

St Martins C3 – July 20, 2025
The Coats of Joseph – The Multicoloured Coat of Self-Importance

Sermon Notes:

In the next five weeks, we'll study the Old Testament man Joseph. As we explore his life, we'll reflect on our own and gain hope as we follow Jesus. We've named this series, The Coats of Joseph, because his life's movements are signified by changing clothing.

Read Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 11

After the first sin, it was hinted that someone would bring God's salvation to the good but fallen creation. However, no one could do it entirely. So, God called Abraham's family to be a blessing to all the world.

Read Genesis 12:2

Abraham is called to bless all families on earth, but his descendants forget their calling and go astray. Their history is marked by sibling tension, sexual sin, and revenge, leading them to forget their true selves and purpose.

Read Genesis 37:2-3

Jacob gave Joseph a colourful coat, a long sleeved beautiful robe, befitting an influential person or ruler. The pain that follows is largely due to Jacob's favouritism, which tears the family apart.

Read Genesis 37:4-8

Joseph has a dream and just can't help but share it. Will these dreams be fulfilled? Yes, but not how Joseph would choose.

God does sometimes speak through dreams and vision, but Joseph's life shows us we should be wary of oversharing these revelations. They rarely happen quite the way we think they will. If God gives a dream then he will fulfil it, we don't need to force it.

Read Genesis 37:9-11

Joseph has charisma and he has the calling, but he is missing something vitally important. Character. He is not ready to be a blessing to the world. We need to surrender our character to God and allow him to mould and shape us.

Read Genesis 37:12-24

Joseph's great flaw was self-importance. If we want to be used by God the one thing that needs to die in us is self-importance. We must remember we're not the main character of the story.

Read Proverbs 3:7; Romans 12:3; 2 Corinthians 8:9

Joseph's great flaw as a seventeen year old was that he was more focussed on how he could get more for himself rather than using what he had to serve others. May we kill the self-importance in our own lives and instead learn to serve. That was what Joseph needed to learn. More on that next week.

Questions for Connect Groups:

Key Point

Joseph fell from his original purpose by being more self-focussed than others-focussed.

Questions

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

What does this message tell you about God and humans?

Who is your favourite Bible character and why?

In what ways do Old Testament Bible characters stories give us hope for today? How are these more than just moral tales?

Have you ever had a God-given dream, vision or prophecy that God fulfilled but not in the way you expected? Share.

How do we evaluate and wisely share dreams?

When have you seen people of great charisma, capability and calling cause damage because they didn't have character?

What would have happened if Joseph had been put in a position of ruling without working on his character?

What character area is God working on in your life?

Joseph's issue was self-importance. What does it mean to be self-important?

What areas of self-importance do you need to surrender

Monday Devotion: The Fall

Read Genesis 3:8-19

This week in our devotions, we will read passages which give us the background of the story of Joseph. We begin by looking at the consequences of the first sin, which sets up the pattern for all of Genesis.

Adam and Eve had the opportunity to trust in God and created a beautiful world for all to enjoy. Their failure to have faith in God's way opened a world of sin, shame, and exile.

The prophecy given to the snake sets up the drama in the coming chapters:

*I will cause hostility between you and the woman,
And between your offspring and her offspring.
He will crush your head,
And you will strike his heel.*

In the chapters that follow, we have several candidates put forward as the ones to defeat the snake and begin to restore the good world that God created.

Ultimately, we see it is impossible for any person, until Jesus comes and through his death and resurrection, has his heel struck but crushes the snake's head. He is the restorer of all that is wrong in the world.

We have a choice each day whether we side with the snake or with the Messiah in the way we live our lives. Today, determine to choose faith in God rather than trusting your way.

Tuesday Devotion: The Flood and Noah

Read Genesis 6; Genesis 9:20-24

The first saviour or messiah for the world was a man named Noah. Since the time of Adam and Eve, the world had become corrupt. Murder, evil, and wickedness were the norm. God was sorry that he ever created the world because of the brokenness that people had brought to His creation.

