

The Life Challenge

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10

Series: Live by Faith...Dream for More

Title: Tragedy to Triumph

Text: Genesis 37

Speaker: Steve Berg

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WARM-UP

God isn't mentioned in this part of the story of Joseph's life. Can you tell a story when you struggled with the perception that God has been absent from part of your own story? How have you lived out your belief that God is good and faithful despite the challenges and tragedies that you have faced? How does this open up your heart to pay attention to God's activity in every circumstance of your life?

DISCUSSION

The hateful divisions in Jacob's family that resulted in the sale of Joseph into slavery explains how the entire nation of Israel ended up in Egypt. It helps us understand why the tragedy of 400 years of slavery would take place and why the triumph of the great exodus of God's people back to the promised land was necessary.

1. Read Genesis 15:12-14 as an introduction to this Joseph story. What is significant about God revealing this to Abraham many years before this part of the story actually took place?
2. How would you describe the family history and the present dynamics of Jacob's family in this passage?
3. In what ways is the gift of a coat from Jacob to Joseph symbolic of the broken family relationships? In what ways is that significant to the whole story of the 400 years of slavery in Egypt?
4. Describe Joseph's two dreams. How are they similar? How are they different? What did Joseph hope to accomplish in telling his dream? What did it actually accomplish? If you were Joseph, why/why not would you tell your brothers and parents about this dream?
5. The brothers did not have a clear plan when they threw Joseph into the cistern. What are the various plans that the brothers come up with? What sort of characters are Judah and Reuben in this story? What is the significance of taking the ring and the robe?
6. How was Joseph's disappearance explained to Jacob? Why did Jacob believe the brothers' story, and how did this affect him?
7. David Platt has written, "God uses sorrowful tragedy to set the stage for surprising triumph—whether in this life or the life to come."
 - Finding an adequate answer to your hardship, your loss, your tragedy may not be possible, but how can you find God to be present with you in your tragedy?
 - Do you believe that God does take tragedy—in fact uses tragedy—to fulfill His purposes? What is God saying to you about trusting Him to be triumphant through your tragedy?

TAKE AWAY

1. How is the Holy Spirit prompting you to Live By Faith and Dream For More this week?
2. Is there anything you want to do differently to be ready to hear God's voice each day?