

St Martins C3 – August 3, 2025

The Coats of Joseph – Joseph Loses His Coat

Sermon Notes:

Content Note: Today's sermon deals with unwanted sexual pressure. Please judge whether it is appropriate for yourself and others you are with – particularly younger ones.

Joseph is now in Potiphar's house, where he has become so successful that he has been placed in charge of the entire household. This has some unintended consequences.

Read Genesis 39:6-9

Potiphar's wife demands to sleep with Joseph. He refuses for three very good reasons:

- 1 – The natural consequences
- 2 – It's wrong
- 3 – It's a sin against God

If we are struggling with temptation, then it would be good for us to learn from Joseph's example and make a strong stand. Resisting sin is a vital thing for true followers of God to do.

Read Genesis 3:6

Eve *saw*, she *desired*, and she *took*. This is a pattern that is repeated over and over in Scripture (see this week's devotions), showing humanity's continued failure to live for God. But Joseph passes that test that Adam and Eve failed.

We all have a moment when we see and desire something we shouldn't. The question is, will we reach out and take it?

Read Genesis 39:10; Matthew 5:30

The temptation does not go away, but continues day after day. Joseph resists it and puts up boundaries to stay away from the wrong influence.

It is better to take drastic action and rid yourself of the evil that is going to destroy you even though that evil may feel like part of you.

Read Genesis 39:11-20

Unlike Adam and Eve, he passes the test. But just like Adam and Eve he is judged, and he is exiled. His coat has been torn from him again through little to no fault of his own. One day elevated the next day humiliated. Just because we do the right thing does not mean we will always have great results.

Joseph, ultimately, is a type and foreshadow of Christ. He was tempted and saw things that would have been pleasing to his eyes, yet he did not take.

Read Matthew 4:1-11; Philippians 2:5-11

Some days we will fail the test. We'll be more like Adam and Eve than like Joseph and Jesus. That is why we embrace his grace. Grace says we are loved even when we fail. Grace gives us the power to get back up, pass the test and resist the deceiver. Determine to do that this week.

Questions for Connect Groups:

Key Point

Joseph resisted temptation and we can too.

Questions

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

What does this message tell you about God and humans?

How is it for you to discuss this story of unwanted sexual advances? How can we make it easier for you to discuss?

Imagine you were in Joseph's position. What would have made it easy to accept Potiphar's wife invitation?

Why is it important that we resist sin in our lives?

Talk about a time you were faced with temptation and resisted.

Talk about a time you were faced with temptation and failed to resist it.

What was the difference between those two times?

What are the main sin temptations that you face?

What boundaries have you put in place against those temptations?

How does our relationship with Jesus help us to resist temptation?

Monday Devotion: The Fall

Read Genesis 3:1-7; 6:1-8

This week, we look in greater detail at a literary pattern that is used in scripture to talk of our propensity to walk away from God's way of life.

We see it first in the story of Adam and Eve. The snake tempts Eve to eat the fruit, and to begin with, she resists. The key moment happens, however, when she *sees* the tree, *desires* fruit, *takes* it to eat, and *gives* it to her husband.

This starts a pattern with regard to sinful behaviours. Often, these actions are repeated fully or in part, sometimes using the exact same language, often using the same ideas. It is the biblical author's way of comparing the action taking place with the original human rebellion.

Take, for example, the sons of God and their relationship with the daughters of men. While we might wonder as to exactly who these characters are and what they did, we notice the repeat of language from the story of the fall.

In both cases, it is quickly followed by disastrous consequences. This is a literary design that we see throughout the Bible, always calling us to think back to the first story where it occurred.

We, as humans, have changed much over the years, but our original rebellion remains the same. Often, we fall into the same trap. Today, ask God to show you where you might be in danger of being snared as others have been.

Tuesday Devotion: Sarai and Esau

Read Genesis 16:2-3; Genesis 25:29-34

Sometimes we read a story in the Bible we are not sure how to evaluate. We don't always see a comment on whether the biblical author condemns or condones an action. Many incidents are presented as fact without judgment.

However, if we observe the subtleties of the author we can pick up what is really happening in a text. Take for example, the story of Sarai giving her Egyptian servant to Abram to bear his children. At first glance, this might seem as though the Bible is turning a blind eye to Sarai trying to make God's plan happen her way.

