

Sermon Series: Extraordinary Dreams**Sermon Title: Dream Collision****Sermon Text: Genesis 37****Sermon Presenter: Pastor Larry****Sermon Summary**

This message looks at Genesis 37 which is the beginning of the story of Joseph and his life. Some background is given concerning Jacob and Rachel, Joseph's parents. This sets the stage for the circumstances surrounding Joseph's brothers and their reaction to his God-given dreams. Of course, the brothers did not believe the dreams were from God and doubted they would ever come to pass. They even took steps to insure the dreams would never happen when their hatred of Joseph led them to sell him into slavery to foreign merchants. In other words, Joseph's dreams collided with the harsh realities of life. His dreams were rejected by others and the circumstances seemed to indicate the dreams would never be fulfilled. But our extraordinary God has ways to make His extraordinary dreams for us come to reality! The application comes when we analyze whether our dreams are God-given or self-generated. If God-given they're worth fighting for, and God will make a way! If they are not God-given, we wouldn't like the results even if they did come true!

Full Sermon Notes**The Dream Collision**

"Here I am to worship, here I am to bow down, here I am to say that You're my God!" We gather on Sundays as the Church, the Body of Christ. We gather to worship our awesome God who is the light of the world! Here's my question for each of us today: What happens when we walk out those doors? Are we willing to continue worshiping with our lives? Are we willing to bow down with our will, our wants and our dreams to God Almighty and His divine plans for our lives? An extraordinary God wants to take your ordinary dreams and turn them into something extraordinary with extraordinary and even eternal results. Let's pray and ask God to show us why we should allow Him to do just that! Pray!

I hope your 2022 is going well so far. Some of you have asked about the reading plans. They're starting today. It will be Scripture readings and a devotional five days a week. It will correspond with what many of our small groups will be studying. They will be studying various books of the Bible and the reading plans will follow that rather than the sermons on Sunday.

Okay, I'm full of questions today! How many of you have aspirations, hopes, dreams and plans for the future? How many of you used to have aspirations, hopes, dreams and plans for the future, but you gave up on them a long time ago? What happened? Every dream eventually collides with reality! The reality of roadblocks, detours, lack of resources, naysayers, complications, health issues, timing, age, and a host of dream killers, which we'll talk about next week. When your dream collides with reality, you have to determine if the dream is worth fighting for. You have to assess where the dream came from. And if you know the dream is God given, then you must decide whether or not you're willing to trust God to bring the dream to fulfillment! If the dream is not God-given, but rather an invention of your own desires and wishes

you may fight for and eventually achieve your dream on your own, but I can guarantee this, you'll be disappointed. Why? Because the dreams we dream up never bring the satisfaction or fulfillment we hoped for and can't compare with the dreams God has for us. It's not that all of your dreams are terrible and they may even be motivated because of your own special and God given talents and gift mix! But our dreams apart from God's blessing and direction are limited and will never achieve the satisfaction, purpose and magnitude that God's dreams for you would achieve! Here's the deal, when we are pursuing our own dreams, apart from God they may at first seem elusive so we spend our energy, time, and resources in pursuit of our dreams. And once achieved, we may discover they were not only elusive, but in fact were an illusion and not all what we had hoped for!

On the other hand, when our dream is God-given, it may seem to be elusive, but when we achieve the dream we will discover that God was using every roadblock, detour, lack of resources, naysayer, complication, health issue, timing issue, age, and even the dream killers to make it all come together! He'll use those things to bring the dream to reality. We will discover over the coming weeks how to determine if our dreams are God-given or not! The Bible has an amazing story of a dreamer named Joseph who had a God-given dream. I'm not sure he knew the dreams were God-given at the time he first had them, but they were definitely from God! They were literal dreams he had while he was sleeping. He was a teenager when this happened. Regardless, the dreams he had collided with reality with such force it's hard to imagine the dreams could survive such a catastrophic hit. I'm going to spend the first half of the message today on the details of our Bible story and the history behind it. I'll spend the second half, talking about how it applies to our lives today! Our story is found in the first book of the Bible, Genesis 37.

