

May 29, 2016

Heroes of Faith, Part Two

*A series on Heroes of the Old and New Testament
"The act of faith is what distinguished our ancestors,
set them above the crowd," Hebrews 11:3 The Message*

"Joseph: (Pastor Ryan)

The Circuitous Journey to the Top"

"You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people." Genesis 50:20

A. Joseph had his "ups" and "downs" ...

1. Joseph's life began with an "up!" His mother was Rachel, the favored wife of his father Jacob! His father's favoritism was evident in the colored coat gift!
2. Joseph's life went "down" as he was sold into slavery by his brothers who resented his dreams and their father's favoritism. Joseph was 17.
3. Joseph learned the culture and was elevated to a position of height in Potiphar's household as manager. He was "up" again!
4. "Mrs. Potiphar" was attracted to Joseph and when Joseph resisted her advances, he was falsely accused and imprisoned. "Down" once again!
5. While in prison, Joseph was put in charge of the prisoners. Even in prison, he experienced a bit of an "up" among prisoners. Joseph interpreted the dreams of the baker and the cupbearer.
6. The cupbearer forgot about Joseph for 2 years and the "down" cycle continued in prison.
7. But then Pharaoh had a dream and Joseph was remembered. He was brought to Pharaoh to interpret the dream...he was "up" ... and at age 30, Pharaoh made Joseph the #2 man in the nation!

B. Joseph did not let his "ups" and "downs" control his life...

1. When Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers, he learned the culture of a strange land and was elevated to a position of leadership by Potiphar, the captain of the guard as one of Pharaoh's officials.

"The Lord was with Joseph and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master." Genesis 39:2

2. When Joseph was falsely accused and put into prison, Joseph continued to do his best where he was planted.
"But while Joseph was there in prison, the Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden." Genesis 39:20b-21

3. When Joseph interpreted the dreams, he hoped for some release and asked to be remembered.
"But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness, mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison...for I have done nothing to deserve being put into a dungeon." Genesis 40:14-15

4. When Joseph interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh, he was elevated to the highest position in the land beneath Pharaoh.
"Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.'" Genesis 41:39-40

C. Joseph chose to receive each disappointment as from God's Hand...

"Often the disappointments of life are a part of the Lord's curriculum to prepare you for an even more determinative ministry. Nothing is ever wasted in the will of God. Your future is as bright as the promises of God." –Dr. Howard Hendricks

1. Rather than be bitter in slavery, he honored God and God honored him.
2. Rather than be bitter in prison, he honored God and God honored him.
3. Rather than be bitter as he seemed to be forgotten, once again, he honored God and God honored him.
4. Rather than be bitter at his brothers, he honored God and God honored him!

"You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people." Genesis 50:20

D. How are you choosing to respond to the trials of your life?

1. Are you willing to trust God's plan?
2. Are you willing to give thanks for the plan?
3. Are you willing to surrender the results to Him?
4. Are you believing that the "ups" and "downs" are within His permissive or perfect will?

"And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them." Romans 8:28

"So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world." 1 Peter 1:6-7

"For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all." 2 Corinthians 4:17
"Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing." James 1:2-4