

St Martins C3 – August 24, 2025

The Coats of Joseph – God Meant It For Good

Sermon Notes:

Joseph's coats have told the story of his life:

- *Multicoloured robe* – favoured son
- *Slave coat* – desired then despised
- *Prison clothes* – humiliated but faithful
- *Transformation clothes* – ready for Pharaoh
- *Royal robes* – authority to Rule

We've run out of coats, but we wanted to take one more week to conclude the story of Joseph. Joseph is reunited with his family and eventually, Jacob dies, is mourned and buried.

Read Genesis 50:14-15

The brothers assume of Joseph what is true of most humans. We want to get even for the wrongs that people have done.

Read Genesis 50:16-18

For the fourth time in the story Joseph's brothers bow down to him. His dreams have come true. But Joseph doesn't try to get even.

Read Genesis 50:19

Joseph doesn't see it as his place to punish wrongdoing. He is happy to hand that over to God. Joseph recognizes the main character of his story is God.

Read Genesis 50:20

What a verse! Joseph sees that it is God who defines good and evil and he can even take evil and use it to do what Israel was called to do: “Bless all the nations on the earth.” (Gen 12:1-2)

But how does that all work? Are world events, personal salvation, and the details of our lives shaped by human choice, God’s will, or just random chance?

Here are three errors about predestination:

- a. To ascribe everything to random chance.*
- b. To diminish the meaningfulness of human choice.*
- c. To downplay the sovereignty of God.*

We need to embrace the mystery of God’s will and see that we do have a choice but He is sovereign. It is for us to trust Him.

Read Romans 8:28-29

When I trust that God is in charge:

- 1 – I Can Endure Pain
- 2 – My Failure is not Catastrophic.
- 3 – Forgiving Others is Possible.

Read Genesis 50:21-26

The story of Joseph ends with forgiveness, hope and an unwavering faith in the goodness of God. May we live our lives in the same way.

Questions for Connect Groups:

Key Point

God is sovereign so pain is endurable and failure is forgivable.

Questions

What stood out to you from this week's message?

What does this message tell you about God and humans?

What stands out to you about the story of Joseph?

Share about someone who looked down on you or mistreated you. How strong is the motivation to get back at them?

What does it mean that the brothers intended it for harm, but God intended it for good?

Are world events, personal salvation, and the details of our lives shaped by human choice, God's will, or just random chance? Discuss.

How does the idea of a [photo mosaic](#) help us understand the interaction of God's sovereignty and people's choice?

Why do we struggle with mystery in our modern world? How can we learn to be okay even if we don't fully understand?

How have you seen God work for your good and for His glory?

How does trusting God's sovereignty help you with pain, failure and forgiveness?

Monday Devotion: Why All the Twos?

Read Genesis 41:39-52

I have highlighted the multiple twos in this series. Joseph is to give two reports on his brothers, twice we are told God is with him, and twice he rises to success in a hard situation. He refuses Potiphar's wife twice, twice she lies about him. Twice he is thrown into a place described in Hebrew as a pit. There is the triple double of dreams: He has two dreams of his own, he interprets two dreams in prison, he interprets Pharaoh's two dreams. His brothers come twice to Egypt for food.

Someone asked me recently, what this all means. In part, it is a literary device designed to make the story more easily remembered. This would have originally been an oral history, and the pairing of stories enables it to be more easily recalled and passed on.

But, in this passage we see the theological meaning through the birth of Joseph's two sons. The first is called *Manasseh*, which means to forget, because God has caused him to forget his trouble and his father's household. The second is called *Ephraim*, which means double blessing.

As Joseph reflects on his life and all the doubles he has been through, I believe the name of his second son shows he sees it all as a blessing. The elevations and the pits, the dreams and the interpretations, the injustice and the success. Joseph knows that God was working in all these moments and at the birth of his second born he chooses to celebrate God's abundant blessings in the good and the bad. May we see the same in our lives and thank God for it.

Tuesday Devotion: The Brothers Repent

Read Genesis 42, 44-45:15

Here's a question for you: When is the first time in Genesis someone shows sorrow over their actions? The answer is right here in Genesis 42:21, when the brothers express sorrow for the way that they treated Joseph. Unknown to them, they were doing it in the presence of the man himself.

Just think about that for a moment. Isn't it remarkable that amongst all the evil that goes on in the book of Genesis, this is the only time there is sorrow over sin?

