

Listen, watch, or read the sermon on the website if you missed it. Turn to the back for an outline of the sermon.

This week's reading in the 2015/16 reading plan includes: Exodus 6-12; Luke 9-15

**Ice Breaker:** Name a situation where you could not see God's hand until after it was over.

1. Discuss anything that jumped out at you in your private devotions this week.
2. Do you apply the same standard to others that you apply to yourself/your own family?
  - A. Read Romans 2:6-11. Unlike Jacob (Genesis 37:2-4), God does not show favoritism. How should this passage affect our outlook on sin? What does this imply for Christians/non-Christians?
  - B. Read James 2:1-9. How strongly does James condemn partiality? On what basis?
3. God was at work in Joseph's difficult situations (Genesis 50:15-21). Despite how difficult a present situation may be, God has promised that he will always be with us (Matthew 28:20, Hebrews 13:5).
  - A. How does the presence of God offer hope in difficult circumstances? Why does God not remove our suffering rather than merely walk with us through it? Evaluate your response in light of 1 Peter 2:18-21.
  - B. Joseph faithfully served both God and his pagan masters (Potiphar & Pharaoh). What lesson does this have for us? Does the moral character of our supervisors/government affect our responsibility to obey them?
4. At what point in Genesis 37-50 do you think that Joseph realized the purpose that God had for him?
  - A. Read Genesis 45:5-9. When evaluating your circumstances do you credit your own merit, blame others, or give credit to God?
  - B. What purpose does God want to accomplish through you? If this is difficult for you to answer, consider Romans 12:1-2. What changes need to happen before this is clear?
5. How do you treat difficult passages such as Genesis 38? Do you skip these, question their value for your life, or seek to learn about God from them?
  - A. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Of the four uses that Paul gives Timothy, which ones can be applied to Genesis 38?
  - B. God wishes for us to be complete, and in order to do this we must learn from the whole of Scripture. Which application given in 2 Timothy 3:16 do you currently need most in your life?

**Sermon Idea:** "God overrules our actions and circumstances as needed to accomplish His purposes."

Outline:

**I. Our viewpoint differs dramatically from God's viewpoint.**

**II. God's purposes are sometimes because of sins.**

- A. Jacob's family was more dysfunctional than his father Isaac's.
- B. Joseph was a snitch. (Gen. 37:2)
- C. Joseph was his father's favorite. (Gen. 37:3)
- D. Joseph bragged about his dreams that made in ruler over his brothers. (Gen. 37:5-9)
- E. Jacob's sons hated Joseph. (Gen. 37:4; 11)

**III. God is with us even when our circumstances may seem as if He is not.**

- A. Joseph's life was a roller coaster of problems and successes.
- B. Jacob's sons sold Joseph into slavery. (Gen. 37:17-36)
- C. God was with Joseph and brought him to prominence in Potiphar's house. (Gen. 39:1-6)
- D. Joseph was faithful to God in temptation and it got him thrown into prison. (Gen. 39:7-20)
- E. God was with Joseph and prospered him in prison. (Gen. 39:21-23)
- F. God enabled Joseph to interpret dreams for men in Pharaoh's inner circle. (Gen. 40:14; 23)
- G. God used Joseph to provide salvation to the world in famine. (Gen. 42:1-26)
- H. Joseph tested his brothers to see if there had been any repentance in them. (Gen. 44)

**IV. God's purposes are to build our trust in Him.**

- A. Joseph's brothers were afraid of him because of their sins against him. (Gen. 45:1-3)
- B. Joseph forgave them because he recognized God's purposes in their sins against him. (Gen. 45:5-9)
- C. God chose Joseph for salvation from famine and blessings in his generation. (Gen. 49:22-26)
- D. God chose Judah for continuing the promise for the Son who would save the world and reverse the curse. (Gen. 49:8-12)