So, He called Noah to build a boat where he could preserve the creatures while God sent a flood to remove the corrupt people from the earth. This incident becomes an example of what God will do at the end of the age when he carries His people away from the destruction of the world and has them land in a renewed earth.

Noah gives us a great example of perfect obedience in the ways of God, which saves the world from complete annihilation.

For a moment it seems that Noah will be the one to crush the snake's head and usher in a new righteous age. Unfortunately, the incident of Noah's drunkenness shows us that the evil in the world is not easy to escape. It is present in each heart.

We again see the need for the true Messiah to deal with not just the acts of wickedness, but the internal problem of sin.

Joseph was imperfect but became a righteous man in a corrupt world, bringing salvation when another disaster struck. We can choose the way of new life, too.

Wednesday Devotion: Abraham's Family

Read Genesis 12:1-2; 15:13-16; 18:16-33

If an individual could not be the one to bring God's salvation, then maybe a nation could do it. That is the idea behind the calling of Abraham. He is given the first Great Commission, called to be a blessing to all the people on Earth. Even though God foresaw the need for their Egyptian slavery.

We begin to see Abraham step into his calling in the incident of Sodom and Gomorrah. He intercedes on their behalf, pleading with the Lord to spare the city even if ten righteous people live there. Regardless of the results, the destruction of the wicked city, Abraham was stepping into his calling.

This calling for the nation of Israel should change every action from this family. If you are called by God to be a blessing, then every person associated with your family should step up to that calling. As we will see, that is not what happens, and when Joseph arrives, his family seems no different than any other. In fact, they are in many ways worse.

We too have been given a great commission and a great command. To make disciples and to love God with all our heart, loving our neighbour as we love ourselves.

It would be good for us to reflect on our lives. Are we living up to the calling that God has for us, or have we become focused on lesser things? Let's realign our focus to the things of God and the ways we can share his love with others.

Thursday Devotion: Jacob Steals the Blessing

Read Genesis 27:1-41; 29:30; 37:3

Abraham's grandson was a man named Jacob. He is the one through whom his line and blessing flow. Unfortunately, the only way this happens is through lies and deception. Jacob, the second-born, is the favourite of his mother Rebekah, while Esau, the first-born, is the favourite of his father, Isaac.

Rebekah tricks Isaac into believing that Jacob is Esau, so he gives the family blessing to Jacob instead of Esau. As a result, there is hatred from Esau towards Jacob, and he vows to kill him.

What is particularly odd about this story is that Jacob does the same thing with his kids. Just like his father and mother, he chooses to have a favourite wife and a favourite child. This causes a breaking of the relationship between his children.

Jacob experiences the pain of having a brother who hates him, but when he sees his kids at odds he does nothing to stop it. This is the broken family that Joseph is born into.

Genesis is full of stories where one generation does not learn from the previous one. We are not doomed to repeat the mistakes from the previous generation; we must learn from them so that we can start to write a new story in the world. Whatever has happened to you in the past does not mean that you are unable to make a better choice in the future. Begin today.

Friday Devotion: Revenge Against Shechem

Read Genesis 34

Many want to hold up Biblical characters as paragons of virtue. They say that they are people that we can emulate and be like in our lives today. Unfortunately, what we see is often the opposite. We see more wickedness from our heroes of faith than we do righteousness.

This is never more evident than in one of the grizzliest stories in all the Old Testament. It would be nice to skip some of these accounts, but the Bible doesn't, instead it unflinchingly shows the depth of human wickedness and how it had infiltrated Abraham's bloodline. The story also provides a contrast to Joseph's actions towards his brothers.

How far, and how quickly, this family had fallen from their calling to bless every nation on earth. Instead, when an evil is committed against one of their family, they embrace vengeance by slaughtering every male in the city and taking all their possessions, women, and children as captives.

This is the world that Joseph grows up in. He sees the murder his brothers commit and the slavery his other brothers inflict on those who remain.

At least, he hears his father's displeasure at the way they have acted. This means Joseph grows up with a firm idea of what is right and wrong and as chapter 35 shows, he would have been aware of God's renewed covenant with his family. Now we step into the story of Joseph knowing all he could be.