

Beginnings: Intimacy, Integrity, Injustice, & Intentionality

Genesis 39

"Can't we take it back? Can't we make it alive again? Can't we start over?" – Eckels, "A Sound of Thunder" by Ray Bradbury

I. Intimacy (vv.1-6a)

- **Key Point: Joseph's intimacy with God is the reason why he is successful in slavery and why Potiphar's house is blessed (v.1-6a).**
 - God's presence is with Joseph, and the way in which Joseph lives in God's presence blesses those around him.
 - The same experience of God's presence that Joseph enjoys is offered to you.
 - The question is, Christian, does that mean anything to you?
 - [Q] Are you ignoring God's presence in indifference?
 - [Q] Are other people routinely blessed by you because of God's presence with you?

II. Integrity (vv.6b-10)

- **Key Point: Joseph's intimacy with God produces integrity amid fierce temptation (v.6b-10).**
 - Women, pay attention to eyes and heart of Potiphar's wife.
 - There are 2 things that capture her attention: 1) Joseph's physical attractiveness, and 2) Joseph's successfulness.
 - Men, pay attention to the heart and actions of Joseph.
 - The source of Joseph's purity is God.
 - [Q] When you feel what seems like relentless pressure and inescapable temptation to sexual sin, have you considered God?
 - In the face of sexual temptation, Joseph flees.

III. Injustice (vv.11-18)

- **Key Point: Joseph's integrity does not spare him from injustice but actually causes him to suffer under it (v.11-18).**
 - Just like Joseph, Jesus' integrity does not spare Him from injustice but in the plan of God, His integrity actually causes Him to suffer injustice for our eternal benefit.

- If you find yourself on the Joseph end (or the Jesus end) of an injustice, a couple of things for you to remember:
 - 1) You are being treated like Jesus. Take heart.
 - 2) God's purposes and intentions work well beyond the frame of your current perspective.

IV. Intentionality (vv.19-23)

- **Key Point: God's sovereign intentionality purposes Joseph's suffering for God's glory and Joseph's good (v.19-23).**

- Think what happens if you don't have this story:

"Genesis 39 also becomes God's providential means for getting Joseph into prison, even if he's there for years. After he has earned the trust of the jailer, it's two more years before he bumps into the butler and the baker, but that nevertheless becomes the means by which ultimately Joseph becomes prime minister of Egypt.

And then, of course, in the larger story, if he becomes prime minister of Egypt he also becomes God's appointed means, not only for saving the lives of millions, or at least hundreds of thousands, of Egyptians but ultimately of his own family.

Then, of course, in the larger narrative, beginning with the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 12), the preservation of Abraham's line and this seed who is to come is managed, in fact, because Joseph keeps his integrity and lands up in prison and, in consequence, saves his own family. Thus, he fulfills ultimately not only the dreams he had as a young man with his brothers and ultimately his parents bowing before him, but quite apart from that he keeps the seed and the family alive.

Then, of course, if you read that within the framework of the Pentateuch, this is part of what sets up the condition for the exodus. If you read this canonically, this is precisely what preserves not only the exodus narrative, which becomes such a major type right across Scripture, not only for the exile but also for the new exodus in which we're freed from the slavery to sin, but also this becomes God's means ultimately for bringing Jesus." -D.A. Carson

- Think what happens if this story plays out differently:

"When you think of the various turning points in Old Testament history where the Abrahamic line is almost wiped out but where God has sovereignly intervened in history to bring this all about, this is the first of those big steps. God is behind the scenes, no doubt, but humanly speaking Jesus comes and saves us because Joseph kept his trousers on. That's quite remarkable really, isn't it? It's important, then, to see God working behind the scenes in grace in Joseph's life."

- A deep and abiding confidence in the purposes and sovereign intentions of God how you become the person that God wants you to be.