

Sermon Series: Extraordinary Dreams

Sermon Title: The Dream Killers

Sermon Text: Genesis 39:1-23

Sermon Presenter: Pastor Larry

Sermon Summary: This message highlights the beginning of Joseph's slavery in Egypt. Things happened to Joseph that would have caused many to despair and give up on their God-given dream. From a human perspective it seemed unlikely if not impossible for Joseph to ever advance from slave to ruler, especially in a foreign land. And then Joseph is falsely accused of seeking to be with his master's wife and thrown in prison. However, Joseph depended on God's presence, remained dedicated to his calling, and was determined to be faithful! As a result, Joseph was able to defeat the dream killers of discouragement, despair, despondence, doubt, anger, and temptation.

Full Sermon Notes

"Firm through the fiercest drought and storm. What heights of love, what depths of peace" Are you going through a drought or a storm in life right now? Jesus wants to be your comforter and your all in all! He's the One who can make you stand! If your dreams have been attacked by the dream killers, if your dreams are God-given Jesus can resurrect them. If they were not God-given, Jesus can replace them with way better dreams, extraordinary dreams! Let's pray and ask God to teach us how to overcome the dream killers. Pray!

Do you mind if we just get really, really practical for just a moment? People often ask this question... "How do I know if my dream is from God or not?" Let me just briefly address this question before we get started with our message today. Here's a little list and some Scriptures that you might find helpful with this question...

"How do I know if my dream is from God or not?"

Have you prayed about it?

Psalm 25:4 Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths.

Psalm 25:5 Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.

Have you consulted God's Word to discover His principles?

Psalm 119:9 How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word.

Psalm 119:10 I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands.

Psalm 119:11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Psalm 119:12 Praise be to you, LORD; teach me your decrees.

Have you sought Godly counsel?

Proverbs 1:5 let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance—

Proverbs 12:15 The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice.

Does the dream work with your God-given talents and abilities?

Romans 12:6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith;

Romans 12:7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach;

Romans 12:8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Does your heart desire what God desires?

Psalms 37:3 Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.

Psalms 37:4 Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Psalms 37:5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this:

Psalms 37:6 He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun.

If you are trusting in the LORD and delighting in the LORD then He will put the right desires in your heart! And when that's happening, you can ask Him to give you the desires of your heart and He will because He put those desires in your heart! And one last question...

Does the dream accomplish Godly purposes?

Proverbs 19:21 Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.

If you can answer YES to all of those questions, you can rest assured the dream is from God and you can pursue the dream with great effort and passion. As I mentioned last week, there's no shortage of opposition to a God-given dream and there are things Satan will use to try and kill the dream. If your dream is a God-given dream then it makes sense that God's enemy will seek to destroy that dream!

This morning we're going to look at the continuing saga of Joseph. It's a fascinating story and one that should give us some perspective on what is happening or what has happened in our own lives. God had given Joseph several literal dreams and Joseph didn't know exactly what they meant, but he began to understand they meant something. He may not have at first understood them to be from God, but he came to understand they were in fact from God, but as we talked about last week, Joseph's dreams collided with reality. He was hated by his brothers so they sold him into slavery. In case you weren't here last week and haven't had a chance to listen to or watch the message online, Joseph's dreams indicated that his brothers and even his

father and mother would someday bow down to him. So now you know one of the reasons the brothers hated Joseph. And so without further adieu, we pick up our story where we left it last week. Genesis chapter 39.

Genesis 39:1 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there.

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

Genesis 39:3 When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did,

Genesis 39:4 Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned.

Genesis 39:5 From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field.

Genesis 39:6 So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph's care; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate. Now Joseph was well-built and handsome,

Genesis 39:7 and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"

Genesis 39:8 But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care.

Genesis 39:9 No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"

Genesis 39:10 And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

Genesis 39:11 One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside.

Genesis 39:12 She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.

Genesis 39:13 When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house,

Genesis 39:14 she called her household servants. "Look," she said to them, "this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed.

Genesis 39:15 When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

Genesis 39:16 She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home.

Genesis 39:17 Then she told him this story: "That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me.

Genesis 39:18 But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

Genesis 39:19 When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, "This is how your slave treated me," he burned with anger.

Genesis 39:20 Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined...

