

Joseph, Sermon #4

Genesis 39 – I want to deliver you a patriotic message regarding something that is destroying the moral fiber of our great country—violating our liberties.

While in the home of Potiphar, Joseph faced a severe test (vs. 7).

- We have a very familiar story—the account of Potiphar’s wife and her seduction of Joseph
- Sexual attraction is perhaps the strongest lure of mankind—lust of the flesh, lust of the mind, and the pride of life. Whether or not it is controlled can either make or break a person.

Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

So, the decisions that you and I make regarding this matter, blesses or destroys our country.

Joseph had been presenting a pure, clear-cut testimony for God, and at this time Satan attempted to bring an end to the glory God was receiving through Joseph.

A believer is not able to build, a wall around him high enough to keep out temptation.

- It is not sin to be tempted; it only becomes sin when one yields to the temptation.
- Our reaction to temptation has lasting effects.

What a person accepts or rejects, particularly in the realm of sexual temptation, will affect the rest of his life.

There is no immunity to this sin

- God is speaking to every husband, every wife, every single person, dating couple, every teenager.
- We are living in a society that is filled with this kind of sin.
- The stats for this in our society are outrageous.

So many people have defiled themselves in this arena:

- Unwed mothers—40% of births (only 3% in 1940);
- Aborting babies by the millions;
- Couples living together is the norm;
- Sex outside of marriage—70%, 80%, 90% are not waiting until marriage.

Everywhere we go, we are confronted with temptation in this area—we face it on TV, the check-out line, the convenience store, and on the Internet.

Several of Joseph's brothers fell to sexual temptation, but victory is possible—Joseph had victory.

I've entitled today's message "Joseph and Sexual Temptation"

Genesis 39:7

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word.

Genesis 39:7-12

Let us pray.

You may be seated.

Joseph and Sexual Temptation

In these brief verses we have three waves of temptation and three defenses against it:

- Potiphar's wife on the offense and Joseph on the defense.
- Resist the devil and he will flee.

Vs. 7 – after Joseph's promotion and position

She invited him to her bedroom—an invitation to sexual sin.

First, we see the sudden proposal of temptation: I call this the ambush style, the unexpected trap.

There are several things to observe about the temptation which Joseph faced:

- It was totally unexpected.
- It came at a time when everything was going well for Joseph.

And, the temptation came from an unexpected source.

- As Joseph was active in the routine of his duties, he never dreamed he would come face to face with one of the greatest temptations of his life.
- Because it was so unexpected, he had no time to strengthen himself against the temptation.

We need to be aware that temptation is not predictable; it strikes like lightning.

- It never waits for us to put on the armor of God, so we will be able to resist it.
- This is why we need to be wearing the armor at all times and be prepared for temptation.

Just as Joseph did not know when he would be tempted, neither do we.

This is a device that the devil uses and we cannot escape it.

- It's called an ambush, and we will be ambushed.

I wonder why Potiphar's wife gave this proposition to Joseph.

What caused her to fall?

In this case, temptation came out of the context of someone who had a troubled marriage.

- When there is trouble at home, this is the crack in the door.
- We can surmise that she was in a troubled marriage.

Vs. 14 – (he) hath brought – Potiphar

She is speaking of her husband in a degrading way.

Vs. 17

Last but not least (Genesis 39:1), Potiphar was a eunuch—castrated male.

Potiphar is called an “officer,” but the Hebrew word is *saris*, meaning “eunuch,” which fact is no doubt partially explanatory of his wife's dissatisfaction and her attempt to seduce Joseph.

Often those who served in the highest positions were required to do this to show loyalty.

It was customary in pagan countries to require prominent officers associated closely with the king's court to be castrated to ensure full-hearted devotion to the duties required of them.

Since Potiphar was a married man, it would seem either that Potiphar had consented to such an operation after he was married in order to acquire his high office or else that his wife had married him for political or financial reasons rather than for normal marital relations.

In Egypt, if a woman committed adultery, it was punishable by death, burning at the stake, or disfigurement (cutting off the nose, etc.)

Here we have a woman in spite of all that kind of possibility of punishment, she is still very brazen in her attack on Joseph.

- If I can make a side comment, your partner in your marriage is one of the defenses that God has given you against this kind of sin.
- It behooves us to provide the intimacy in our marriage.
- And, a failure to provide leaves the partner vulnerable.

I Corinthians 7:1

The body is “not for fornication, but for the Lord”, and the Lord for the body – I Cor. 6:13

Turn back to Genesis 39.

Why was Potiphar’s wife tempted? The Bible sets this up for us at the end of verse 6.

- Joseph was well-built and handsome—literally, a beautiful body and beautiful face and that little addition at the end of verse 6 prepares us for what is coming next.

Because verse 7 says the master’s wife cast her eyes upon Joseph

What caught Potiphar’s eye has now caught his wife’s eye.

- The eye gate—Jesus told us if we look upon a woman and lust after her, we have committed adultery already in our hearts.
- We must control what we allow to enter our eyes.

