

Sermon Series: Extraordinary Dreams**Sermon Title: Dream Realization - The We Factor****Sermon Text: Genesis 42-45 (selected verses)****Sermon Presenter: Pastor Larry****Sermon Summary:**

This message looks at Joseph's dream realization and how it included and impacted people around him, especially his family. Joseph had been elevated to second in command in Egypt while his family back in Canaan were suffering under the effects of the famine. The story follows Joseph's brothers as they attempt to buy food from Egypt and end up discovering Joseph was still very much alive. A close look at the details of this story reveals at least five very valuable life lessons:

Decisions you make don't just affect you!

Ungodly decisions can put you and others in serious bondage!

Your faith or lack of it has an impact on others!

Sometimes you have to step out on faith even when your faith is weak!

The dream itself was not the most important thing after all!

Full Sermon Notes

"You give life, You are love, You bring light to the darkness. You give hope, You restore, Every heart that is broken"

Those lyrics are why we can say: "Great are You Lord!" And in our story today we're going to see our Extraordinary God give hope and restore some broken hearts. The things we will learn from our story will have extremely practical applications to our lives in the here and now! Let's pray and seek God's direction and anointing today! Pray!

Last week we talked about the You Factor. We talked about how God's extraordinary dream and vision for you is about you and for you, but it's not just about you or for you! It's also about others. In other words, it's not just me, but we! If your dreams and plans only include you, you can be assured they're not from God! God is always concerned about others in your life, especially your family and friends. Of course He cares about people you don't even know, but we'll talk about that next week in our "They Factor" message! And let me point something out to you: Joseph's dreams were extraordinary dreams, and God has some extraordinary dreams for you and me. However, it's not as much about how extraordinary the dream is but how extraordinary our God is and what His dreams for us ordinary folks can accomplish! And what would that be? Transformed lives. God's dreams for you may not seem extraordinary, but what our extraordinary God can accomplish when you follow His dreams and plans for your life can accomplish extraordinary things, like "transformed lives!" Today we continue to look at Joseph's dream realization and how it included and impacted people around him, especially his family. Our story continues in Genesis 42 and goes through the first part of Genesis 46. Time will not permit me to read the entire story, but I wish I could. It's so powerful. However, we'll deal with much of it and along the way discover some very important takeaways from the "We Factor" part of Joseph's story.

We Factor # 1

Decisions you make don't just affect you!

Let's pick up our story in Genesis 42:1...

Genesis 42:1 When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you just keep looking at each other?"

Genesis 42:2 He continued, "I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. Go down there and buy some for us, so that we may live and not die."

Genesis 42:3 Then ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt.

Genesis 42:4 But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with the others, because he was afraid that harm might come to him.

Ok, are you getting the family dynamic here? Jacob, or Israel, as he was also known, was still upset with the fact his older sons had allowed something terrible to happen to Joseph. He wasn't about to trust them with Benjamin. You see, when the brothers sold Joseph, they didn't get rid of their problem, they just added a whole new list of problems to the ones they already had. And the problem with Joseph was more with the way they handled their dad's favoritism towards Joseph than it was Joseph. Getting rid of Joseph had certainly not helped their relationship with their dad.

Jacob's decision to show favoritism to Joseph had affected the whole family negatively. The decision the brothers made to get rid of Joseph affected the whole family negatively. We'll see today that God was able to make good come from the bad, but we must know this: If Jacob and the brothers had made better decisions, God would have still gotten Joseph to Egypt, He would have just taken a different route and maybe there would not have been so much family division. But once again, God has a way of making good come from the bad! Let's read on...

Genesis 42:5 So Israel's sons were among those who went to buy grain, for the famine was in the land of Canaan also.

Genesis 42:6 Now Joseph was the governor of the land, the one who sold grain to all its people. So when Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground.

Wait a minute...Did Joseph's brothers just bow down to him? Dream realization!

They had no idea it was Joseph! Joseph had grown up. He looked much different now, but...