Wow, can you imagine? Joseph just couldn't catch a break! How do you think you would have reacted if your family had sold you into slavery, then the slave traders took you to a another country and sold you again? Then you work so hard, given your situation, and do everything with excellence only to be falsely accused of a horrible crime and thrown into prison. What would you do? Would your dream survive the collision with reality? Would your faith survive? Could it? Abraham Lincoln told a story of a young man running to see his sweetheart when he stubbed his toe! The young man said, "I'm too big to cry about this, but it hurts too much to laugh!" What about Joseph? This was way more than a stubbed toe! How do you think he felt? You know he was facing the dream killers of devastation, discouragement, despondency, doubt, despair, disillusionment, and depression. I don't know about you, but I would have been all of these things! I might have even been tempted to be angry! Angry at my brothers! Angry at Potifar's wife! Angry at Potifar for believing her lies. Maybe even angry at God for allowing all these bad things to happen in the first place. Being angry is not always sinful and there are certainly things we should be angry about, like ungodliness, injustice, oppression, deception, there's a long list, but we must be so careful that we don't let our anger turn into sin. Paul gives us this caution:

Ephesians 4:26 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath,
Ephesians 4:27 nor give place to the devil.

If we let our anger turn into bitterness and resentment, then talk about a dream killer! What happens then is our anger becomes more about self and it can sabotage the dream, and hurt you and those around you! Now let me share with you a couple of insights.

Negative feelings are natural!

You know that Joseph had to be feeling some pretty negative feelings! How could he not! His dream seemed to be falling apart along with his life. In fact he later tells one of his fellow prisoners, this...

Genesis 40:15 For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon."

If you believe you have a God-given dream, and all of these things happened to you, it would be natural to feel devastated, discouraged, despondent, depressed, doubtful, angry, confused and ready to give up! Like Joseph, some of the Bible's other great leaders faced these kinds of dream killers. We'll be learning from many of them this year. People like Moses, King David, Elijah, Peter, Paul and even Jesus faced dream killers. We even have a very clearly stated

example in the Bible of the negative feelings that these dream killers can produce. It is written by the Psalmist Asaph. Talk about being honest about how you feel! He said...

Psalm 77:1 I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me.

Psalm 77:2 When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out untiring hands and my soul refused to be comforted.

Psalm 77:3 I remembered you, O God, and I groaned; I mused, and my spirit grew faint. Selah

Psalm 77:4 You kept my eyes from closing; I was too troubled to speak.

Psalm 77:5 I thought about the former days, the years of long ago;

Psalm 77:6 I remembered my songs in the night. My heart mused and my spirit inquired:

Psalm 77:7 "Will the Lord reject forever? Will he never show his favor again?

Psalm 77:8 Has his unfailing love vanished forever? Has his promise failed for all time?

Psalm 77:9 Has God forgotten to be merciful? Has he in anger withheld his compassion?
"Selah

When I teach Chaplains about dealing with people's emotions on a trauma scene I use this passage to teach that these kinds of feelings people go through are normal reactions to a very abnormal event that has occurred in their lives. When we face difficult situations it is healthy to understand that our initial reactions are normal, but it is also vital that we understand...

How we deal with the feelings needs to be super-natural!

The way you deal with all of these feelings will determine whether or not they become dream killers or dream builders. Your response can either make you or break you! You have to allow God to help you see things through His eyes, in other words supernaturally, by way of His Holy Spirit and through His Word! Joseph simply could not have made it without some supernatural help from God! While Joseph didn't pen the following words, I believe it helps explain how he must have dealt with his setbacks and how we must deal with our negative feelings supernaturally! Listen to the words of this song in the Bible written by the prophet Habakkuk...

Habakkuk 3:17 Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls,

Habakkuk 3:18 yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.

Habakkuk 3:19 The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights...

Such faith and trust! A supernatural response to dream killers. I've met people, however, who seek to deal with negative things in their lives with their own strength. When this doesn't work, it leads many to become despondent and to live in despair. Some live with constant discouragement. Some no longer even ask "why me?" They just expect to be victims of some cosmic conspiracy designed to get them. They give up on the dream and some even give up on life! Others become angry at everyone and everything! They are a ticking time bomb! Exploding

from time to time and hurting themselves and those around them. And here's a truth you need to hear, write down, and never forget.

There are serious consequences of not letting God help you handle the dream killers!

Joseph had decisions to make as he faced his dream killers. Would he continue to trust God or would he just throw in the towel, take matters into his own hands, and give up on the dream? If you allow the dream killers to take over your attitude, your emotions, and your thoughts, your whole life will be impacted including your physical well being as well as your spiritual well being! And when the most wicked of temptations come your way, you will be powerless to resist. The temptations Joseph faced from Potiphar's wife were non-stop...

