

Series: A New Beginning; Sermon: A New Journey

Delivered by: Dr. Josh Moody, senior pastor; Date: April 23, 2017

Bible text explored: Genesis 37:12–36

¹²Now his brothers went to pasture their father’s flock near Shechem. ¹³And Israel said to Joseph, “Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them.” And he said to him, “Here I am.” ¹⁴So he said to him, “Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock, and bring me word.” So he sent him from the Valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. ¹⁵And a man found him wandering in the fields. And the man asked him, “What are you seeking?” ¹⁶“I am seeking my brothers,” he said. “Tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock.” ¹⁷And the man said, “They have gone away, for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’” So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.

¹⁸They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. ¹⁹They said to one another, “Here comes this dreamer. ²⁰Come 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 will become of his dreams.” ²¹But when Reuben heard it, he rescued him out of their hands, saying, “Let us not take his life.” ²²And Reuben said to them, “Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him”—that he might rescue him out of their hand to restore him to his father. ²³So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the robe of many colors that he wore. ²⁴And they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

²⁵Then they sat down to eat. And looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. ²⁶Then Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? ²⁷Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.” And his brothers listened to him. ²⁸Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt.

²⁹When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes ³⁰and returned to his brothers and said, “The boy is gone, and I, where shall I go?” ³¹Then they took Joseph’s robe and slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. ³²And they sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father and said, “This we have found; please identify whether it is your son’s robe or not.” ³³And he identified it and said, “It is my son’s robe. A fierce animal has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces.” ³⁴Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. ³⁵All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, “No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning.” Thus his father wept for him. ³⁶Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.

[ESV]

Review and application:

1. About one-third of the book of Genesis (37:2 to the end) is devoted to Joseph’s life story. How does what Joseph told his brothers in *Gen. 50:20* provide a lens through which to view these chapters?

2. The Bible never glosses over the evil and tragedy in the time-frame it documents. What harm-and-evil examples do we face this week at the national and international level?
How about at the local and personal level?
Do these developments shake our confidence in God's *ability* to produce ultimate good for those he has called?
How about his *intention* to do so? (See *Rom. 8:31-32.*)
3. Why (vv. 12-17) was Jacob naïve to send young Joseph to check on his ten older half-brothers' sheep-pasturing location and status?
(See *Gen. 34:13-30.*)
Why was Joseph naïve to wear his richly ornamented robe on this working errand?
4. What (vv. 18-30) motivated the brothers' initial plot to murder "dream expert" Joseph?
Why may first-born son Reuben's proposal of a less awful alternative been an attempt to get back into his father's good graces? (See *Gen. 35:21-22.*)
How does *Gen. 42:21* fill out the picture of Joseph being thrown into a dry cistern while his brothers proceeded with their lunch?
Was selling Joseph to the passing caravan of traders really less of an offense than murder? (See *Exod. 21:16.*)
5. The brothers believed that sending the robe they hated to their father and asking him if it was "your son's robe" (vv. 31-36) would spell the end of Joseph's dreams. But what had their actions actually set in motion?
6. Pastor Moody expressed his goal that we as a church should gain a firm grasp of God's absolute control of events, both good and bad. Have we made belief in God's sovereign rule a shield for our faith?
How is this conviction balanced by continuing responsibility for our own actions?