Genesis 42:7 As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them. "Where do you come from?" he asked. "From the land of Canaan," they replied, "to buy food."

Genesis 42:8 Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him.

Genesis 42:9 Then he remembered his dreams about them and said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see where our land is unprotected."

Genesis 42:10 "No, my lord," they answered. "Your servants have come to buy food.

Genesis 42:11 We are all the sons of one man. Your servants are honest men, not spies. "

Genesis 42:12 “No!” he said to them. “You have come to see where our land is unprotected.”
Genesis 42:13 But they replied, “Your servants were twelve brothers, the sons of one man, who lives in the land of Canaan. The youngest is now with our father, and one is no more.”

Why would they even mention Joseph? It had been 22 years now since they had sold him into slavery. There was Joseph's 13 years of slavery and prison plus the seven years of good harvest and now enough time of famine for Jacob's family to run out of food. We'll see why they mentioned Joseph in just a moment as we examine the...

We Factor # 2

Ungodly decisions can put you and others in serious bondage!

Genesis 42:14 Joseph said to them, “It is just as I told you: You are spies!

Genesis 42:15 And this is how you will be tested: As surely as Pharaoh lives, you will not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here.

Genesis 42:16 Send one of your number to get your brother; the rest of you will be kept in prison, so that your words may be tested to see if you are telling the truth. If you are not, then as surely as Pharaoh lives, you are spies! ”

Genesis 42:17 And he put them all in custody for three days.

Genesis 42:18 On the third day, Joseph said to them, “Do this and you will live, for I fear God:

Genesis 42:19 If you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay here in prison, while the rest of you go and take grain back for your starving households.

Genesis 42:20 But you must bring your youngest brother to me, so that your words may be verified and that you may not die.” This they proceeded to do.

Genesis 42:21 They said to one another, “Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen; that’s why this distress has come upon us.”

Genesis 42:22 Reuben replied, “Didn’t I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn’t listen! Now we must give an accounting for his blood.”

Genesis 42:23 They did not realize that Joseph could understand them, since he was using an interpreter.

Think about this...Joseph had spent his time as a slave and as a prisoner, but he had been free now for over seven years. His brothers, on the other hand, were still being held captive by what they had done! That's why they mentioned him. They were haunted by what they had done. I would rather have been in Joseph's shoes than his brother's shoes. Joseph had been a slave and a prisoner physically, but his brothers were slaves to their anger and prisoners of their guilt! They lived in fear. Sometimes mental and emotional prisons are worse than real prisons. People think revenge will be sweet, but it turns sour very quickly and sickens the very soul of a person.

Maybe you've been guilty of holding on to bitterness and grudges and have been unwilling to forgive. Maybe you've done things to hurt others in the past and have lashed out in anger. You might be here today and can relate to Joseph's brothers and you too have been in an emotional and mental prison. You might be wondering if there's any hope of being released or escaping

the prison you've built around yourself? There is and we'll see this in just a moment! Hang in there with me. It may seem harsh the way Joseph handled his brothers, but he wanted to see if they had changed any at all. He wanted to see if they were still eaten up with hatred towards him, and it wasn't easy for him. Listen...

Genesis 42:24 He turned away from them and began to weep, but then turned back and spoke to them again. He had Simeon taken from them and bound before their eyes.

Genesis 42:25 Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, to put each man's silver back in his sack, and to give them provisions for their journey. After this was done for them,

Genesis 42:26 they loaded their grain on their donkeys and left.

Genesis 42:27 At the place where they stopped for the night one of them opened his sack to get feed for his donkey, and he saw his silver in the mouth of his sack.

Genesis 42:28 "My silver has been returned," he said to his brothers. "Here it is in my sack."

Their hearts sank and they turned to each other trembling and said, "What is this that God has done to us?"

This takes us to a very important factor...

We Factor # 3

Your faith or lack of it has an impact on others!

Genesis 42:29 When they came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them. They said,

Genesis 42:30 "The man who is lord over the land spoke harshly to us and treated us as though we were spying on the land.