Genesis 37:1 Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan.

Jacob was Joseph's father. I need to give you just a little background here. Jacob, or Israel, as he was named by The Angel of The Lord, was the son of Isaac and the grandson of Abraham. Jacob's brother was Esau. Jacob had stolen the blessing of birthright from Esau and Esau wanted to kill him. Jacob's father, Isaac, told him to leave and live with his uncle Laban in Haran, (not Harahan), until Esau's anger subsided. When Jacob arrived in Haran he saw one of Laban's daughters, Rachel. He fell in love with her and wanted to marry her. Laban made a deal with Jacob. "Work for me seven years and I will give Rachel to you as your wife." Jacob did! Seven years. But the night of the marriage consummation, Laban sent his older daughter Leah. The next morning Jacob realized he had been deceived. Listen...

Genesis 29:25 When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn't I? Why have you deceived me?"

Genesis 29:26 Laban replied, "It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one.

Genesis 29:27 Finish this daughter's bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work."

Genesis 29:28 And Jacob did so. He finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife.

It was a very different world and culture back then and some of it was not so good! So why are the details of Joseph's dad's life important? You just need to know Jacob had several wives and several of them had children, but not Rachel, the one he had worked for, for 14 years. So when Rachel did finally have a child, Joseph, it was a big deal for Jacob. This detail plays an extremely important role in our story.

Let's read on... Genesis 37:2...

Genesis 37:2 This is the account of Jacob's family line. Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.

We are not told whether Joseph was an obnoxious younger brother trying to get them in trouble, or if he was just young, and innocently just told his dad what was going on! Regardless, God was going to use all of the circumstances of our story to eventually bring about some extraordinary things in Joseph's life. We get more important details in our text...

Genesis 37:3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him.

Right or wrong, I hope you at least understand a little more of why Jacob favored Joseph, Rachel's firstborn son. This caused no small problems for Joseph, and maybe being a bit naive he didn't see the problems coming. Listen...

Genesis 37:4 When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

Genesis 37:5 Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more.

Genesis 37:6 He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had:

Genesis 37:7 We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."

Genesis 37:8 His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

We all have dreams and some are just our minds working overtime at night and they can be a little trippy right. Not every dream you have at night is going to be a message from God, and you can be sure of this, anytime your dream contradicts a clear principle of God's Word, it's not God telling you to do something because He would never contradict His Word! And if you're constantly having bad dreams, try something I did years ago, I would read Scripture before going to sleep and follow this advice found in God's Word...

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Just a little practical application for dreams in general. Back in the Old Testament times, God seemed to use dreams more often to communicate with His people. Of course they had to decide whether their dreams were just the normal, natural phenomenon of dreaming or a special supernatural revelation from God. In our story today, the Bible doesn't tell us what Joseph's motivation was in telling his brothers his dream, but it could have just been an innocent recounting of a weird dream he had or he could have been a younger sibling trying to annoy his older brothers. We don't know his motive or whether or not he believed at the time the dream to be a message from God. What we do know is what his brothers thought. They assumed Joseph believed the dream was to become a reality and they were angry! We have the advantage of knowing the dream was in fact from God and we see Joseph's God-given dream colliding with reality. His brothers mocked him and their hatred grew. But again, Joseph is young and maybe just doesn't see it. Of course he is a dreamer, and sometimes dreamers are not deterred by reality.

Genesis 37:9 Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."
Genesis 37:10 When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?"

There's a lot of debate among scholars over whether Joseph's mom, Rachel had already given birth to Joseph's younger brother Benjamin and died from complications during the birth or was still alive. If she had already died, Leah would have assumed the responsibility of being the mother to Rachel's children and this would have been who Jacob was referring to. Regardless, Joseph's dream only serves to make his brothers even more spiteful of him...

Genesis 37:11 His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

Jacob was bothered by Joseph's presentation of his dream, but he was wise enough not to totally dismiss it. He was aware that God sometimes worked in mysterious ways, and sometimes used dreams to communicate with His people so he kept the matter in mind.

