

The Plot Thickens

(Genesis 39:1-23)

Yearly Theme: “Love Does...”

Series Title: *Hard Knock Life*

September 8th, 2019

Something to think about:

What would you be willing to do if you knew no one would ever find out? For that matter, who are you when no one else is looking? Are there things do you do in secret that would be a complete embarrassment for you if others found out?

As we continue our series on Joseph this morning, and the definition of love that, “keeps no record of wrongs,” not only do we learn that *love keeps no record of wrongs* in Joseph’s case, love also *does no wrong*. Joseph had a situation to do something in secret that, under normal circumstances, he would never do. He could have compromised his integrity and character for a few moments, but he didn’t. Let’s pick up his continuing saga...

Genesis 39:1-23 (NLT)

¹ When Joseph was taken to Egypt by the Ishmaelite traders, he was purchased by Potiphar, an Egyptian officer. Potiphar was captain of the guard for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.

² The Lord was with Joseph, so he succeeded in everything he did as he served in the home of his Egyptian master. ³ Potiphar noticed this and realized that the Lord was with Joseph, giving him success in everything he did. ⁴ This pleased Potiphar, so he soon made Joseph his personal attendant. He put him in charge of his entire household and everything he owned. ⁵ From the day Joseph was put in charge of his master’s household and property, the Lord began to bless Potiphar’s household for Joseph’s sake. All his household affairs ran smoothly, and his crops and livestock flourished. ⁶ So Potiphar gave Joseph complete administrative responsibility over everything he owned. With Joseph there, he didn’t worry about a thing—except what kind of food to eat!

Joseph was a very handsome and well-built young man, ⁷ and Potiphar’s wife soon began to look at him lustfully. “Come and sleep with me,” she demanded.

⁸ But Joseph refused. “Look,” he told her, “my master trusts me with everything in his entire household. ⁹ No one here has more authority than I do. He has held back nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How could I do such a wicked thing? It would be a great sin against God.”

¹⁰ She kept putting pressure on Joseph day after day, but he refused to sleep with her, and he kept out of her way as much as possible. ¹¹ One day, however, no one else was around when he went in to do his work. ¹² She came and grabbed him by his cloak, demanding, “Come on, sleep with me!” Joseph tore himself away, but he left his cloak in her hand as he ran from the house.

¹³ When she saw that she was holding his cloak and he had fled, ¹⁴ she called out to her servants. Soon all the men came running. “Look!” she said. “My husband has brought this Hebrew slave here to make fools of us! He came into my room to rape me, but I screamed. ¹⁵ When he heard me scream, he ran outside and got away, but he left his cloak behind with me.”

¹⁶ She kept the cloak with her until her husband came home. ¹⁷ Then she told him her story. “That Hebrew slave you’ve brought into our house tried to come in and fool around with me,” she said. ¹⁸ “But when I screamed, he ran outside, leaving his cloak with me!”

¹⁹ Potiphar was furious when he heard his wife’s story about how Joseph had treated her. ²⁰ So he took Joseph and threw him into the prison where the king’s prisoners were held, and there he remained. ²¹ But the Lord was with Joseph in the prison and showed him his faithful love. And the Lord made Joseph a favorite with the prison warden. ²² Before long, the warden put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners and over everything that happened in the prison. ²³ The warden had no more worries, because Joseph took care of everything. The Lord was with him and caused everything he did to succeed.

Of these 23 verses, what’s the key point this morning?...

Key Point: “Integrity is hard when the odds are stacked against you.”

True integrity is the result of the consistency of a person’s character in public and in private.

Here’s what we can learn about Joseph’s integrity from this passage:

- Integrity requires that we honor others.

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- Integrity is often tested at the most inconvenient times.

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- Integrity requires overcoming temptation often to the point of personal hardship.

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Something to take home:

Who are you when no one’s looking? What pressures are you tempted to give in to?

Psalms 119:1-3 (NLT), ¹ Joyful are people of integrity, who follow the instructions of the Lord. ² Joyful are those who obey his laws and search for him with all their hearts. ³ They do not compromise with evil, and they walk only in his paths.

Key Point: “Integrity is hard when the odds are stacked against you.”

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Series Title: "Hard Knock Life"

KICK STARTERS:

- ⇒ What is "integrity?"
- ⇒ Describe a time when your integrity was put to the test.

SCRIPTURE: (Before studying this material, consider listening to the corresponding message online at: <http://www.northmaincog.org/media/sermon-media>)

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GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. In a few sentences, describe what's going on in this passage of Scripture?

2. After being sold into slavery by his brothers, and taken to Egypt, Joseph was purchased by a man named Potiphar. What was slavery like for Joseph under Potiphar's rule (vv. 2-6)?

3. Now, Potiphar had a wife, and because of her attraction toward Joseph she began to look at him lustfully. What does Potiphar's wife do in her lust toward Joseph, and what is Joseph's response to her (vv. 7-12)?

4. After fleeing from Potiphar's wife, and leaving his cloak behind, what does Potiphar's wife do?

5. After hearing his wife's story about Joseph, what is Potiphar's reaction (v. 20)?

6. After being thrown in prison by Potiphar, what happened to Joseph (vv. 21-23)?

6. Is it difficult to maintain integrity? Why, or why not? Joseph maintained his integrity when faced with temptation, but ended up in prison. Is it better to maintain your integrity and suffer punishment, or compromise your integrity and maintain your earthly freedom? Explain...

7. Integrity requires that we honor God and honor others. How do we honor others when they show dishonor to everyone else?

8. Read Psalms 119:1-3. How does this passage apply to living out our faith in God today? Give some practical examples:

SELF-EVALUATION/APPLICATION:

- ⇒ **WHO ARE YOU WHEN NO ONE IS LOOKING?** What pressures are you tempted to give in to? How can you overcome evil with good?
- ⇒ **TAKE SOME TIME THIS WEEK** and evaluate yourself: *Have you compromised your integrity, or have you held tight to it even when you're up against great temptation?* Pray that God will strengthen you to conquer whatever challenges you might face.
- ⇒ **MEMORY VERSES:** *Genesis 39:2-3* and *Psalms 119:1-3*