Genesis 42:31 But we said to him, 'We are honest men; we are not spies.

Genesis 42:32 We were twelve brothers, sons of one father. One is no more, and the youngest is now with our father in Canaan.'

Genesis 42:33 "Then the man who is lord over the land said to us, 'This is how I will know whether you are honest men: Leave one of your brothers here with me, and take food for your starving households and go.

Genesis 42:34 But bring your youngest brother to me so I will know that you are not spies but honest men. Then I will give your brother back to you, and you can trade in the land.'

Genesis 42:35 As they were emptying their sacks, there in each man's sack was his pouch of silver! When they and their father saw the money pouches, they were frightened.

Genesis 42:36 Their father Jacob said to them, "You have deprived me of my children. Joseph is no more and Simeon is no more, and now you want to take Benjamin. Everything is against me!"

Have you ever been in Jacob's shoes? He felt like everything was against him. Jacob, Joseph's dad, had missed so many opportunities to be a leader in his family. He had missed many opportunities to exercise his faith in God and show his children that faith. All he could see was bad because he only looked at the circumstances. Little did he know that God was about to show up! Here's an important thing to remember. God wants the best for you! But you have to

trust Him and allow Him to work through all the circumstances surrounding you. Your trust and faith in Him are all that stand between you and total defeat! Without faith and trust in God's plans, Jacob couldn't possibly see what was about to happen. What seemed at the moment to be the end of everything was actually going to be a new beginning! Reuben, if you remember, was the brother who had tried to rescue Joseph and return him to his father, but had been too late. He is willing to take a big step of faith. Here's what he says...

Genesis 42:37 Then Reuben said to his father, "You may put both of my sons to death if I do not bring him back to you. Entrust him to my care, and I will bring him back."

Genesis 42:38 But Jacob said, "My son will not go down there with you; his brother is dead and he is the only one left. If harm comes to him on the journey you are taking, you will bring my gray head down to the grave in sorrow."

He wasn't saying Benjamin was his only son, but the only one left from his marriage to his wife Rachel who he had loved so much. Jacob misses yet another opportunity to exercise faith in God. But what neither Jacob, nor Reuben or any of the other brothers could yet see was that God was using the dream He had given to Joseph, those many years ago, to save the whole family!!

Genesis 43:1 Now the famine was still severe in the land.

Genesis 43:2 So when they had eaten all the grain they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, "Go back and buy us a little more food."

Genesis 43:3 But Judah said to him, "The man warned us solemnly, 'You will not see my face again unless your brother is with you.'

Genesis 43:4 If you will send our brother along with us, we will go down and buy food for you.

Genesis 43:5 But if you will not send him, we will not go down, because the man said to us, 'You will not see my face again unless your brother is with you.'

Genesis 43:6 Israel asked, "Why did you bring this trouble on me by telling the man you had another brother?"

Genesis 43:7 They replied, "The man questioned us closely about ourselves and our family. 'Is your father still living?' he asked us. 'Do you have another brother?' We simply answered his questions. How were we to know he would say, 'Bring your brother down here?'"

Genesis 43:8 Then Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the boy along with me and we will go at once, so that we and you and our children may live and not die.

Genesis 43:9 I myself will guarantee his safety; you can hold me personally responsible for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him here before you, I will bear the blame before you all my life.

So now Judah takes a step of faith as well. You might remember that Judah was the brother who talked the others into selling Joseph rather than killing him. God was using everything in this story to help the members of this family to get their eyes off themselves and to realize just how important family really is! And this brings us to...

We Factor # 4

Sometimes you have to step out on faith even when your faith is weak!

Genesis 43:11 Then their father Israel said to them, “If it must be, then do this: Put some of the best products of the land in your bags and take them down to the man as a gift—a little balm and a little honey, some spices and myrrh, some pistachio nuts and almonds.

Genesis 43:12 Take double the amount of silver with you, for you must return the silver that was put back into the mouths of your sacks. Perhaps it was a mistake.

