn't know anything about it, but some big name celebrities and stars maybe think so. That shocks me because I figure they're celebrities because they have good looks. They play up their looks. They modify their looks to make themselves appear even more good looking. Normal looking people wonder where the curse is. **"Joseph was well-built and handsome, and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph."** That's where Joseph's good looks became a curse. He faced an awkward situation where his own master's wife wanted him.

Joseph served in the house of Potiphar. It was an easy gig as far as serving went. He was basically in charge of the household. He handled the business, oversaw the other servants, and made sure everything was at it should be. Nothing was off limits to Joseph, except Potiphar's wife of course. And she wanted Joseph. **"Come to bed with me!"** She was attracted to him, threw herself at him, basically begged him to sleep with her every day. Joseph could sooth any feelings of loneliness or lack of attention in the arms of this woman. Sadness because he was miles from home and family would all go away for a brief moment. Physical pleasure and satisfaction was all there, easy to get. All Joseph had to do was give in. Do what was wrong just this once and feel good.

Three reasons kept Joseph standing strong, not giving in, and doing what was right. **"My master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care."** Joseph had special privileges. He was no mere servant. Potiphar purchased him, but raised him up. He put a huge amount of trust in him with little oversight. Joseph refused to break that trust. **"My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife."** Everything Joseph saw he could have, he could use. It wasn't his, but he managed it. But the one thing not given to him was not his to take. **"How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"** This third reason was the biggest, a confession. Joseph trusts in God. He knows his position with Potiphar isn't because he was so great, or even good looking. God raised him up to this position. God took him from the cistern being sold by his brothers to trusted servant in a high official's house in Egypt. Giving in now would throw that all away, even throw it back in God's face. No, he would not sin against the Lord.

Do what's wrong and feel good. That's essentially every day all around us. Give in. Get some for yourself. If that's the message, then it only seems right to live with who you're dating, even experience sexual pleasure before marriage. Since the world largely approves and doesn't stand in the way it almost seems right not wrong. Logic says go along with the dominant group. Don't stand out or get called names. Don't be looked down upon. Why face that kind of pressure when going along is so much easier. Instead make life about fun. Slack off at work and have fun. Take advantage of other's misfortune and have fun. Don't say no when saying yes is more fun.

Joseph still had to work in Potiphar's house. Potiphar's wife was still in the house. And Potiphar was gone a lot. One day the pressure to do what was wrong seemed inevitable. **"She caught him by his cloak and said, Come to bed with me! But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house."** The situation was steamy. Joseph and Potiphar's wife alone in the house. Suspense, anticipation, Joseph could have given in to the passion of the moment. Hide it afterwards. Enjoy it now. Joseph did what was right. He ran. He fled. He remembered his Lord. He didn't want to sin against the Lord. The Lord had so blessed him. He didn't try to fight temptation. He ran so he could do what was right.

You face temptation to do what's wrong, what's logical, what's fun every day. Remember the Lord and his promises to you. The blessings he showers upon you. Blessings of the past when he provided when you didn't know where rent would come from. Blessings of the present as he keeps you safe through accidents and surgeries. The Lord's name calls to mind everything you know about him. His grace to love you when you were unlovable. His forgiveness when you didn't deserve it. A Savior that took away the sin of caving to what was wrong, living with someone before marriage, going along with the group to not seem different, or taking up what was fun instead of what was right. Jesus forgives you for it all. He loves you in spite of those sins because he frees you from them. He saved you so that you can do what is right and not sin against the Lord.

Joseph did the right thing. When the pressure got too much he ran. Away from her good looks, charm, flirtations, he couldn't sin. And that's when it happened. She flipped. As much as she pursued him for her pleasure, she now would pursue him to make him pay for rejecting her. Joseph did what was right and still ended up in prison. He wasn't dead, but his life seemed to take a turn for the worse. In prison, again. Freedom gone, again. Bad times, again. **"But while Joseph was there in the prison, the Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden."** God elevated Joseph again. The Lord was still with him.

For many of you the events of this past week in particular single the beginning of collapse to morality in society. Christians know what God says is right and still nothing seems to stop the march of immorality. What's right seems to be called wrong. God seemed to be blessing us for so long in this country, but now change happens we don't want. We try to do what's right. We try and speak up. But our voices get drowned out and lost. We're shouted down for offending people or for being judgmental. We lose friends. We get scared to say anything. We may even get pushed so far we want to push back. We figure we struggle to follow the rules, pay taxes, have jobs, and people who sleep around, do dirty business deals, and run out on their parents seem to get ahead. If we do what's right and receive nothing but hurt and suffering, what's the point? Doing right seems to get us further behind in popularity, standing in society, and life in general.

Careful about wanting to fight back. If Joseph fought back or tried to defend himself where would he have gotten? Probably executed rather than in prison alive. Everyone believed the lying wife while he remained the silent servant who was punished. Punished for something he didn't do. Still the Lord was with his servant Joseph. Still the Lord is with you.

No matter how mad we might get about what's happening, about how things seem to work for those who cheat and lie, how society's moral compass seems to be off track the Lord is still with you. God's relationship with you hasn't changed. Jesus Christ still remains your Savior today. In fact God's own son allowed himself to be locked away in the prison of death at the hands of those he came to save. In his resurrection he declared victory over the prison of death and sin. It's only through his victory that we have victory. It's only through his suffering that our suffering means anything. It means through Jesus' resurrection we have hope for the future.

In good times God's love seems clearly visible. When society matches your viewpoints and God's, then you're comfortable. You feel blessed by God. Yet you forget. Society crumbles, morality erodes, people seem to want to save their lives. You might someday face persecution or imprisonment for what you believe. God's love might be hard to see. Today God's love might be hard to see. But it's still true, the Lord is still with you. He knows what you face and he leads you through it. He won't always take it away. But he will be with you through it. Your ultimate rescue is guaranteed. Today's immorality can't take away God's loving presence or his desire to bless you. And bless you he does. Blesses you with strength through his Word. Blesses you with the ability to raise your children. Blesses you with resources in life to provide for yourself. Blesses you because the Lord is with you by his grace.