Genesis 37:12 Now his brothers had gone to graze their father's flocks near Shechem,
Genesis 37:13 and Israel said to Joseph, "As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I am going to send you to them." "Very well," he replied.

Spoken just like a true dreamer. "Sure, I'll go, no problem. I love adventures!" Impervious to the peril that awaited him at the hands of his brothers. Unaware his dream is about to have a serious collision with reality.

Genesis 37:14 So he said to him, “Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks, and bring word back to me.” Then he sent him off from the Valley of Hebron. When Joseph arrived at Shechem,

Genesis 37:15 a man found him wandering around in the fields and asked him, “What are you looking for?”

Genesis 37:16 He replied, “I’m looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are grazing their flocks?”

Genesis 37:17 “They have moved on from here,” the man answered. “I heard them say, ‘Let’s go to Dothan.’” So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan.

Genesis 37:18 But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him.

Genesis 37:19 “Here comes that dreamer!” they said to each other.

Genesis 37:20 “Come now, let’s kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we’ll see what comes of his dreams.”

Amazing the sick depths jealousy and hate can take people! But there was at least one brother who had not allowed the hate to totally consume him.

Genesis 37:21 When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. “Let’s not take his life,” he said.

Genesis 37:22 “Don’t shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don’t lay a hand on him.” Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father.

Genesis 37:23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing—

Genesis 37:24 and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

Genesis 37:25 As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt.

Genesis 37:26 Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood?

Genesis 37:27 Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.” His brothers agreed.

Genesis 37:28 So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

Genesis 37:29 When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes.

Some Biblical scholars think Reuben had left the camp and was trying to sneak to the cistern a back way and rescue Joseph, but the other brothers got to him first and sold him into slavery.

Genesis 37:30 He went back to his brothers and said, “The boy isn’t there! Where can I turn now?”

Genesis 37:31 Then they got Joseph's robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood.

Genesis 37:32 They took the ornate robe back to their father and said, "We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son's robe."

Genesis 37:33 He recognized it and said, "It is my son's robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces."

Genesis 37:34 Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days.

Genesis 37:35 All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. "No," he said, "I will continue to mourn until I join my son in the grave." So his father wept for him.

Genesis 37:36 Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard.

It's important to note Joseph dreamed of being exalted but he didn't dream of being sold into slavery or later being imprisoned. God, in His wisdom, doesn't always reveal the struggles we may endure on the way to dream fulfillment. If He did, we might be inclined to abandon the dream. Right now, some of you may be wondering what, if anything, this has to do with your life. If you are a follower of Christ and are seeking to follow the dreams and purposes God has designed for your life, be sure of this. There will be opposition! For one thing, Satan will not give you a free pass! And you know there will be those who will ridicule you for your faith in Christ and your God-given dreams. And to be clear, I'm talking about the kind of dreams that God has placed in your heart by way of the Holy Spirit in your prayer times and in your devotional and study time in God's Word. Now I'm not saying God will never use a dream at night to speak to your heart, He can still do that, but always remember God's Word and principles are to be our guide and measuring stick for all of our dreams and plans in life! There are numerous times when I will wake up in the middle of the night thinking about a Scripture or will have a sermon idea, or a song idea. I grab my phone and start writing things down, because if I go back to sleep I won't remember them. This sometimes wakes my wife and she will ask me if everything is okay, and did I get a text or a phone call. Because, in the middle of the night, as a pastor, when that happens, it's usually something not good. I'll say, "everything's fine, I just had a sermon idea!" The sermon I preached last week was one of those. "Going through the motions by faith." I woke up thinking about that statement and Hebrews 11. I read it on my Bible app in the middle of the night! So God can still use a literal dream while you're sleeping to speak to your heart. However, what I'm about to tell you has to do with a bigger picture of the dreams you have for your life. Let's see what lessons we can learn and apply from Joseph's literal dreams from God and apply them to our lives today!!