Psalmist said, “I will set no wicked thing before my eyes . . .” (Psalm 101:3)

Certain magazines, movies, music videos . . .

Now, Joseph couldn’t help it that he had a good physique.

- She could not keep her eyes to herself and on her own husband.
- Wandering eyes leads to a wandering mind, which leads to a wandering body
- Those are the normal steps to sexual sin.

When God gives you a favorable physique/countenance, you stick out; people will be attracted to you—you will draw attention, oftentimes more than you want—vulnerable to sexual sins.

Proverbs 6:25, *“Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids.”*

That verse admits that the strange woman is beautiful—attractive

I Peter 3 – it is the inside of the woman that is precious in the sight of God—not the outside.

- People look for the outside, people spend time and money working on the outside and fail to work on the inside.
- It is the inner beauty of the woman or man that should be sought out by the single person.

Joseph also lived in a time when he faced the promiscuous dress of women.

- We find ourselves in such a culture today and many women do not realize the sin they cause by their poor choice of dress.
- The dress of many women today is enticement.

How did Joseph resist all this?

- He resisted with his circumstances.
- This is the weakest way to refuse!

Joseph said (vs. 8) I have complete freedom from supervision and, secondly, Potiphar has committed all to me:

- Joseph had power over all—many people in this same position—who have no accountability and power—fall to sin.

Vs. 9 – Joseph’s privileged position

- Joseph said I have no supervision and I have a privileged position.
- And has kept back nothing except you because you are his wife. (vs. 9)

There is this one prohibition that Joseph understood and King David skipped—you are his wife; you are married already.

He explained to her why he wouldn't cooperate:

- She was another man's wife.

A high viewpoint Joseph had on marriage.

God has given marriage to all mankind.

- When a person begins to despise the marriage vows, he is beginning to despise God.
- A man who will break his marriage vows will generally break any vow he has made to God.

Joseph is drawing nigh to God, not to the woman.

Joseph is loyal to Potiphar when Potiphar's wife is not!

He was trusted by his master and didn't want to violate that trust.

When you touch another man, you touch his family.

When you touch another woman, you touch her family.

The Devil will say: No one will ever know; no one is around.

Listen folks, sin is never done in secret or in a corner.

- Consequences of sin are widespread and if we fall into immorality, it will affect our children, spouse, family, church, parents, grandparents, friendships.
- This sin is destructive.

“How then can I do?” – vs. 9e

Joseph's reasons for refusing Potiphar's wife were two:

- He wanted to be faithful to his master, who had helped him (v. 8);
- And, even more important, he wanted to be faithful to God (v. 9).

He knew that such actions were contrary to God's revealed will.

- Even if nobody else found out about it, God would know it and be displeased.
Adultery and fornication are wrong in God's sight.

Proverbs 15:3, *"The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."*

We, too, need to remember that even if no one else sees us commit an act of sin, God sees. It is impossible to hide anything from Him.

Joseph calls sin what sin is!

Joseph calls it wickedness; sexual sin is wickedness.

Hebrews 13:4, *"Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."*

I Thessalonians 4:3-8, *"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That everyone of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; not in the lust of sensuality, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us His holy Spirit."*

It's a sin against God.

Do you think Joseph felt the fires of this temptation?

How then did Joseph, in the midst of his circumstances, remember this is wickedness?

Proverbs 7

Vs. 5

We need to make up our minds before the temptations—honor God.

Vs. 13

Proverbs 25:28, *“He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.”*

When there are no walls, anything can get in or come out.

- Samson used his body to gratify his own pleasures; and
- Samson ended his life buried in a pile of rubble.

★ Joseph was able to resist the continual temptation of Potiphar's wife because he took a strong stand against it from the very first.

When we have believers who are not committed to the Word of God, and they meet a person who is committed to sexual sin, who is going to lose?

The first wave of temptation was ambush style—the resistance, know what you believe.

“Joseph and Sexual Temptation”—Part 2 is next week.

Let us stand for closing invitation.

Joseph Successfully Resists

Sexual desire in itself is not sinful.

- Along with the other natural physical desires, God has given us a sexual desire.
- The individual is personally responsible to control this desire God has given him, but the desire itself is not bad.

Second, temptation in itself is not sinful.

- This is obvious because Jesus “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).
- Temptation can lead to sin, but it becomes sin only when we harbor it and go on to gratify the lust of the flesh.

I want to call us to commitment, to loyalty to God

- Fathers, take control of yourselves and your house; get rid—Internet, cable, suggestive pictures—rid our home
- Resist temptation to immorality

Single, don't give your heart away, then your body away—virginity is God's will until marriage.

Fidelity to marriage

A moment of pleasure is not worth it.

There is no indication that Joseph encouraged her in any way.

- He had no doubt seen examples of his brothers' indifference to high moral standards.
- Joseph could have been very flattered that he was being tempted by his master's wife.

But Joseph loved God and did not want to do anything that would dishonor Him.

So there was little to strengthen him against temptation.