Genesis 43:13 Take your brother also and go back to the man at once.

Genesis 43:14 And may God Almighty grant you mercy before the man so that he will let your other brother and Benjamin come back with you. As for me, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved.”

At this point Jacob is desperate! His faith is very small. He knows that God Almighty can get them back home safely, but he's not confident that God will get them back safely and so he says...

Genesis 43:14... As for me, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved.”

Jacob has no idea that Joseph is still alive! He has no idea that God has been working and using everything according to His plan. Jacob had some unnecessary grief and pain because of his lack of faith. Have any of you ever worried and fretted over something only to realize later that God had things under control and was working and we just needed to trust Him? I know it's not always easy to exercise our faith when we are in the midst of extremely difficult situations, but we should learn from this story and maybe even from our own past experiences that God's got our back! And remember, it's not how big your faith is, but who you put your faith in that counts! When we make it all about how big and great and strong our faith is, the spotlight is on us! When things don't work out like we would have liked, then we feel responsible and guilty. When things go as planned we can inadvertently take the glory because we believe it was our great faith that accomplished things. I'm not being disparaging of faith! According to the writer of Hebrews...

Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

And we get this perspective from Jesus when He healed a demon possessed boy the disciples could not heal...

Matthew 17:18 Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed at that moment.

Matthew 17:19 Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, “Why couldn't we drive it out?”

Matthew 17:20 He replied, “Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

So you need faith! You need belief, but notice, Jesus said it only takes a mustard seed of faith to move a mountain. Why? Because it's our awesome and almighty God who responds to the mustard seed of faith and moves the mountain! But you need at least a mustard seed. And those are so tiny! And then, I can truly relate to this guy in the New Testament who asked Jesus to heal his son...

Mark 9:21 Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" "From childhood," he answered.

Mark 9:22 "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."

Mark 9:23 " 'If you can'?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes."

Mark 9:24 Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

Like I said, I can relate to that boy's dad. Sometimes I just have to admit...

"I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

When there seems to be no way, put your trust in God and let Him handle things. We must learn to trust that nothing gets through God's defensive line for us unless He allows it and if He allows it then there's some greater good that we cannot see, but we must trust God's wisdom! In our Joseph story, for his dad, Jacob, there sure seemed to be no good outcome to be had, and he was now in this position: I'm going to do what I can, but it's in God's hands now! If He doesn't step in, all hope is lost! But all hope wasn't lost because God had a reason and a purpose for everything that was happening. And so we'll spend the rest of our time on this last extremely important "we" factor...

We Factor # 5

The Dream was not the most important thing after all!

Watch how God, the ultimate dream weaver, causes His ultimate dream for Joseph and his family to come to reality...

Genesis 43:15 So the men took the gifts and double the amount of silver, and Benjamin also. They hurried down to Egypt and presented themselves to Joseph.

Genesis 43:16 When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Take these men to my house, slaughter an animal and prepare a meal; they are to eat with me at noon."

Genesis 43:17 The man did as Joseph told him and took the men to Joseph's house.

Genesis 43:18 Now the men were frightened when they were taken to his house. They thought, "We were brought here because of the silver that was put back into our sacks the first time. He wants to attack us and overpower us and seize us as slaves and take our donkeys."

Isn't it amazing how guilt can make you paranoid? Isn't it amazing the difference between Joseph and his brothers? Do you remember the characteristics that helped Joseph overcome his horrible circumstances? Three things. Joseph...

Depended on God's presence
Was Dedicated to his calling
Was Determined to be faithful

Things were so different for his brothers. They were scared out of their wits.
Listen...

Genesis 43:19 So they went up to Joseph's steward and spoke to him at the entrance to the house.

Genesis 43:20 "We beg your pardon, our lord," they said, "we came down here the first time to buy food.

Genesis 43:21 But at the place where we stopped for the night we opened our sacks and each of us found his silver—the exact weight—in the mouth of his sack. So we have brought it back with us.