However, as we look at the language used, we see there is a clear allusion to Eve in the garden. "Sarai *took* Hagar and *gave* her to Abram." The original Hebrew used here is the same that is used in Genesis 3 when Eve takes the fruit and gives it to her husband. You can sense the Biblical author saying, "this is not going to turn out well!"

In the story of Esau selling his birthright the same language is not used but the same idea is stated. Esau *saw* the stew, he *desired* it and he *gave* up his birthright to *take* it.

In both incidents there was a forbidden fruit, that the person saw, desired, took and, in Sarai's case, gave to another. Let us be mindful this week of the subtle lure of sin and the destructive nature of our poor choices. Truly, large doors swing on small hinges.

Wednesday Devotion: David and Relations

Read 2 Samuel 11:1-5; 13:1-22

There are many stories where this literary pattern occurs. Today, is the worst of them. If you want an easier devotion then read about Achan's sin in Joshua 7:20, or read on.

These two stories, nearly back to back in Scripture, are very similar to both the story of Adam and Eve and also the story of Joseph. In the first one, David is walking on his rooftop and *sees* Bathsheba bathing. He *desires* her and *takes* her into his house, where he sleeps with her and makes her pregnant.

The second story is one of the most awful in Scripture! It is both a repeat of what David has done and an exaggerated version of the Joseph story. It shows the destructiveness of lust. In the story, Tamar plays the role of Joseph, even down to her cloak being torn. But instead of running away, she is overpowered and raped and lives the rest of her days in shame. It is a tragedy that should make us weep.

This is the beginning of the end of David's kingdom. Whilst he is angry with Amnon, he can't be too angry as he has just done largely the same thing. His other son Absalom, however, does do something about it. He kills Amnon and eventually rebels against David and sleeps with his concubines on David's roof (where he saw Bathsheba), bringing the story full circle.

Truly, disastrous things happen when we follow the wants of our eyes. May this horrible narrative be a cautionary tale to not allow sexual sin to have mastery over you.

Thursday Devotion: In Joseph's Story

Read Genesis 37:18-24; 38; 41:38-41; 42:7

So, what about Joseph's story? We see this literary pattern at play in both positive and negative ways.

First, we observe it in the brothers and the way that they *see* Joseph coming towards them. They *take* him and throw them into a pit. Then they *sell* him to the Ishmaelites who are the descendants of Abraham and Hagar's son. If we link this back to Sarai's story, we now see multiple generations of *taking* and *giving* going on!

After Joseph is sold into slavery, we read a story that at first looks quite random. It is the story of Judah and the first Tamar. This Tamar is also involved in a story of sleeping with a family member, her father-in-law Judah. His indecency is juxtaposed with Joseph's integrity.

Later on, in Joseph's story, we read of two positive spins on the "seeing and taking" structure. Pharaoh sees something good in Joseph and takes him into his governance structure. Finally, we see the way that Joseph treats his brothers when they come to Egypt. We are told that he sees them and recognises them, but rather than taking revenge on them, he shows them mercy and love – after messing with them first.

There are times when we may see the opportunity to hurt others, but instead, we take the moment to treat them with love and mercy. Pray about who you can do that with today.

Friday Devotion: The New and Better Joseph

Read Matthew 4:1-10; Philippians 2:5-11

The New Testament tells us that the point of the stories from the Old Testament was to give us hope and to lead us to Jesus. There are times in the stories of those in the Old Testament that we see something of Jesus coming through. This week, we have seen the principle of seeing, desiring, taking, and giving and how it led to disastrous sins.

As we reflect on Joseph and how this literary pattern is given a positive take in his history. It is now worth seeing how this has taken to the next level by Jesus.

The original language of Philippians 2:6 says that Jesus did not consider equality with God something to be grasped. Something to hold on to. Something to eagerly claim. Something to *take*.

Jesus not only *saw* equality with God, he already had it. It wasn't just a chance to be like God, it was his very God nature. But he laid it down. He chose not to take it back.

This is Joseph squared! It's exponentially better.

We worship the one who resisted the temptation to have what was not yet time for him to have *and* gave up what he already had for our sakes.

Every time we resist temptation, we point towards the one who gave us the example, the grace, and freedom to resist.