Genesis 39:10 And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

Temptations to sin are designed to destroy the dreams and plans God has for your life!

Paul had some great wisdom in 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

1 Corinthians 10:12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

By the way, that is my life verse right there! I realized many years ago that if I don't keep my eyes on Jesus I could get stupid and so I live my life, not in fear, but with the knowledge that I'm human and in life there's always this cliff and when it comes to sin, we are all closer to the edge than we might think so it is vital that we realize our dependence on Jesus and His leadership, His guidance, His strength, His wisdom, and His Precious Holy Spirit to help us do the right things and not fall to temptation. Everybody faces temptation, but we don't have to give in to temptation! Paul goes on to say...

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

So it is possible to stand up under severe temptation! It is possible to keep on going even when it seems God's plan just hasn't worked out and you're tempted to give up on God's ways and just dive into the ways of the world! Joseph was surely tempted to do that! The dream killers can be overcome! Joseph overcame temptation and held on to his God-given dream and principles even in the midst of overwhelming circumstances! And in our Joseph story we discover his secrets for defeating the dream killers. The first thing we discover is that we...

Defeat Dream Killers through Dependence on God's presence!

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

It's important to note, God didn't keep Joseph from trouble, but was with him in his trouble. In other words...

God may not take you out of the storm, but He'll walk with you through the storm, and if God is with you, remember God is bigger than the storm!!

I love the way David put it in Psalm 139:7-12

Psalm 139:7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

Psalm 139:8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

Psalm 139:9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,

Psalm 139:10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

Psalm 139:11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,"

Psalm 139:12 even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

And I simply love the following passage as it is translated in The New King James Version of the Bible...

Zephaniah 3:17 The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing."

I know that God quieted Joseph with His love because our text tells us that...

Genesis 39:2 The LORD was with Joseph and he prospered,

The only way to defeat dream killers is to be aware of God's presence, to trust God's presence, and to depend on God's presence each and every moment of your life! You might say, "Pastor Larry, I want to be more aware of God's presence. How do I do that?" One of the things I do is to remind myself of the ways God has been with me in the past during difficult times and how He's been so faithful and never, ever failed me or forsaken me!! I think of the ways He has blessed me over and over with the resources I've needed to do what He's called me to do! And if I'm faithful to read God's Word He brings to mind some of those very truths and many times they match perfectly the situation I find myself in! I pray and ask God to be with me and to guide me in everything I say and do. The times I'm called out as a chaplain, as I'm on my way I tell Jesus how much I love Him and how grateful I am that I belong to Him, and that I'm trusting His Holy Spirit is with me! Folks, I don't go out with self-confidence and pride because I know I can't fix everything for everybody! If I thought I could, that kind of attitude would be prideful, dangerous and hurtful! But if I go out with the confidence that God has called me to be His representative in this situation and that He will keep His promise to never leave me or forsake me, then I know He'll do what He needs to do through me!

And another way I experience God's presence is seeing God in the natural revelation all around me and whenever I can I try to take a picture!

The second thing we discover from this part of Joseph's story is that we...

Defeat Dream Killers through Dedication to the calling!

Joseph was dedicated to do the best job he could do no matter what situation he found himself in. Joseph did what he could do and put the rest in God's hands so God was with him.

Genesis 39:3 When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did,

Genesis 39:4 Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned.

Genesis 39:5 From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field.

God blessed the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. Sometimes we have the attitude, "I'll work hard once the dream comes true! When I get the dream job, the dream position, the dream calling." However, God wants us to be dedicated in the little things, then He can trust us with the big things! Jesus said this in a parable...

Luke 16:10 "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.

And I love these verses in Paul's letter to the Colossians...

Colossians 3:23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,

Colossians 3:24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

People pursue all sorts of dreams in this life and work at them with all of their hearts. Some find success and some do not. Michael Jordan tried out for his high school basketball team when he was a sophomore. He didn't make the list. But he didn't quit. He would later be named the McDonald's All-American in high school. He said this about his dream...

"Whenever I was working out and got tired and figured I ought to stop, I'd close my eyes and see that list in the locker room without my name on it. That usually got me going again."