Genesis 43:22 We have also brought additional silver with us to buy food. We don't know who put our silver in our sacks."

Genesis 43:23 "It's all right," he said. "Don't be afraid. Your God, the God of your father, has given you treasure in your sacks; I received your silver." Then he brought Simeon out to them.

You gotta love this. Even this pagan Egyptian could see God working in this story. Wait a minute, that's next week's sermon.

Genesis 43:24 The steward took the men into Joseph's house, gave them water to wash their feet and provided fodder for their donkeys.

Genesis 43:25 They prepared their gifts for Joseph's arrival at noon, because they had heard that they were to eat there.

Genesis 43:26 When Joseph came home, they presented to him the gifts they had brought into the house, and they bowed down before him to the ground.

Genesis 43:27 He asked them how they were, and then he said, "How is your aged father you told me about? Is he still living?"

Genesis 43:28 They replied, "Your servant our father is still alive and well." And they bowed down, prostrating themselves before him.

Genesis 43:29 As he looked about and saw his brother Benjamin, his own mother's son, he asked, "Is this your youngest brother, the one you told me about?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son."

Genesis 43:30 Deeply moved at the sight of his brother, Joseph hurried out and looked for a place to weep. He went into his private room and wept there.

Genesis 43:31 After he had washed his face, he came out and, controlling himself, said, "Serve the food."

Now I'm going to have to skip over a bunch of the story. You need to get your Bibles and read chapter 44 for yourself. It's amazing! Joseph tested them once more and it's nerve racking as you read the story. He sends them off again and plants his personal silver cup in Benjamin's luggage. He tells them Benjamin would not be allowed to go home, but when Judah makes an impassioned plea and tells Joseph that Jacob would simply die if they went home without Benjamin. Here's what happens...

Genesis 45:1 Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers.

Genesis 45:2 And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it.

Genesis 45:3 Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.

Genesis 45:4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt!

Genesis 45:5 And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.

Genesis 45:6 For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping.

Genesis 45:7 But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

Genesis 45:8 "So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt.

Genesis 45:9 Now hurry back to my father and say to him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don't delay.

Genesis 45:10 You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me—you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have.

Genesis 45:11 I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.'

Genesis 45:12 "You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is really I who am speaking to you.

Genesis 45:13 Tell my father about all the honor accorded me in Egypt and about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly."

Genesis 45:14 Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping.

Genesis 45:15 And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.

You see, God's extraordinary dream for Joseph was not that Joseph's brothers would bow down to him, but that Joseph would embrace them, kiss them and be reconciled to them! God's dream for Joseph and his family was for them to forgive one another, for them to love one another and for them to be together. So many times when we think of extraordinary dreams we think of worldly success, fame, fortune, popularity, great career achievement, Olympic gold medals,

superbowl rings, platinum albums, and owning lots of stuff, fancy, expensive stuff! Not that any of those things, in and of themselves, is bad, but God knows those things do not have the capability of bringing true happiness or lasting joy. He knows those things are temporary, not eternal. Joseph had risen to be the second highest official in all of Egypt, which would have certainly been considered a world power back then! But all of his power, fame, and fortune paled in comparison to his desire to be reconciled with his family! Jesus told His disciples this...

Matthew 6:19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

Matthew 6:20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

So what do you treasure most in this life? Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Do you most treasure your personal relationship with God and your walk with Him? Do you, after that, most treasure your personal relationship with your spouse, your children, your extended family, your friends and your brothers and sisters in Christ? Jesus also said this...

Mark 8:36 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?

James Dobson, a well known and respected Christian Psychologist once said this to a room full of pastors...

"What good is it for a pastor to win the whole world, yet lose his own family!"

God's extraordinary dream for Joseph was not just about Joseph, it was also about Joseph's family! God's dream for you includes your family. Never forget or neglect the "we" factor when it comes to God's dreams for you! If your dream priorities have neglected or left out the we factor, today would be a good day to ask God to help you get your priorities straight! Let's pray!