Joseph begins to see the change in his brothers, but he gives them one more test. He knows that his brother Benjamin is Jacob's favourite, so he gives his brothers an opportunity to betray Benjamin in the same way that he was betrayed.

Joseph places a silver cup in Benjamin's grain bag and tells his servant to make whoever has it into a slave. Instead of making Benjamin the scapegoat, the brothers go back to Joseph. Judah, whose idea it was to sell Joseph into slavery, intercedes and offers to take Benjamin's place as a slave. This is too much for Joseph, who finally reveals himself. Wow! What a story.

It is encouraging to see the way that Joseph's brothers have changed. They are not who they used to be. We too can change if we would repent of our sins and choose a new way of living. It would make all the difference.

Pray and ask God what He would like to change in you. Praise Him for the way that you have changed over the years.

Wednesday Devotion: Jacob vs Joseph

Read Genesis 43:1-14

Through the series, we have looked at the character and transformation of Joseph. It has been remarkable to see how the spoilt brat of a teenager has become the wise, just, and forgiving ruler of the ancient world. His wisdom blesses all the nations of the Earth (Genesis 12:1-2).

It has been a great pleasure to study and to teach the series. We would like to do other biblical characters in the future; however, the one character I wouldn't relish doing is Jacob. Where Joseph shows character growth and wisdom, Jacob shows very little.

Originally, Jacob was known as a deceiver, and he lived up to his name in his dealings with his brother and his uncle. He caused much pain through some of his deceptions. Now, we see Jacob as an older man, and unfortunately, we see that not much has changed. He still has a favourite son, and that makes him overprotective. Even in this passage, he tells his sons to hide the truth. The deceiver he remains.

There is part of me that wonders if one of the reasons God removed Joseph from Canaan was that he would not turn out like his father. He did not change, but we must. What are the character traits that you see yourself stuck in? Can you bring them to God and ask him to renew you and transform you into a new person?

Thursday Devotion: The Table of Grace

Read Genesis 43:15-34; Psalm 23:5; Luke 14:15-24

It is interesting to see the emotions of Joseph. We see that he was a man who was deeply affected by all that happened to him. He weeps when he meets his brother for the first time in many years. He may have said at the birth of his firstborn that he had forgotten his family, but here we can see that he is still deeply connected to them.

His words to Benjamin are words of grace and welcome. They then sit down to eat a meal. It must have been odd for the brothers to see the Egyptians eat by themselves, Joseph by himself, and the brothers by themselves. Just to mess with their heads, he sees them in the accurate order. Giving Benjamin five times the food that the other brothers have.

Just picture the scene, the brothers are amazed at the personal care that has been given to them. Benjamin, however, receives so much more. For every portion of lamb they receive, Benjamin receives five. For every scoop of ice cream they get, Benjamin gets five.

This is a picture of grace. The brothers do not deserve to eat at Joseph's table. They deserve judgement and punishment. Instead, they receive mercy and so much more.

Consider that when we come to no Christ, we too get to sit at his table even though we don't deserve it. We get the abundance of food that is more than we could ever ask for. We sit at the table of grace. Consider that today and humbly bow in gratitude to our great God and King.

Friday Devotion: Endings

Read Genesis 50:14-26; Hebrews 11:22

There is much more than we could say on the story of Joseph. In chapters 45 through 50 we read the rest of the story of his life. We see how he was reunited with his father and planned a way for his whole family to come and live in Egypt. We see his wise management during the time of famine. We see the last days of Jacob and the blessing that he gives on Joseph's children and on his own. Then finally we read of Jacob's death and burial. You are welcome to read it all in your own time.

It is worth us focusing again on Sunday's passage, because it is a suitable ending to an epic saga. Joseph's brothers are afraid of him, thinking he only held back his anger because of their father. In a tremendously moving scene they come and bow down before him devoting themselves to him as their slaves. Here is Joseph's dream fulfilled. However, Joseph does not take revenge on them. He offers grace.

Joseph tells his brothers that they intended him evil but God intended it for good. The way that Joseph can see God moving even in the worst of circumstances is inspiring. Joseph also asks for his bones to be brought back to his homeland. This act gains him special recognition in Hebrews' Hall of Faith.

Joseph could see not only what God was doing through his life, but what God was going to do beyond his life. May we too have the faith of those who believe that God can bring good out of our circumstances and even something that lasts beyond us. Thank Him today for the life of Joseph and commit to living a life of faith, integrity and forgiveness.