His motivation was to be on that roster, and he achieved it big time. But as I said, some find success and some do not. Vincent Van Gogh painted over 900 paintings and tried desperately

to make it as an artist, but he only sold one, maybe two paintings while he was alive. Nothing wrong with a dream to be a great basketball player or a great artist, and dreams surrounding your natural abilities may in fact be from God. But here's something to remember, when we commit our dreams to God, seek His will for our lives and do everything as working for the Lord we are promised an inheritance from the Lord as a reward! That means there are rewards in this life, but there are also eternal rewards that outlast our lives here on earth! And those rewards will be yours even if no one ever knows your name! God knows you and He will reward your faithfulness! And this takes us to our third and final thing we discover in our story today. We...

Defeat Dream Killers through Determination to be Faithful!

Even though Joseph was dedicated to his calling, and did his job with all of his heart, problems still came his way! Again, it seemed he couldn't catch a break! Joseph is seduced by Potiphar's wife. But Joseph remains faithful to his God, his master, and his self! Listen...

Genesis 39:7 and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"

Genesis 39:8 But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care.

Genesis 39:9 No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"

So Joseph was faithful to his master! Joseph was faithful to his God, and by being faithful to them he was being faithful to himself! Joseph could have followed the world's ways but chose not to! Listen to the way the Psalmist put it...

Psalm 97:10 Let those who love the LORD hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

Psalm 97:11 Light shines on the righteous and joy on the upright in heart.

Psalm 97:12 Rejoice in the LORD, you who are righteous, and praise his holy name.

When it comes to a God-given dream, you will face an unending parade of dream killers, so you must repeat today's instructions every time you face a dream killer. To defeat the dream killers you must have...

Dependance on God's Presence

Dedication to the Calling

Determination to be Faithful

Joseph repeated the instructions when he faced yet another horrible situation! Joseph goes from being a slave to being an inmate in prison! Listen to what happens when he goes to jail...

Joseph was Dependent on God's presence!

Genesis 39:20 Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined. But while Joseph was there in the prison,
Genesis 39:21 the LORD was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden.

Once again, it was God's presence that would get Joseph through the hard times and the seeming death of his God-given dreams.

Joseph was Dedicated to the calling, the dream!

Genesis 39:22 So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there.

Joseph's dedication to his calling, and his amazing servant heart was so powerful that even in prison he was elevated to head trustee very quickly! And then we see this repeated...

Joseph was Determined to be faithful!

Genesis 39:23 The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

Joseph was faithful no matter what happened and no matter what came his way. He just continued to depend on God's presence, was dedicated to his calling, and was determined to be faithful, trusting God with the dream fulfillment! You just gotta love that guy! He refused to let the dream killers destroy his God-given dream!

Don't you want to have that kind of persistent, consistent, fervent, and ardent faithfulness to God and His dreams and plans for your life! If you don't mind, I want to share with you how the preparation of this message has spoken to me personally!

One of the strongest dreams I have and have had for a number of years now, which I believe to be a God-given dream, is to see Northshore Church continue to have a powerful ministry in this community for many years to come! Amen! I've been in ministry since I was seventeen years old, and this year I'll be 63, so that's around 46 years if my math is correct. 20 plus years of that ministry has been right here at Northshore Church! I plan on continuing doing some type of ministry until the Lord calls me home, but about five years ago I told the leadership team and our staff this: "I don't want to be the guy that planted the church and stuck around long enough to kill it!" Now, Lord willing, you guys are going to have to put up with me for a few more years, but one of my biggest dreams in life is to transition well and help Northshore Church to continue strong and get even stronger and continue reaching people with the love of Jesus long after I'm gone. Amen? Because this church belongs to Jesus not the founding pastor! And as I shared last week, I didn't plant this church alone. Jay and Andrew were here on the Sunday we launched into Sunday Services, Palm Sunday, 2002! To be sure, Satan would love nothing more

than to destroy that God-given dream, but I'm asking each of you to pray for our church to continue its God-given mission of transforming worship, people and the world, and to achieve its God-given vision of raising up a healthy church that impacts the Northshore and ultimately the world with the life changing message of Jesus Christ! And the way we will do this is if we never forget our God-given purpose to see the One who gave His life for us exalted and the ones He gave His life for transformed! Folks that's loving The Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind and loving our neighbor as ourselves! If we continue to depend on the presence of God, stay dedicated to our calling, and remain determined to be faithful to our God given purpose, mission and vision, then we will defeat the dream killers and we will see our God sized dream come to reality. We will continue to raise up a healthy church that will impact the north shore and ultimately the world with the life changing message of Jesus Christ!

Let's pray!