1. Your God-given dreams will collide with reality!

Sometimes the collision may be so serious it will threaten the dream's very survival! Joseph was just a young man when he had his dreams and while they were from God, Joseph didn't claim they were divine revelations from God and that he was going to rule over his family, but his brothers assumed Joseph thought that and was simply being arrogant because of his privileged

relationship with his dad, so they sold him into slavery. Joseph's dream had collided with reality! A little over 20 years ago God put a dream to plant a church, in Slidell, in a man's heart named Reggie Ogea, who was the Associational Missions Director for the St. Tammany Baptist association. That man is Andrew Ogea's dad. Reggie shared his dream with a friend of mine, Dr. Steve Echols, who shared it with me and asked me to pray about moving to Slidell, to start this church. God put the dream in my heart and my wife Debbie's heart. I called Jay Victory and shared the dream and he prayed about it and God put the dream in his heart and his wife Bronnie's heart. I met Andrew at his dad's house, heard him play guitar, and asked him to pray about coming to help us with the dream. He was 18 years old. He came to be our worship leader. Dr. Steve Echols told a fellow professor about the dream and Dr. Jeff Nave and his wife Darla caught the dream and joined our staff! Darla was at one time our children's minister. We started Bible studies in our home in July 2001, and then grew so fast that we had to find other places to meet and launched our Sunday services on Palm Sunday 2002, 20 years ago, in an old gymnastics building on Carey Street. On Palm Sunday 2004 we had our first service in 16,000 square feet of renovated space at the old Pottery World building in the old factory outlet mall on Old Spanish trail. Then on August 29, 2005, our God-given dream collided with reality. Katrina hit us with 5 ½ feet of water and the owners of the building voided our contract, kept the insurance money and we were homeless as a church. We had some decisions to make. When your God-given dreams collide with reality...

2. You must decide whether or not the dream is God-given or self-generated!

I remember driving back into town just two days after Katrina hit. I saw my flooded house in my abandoned neighborhood. It was surreal. And then I drove to the church building and saw the devastation. I was sad, shocked and confused! I remember praying to God saying, "We worked so hard Lord, and now it just seems like it's all gone. Why? I don't understand! Why would you give us the dream to plant a church in Slidell to just have it wiped off the map just a few years later." I then drove up to the Walmart on Natchez drive, which was closed, but they had opened their gas pumps. As I sat in that long line, helicopters were flying over bringing people out of the city to Northshore Hospital. It was at this time God reminded me that the storm did not catch Him by surprise and that the church was not a building but a people and that He had planted the dream in our hearts to plant a church in Slidell because Slidell was going to need the ministry of Northshore Church now more than ever and we didn't have to have a building to do ministry. Jeff Nave later pointed out to me that maybe one of the reasons God allowed the people who owned the building to prevent us from getting back into our building and fixing it, was that it was more important for us to spend our time helping hurting people rebuild their lives and their homes than working on our own building. What an insight! That's what we did!

What are some ways we can discern whether or not our dreams are God-given or Self-generated? Ask these important questions about your dreams...

Were they birthed in prayer?

Were they informed or inspired by Scripture?

Does the dream elevate God and others or self? (In Joseph's dream he is elevated, but God did the elevating, not Joseph.)

Who benefits the most if the dream comes to pass?

Two good passages come to mind in this regard...

1 Peter 5:5 ...“God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”

1 Peter 5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

Phil 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

Phil 2:4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

We will see in the coming weeks that Joseph humbled himself in his circumstances and became a willing servant to others and God exalted him and used him in very powerful ways.

3. If the dream is self-generated, you won't be happy even if the dream comes true!

Why is this so? As I've said, you may find self-generated dreams to be an elaborate illusion filled with destructive realities! Self-generated dreams follow self and become self-promoting, self-serving and selfish. Paul put it this way in his letter to the Galatians...

Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

Galatians 6:8 Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

Galatians 6:9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

If the dream is, God generated, God-given, and God glorifying then you need to remember the following things.

4. God's dreams are bigger and better than anything you could ever dream up!

I think I said that in a recent sermon, so it must be really important!!! Paul put it this way...

1 Corinthians 2:9 However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him” —

And there's this Old Testament classic I love...

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Jeremiah 29:12 Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.
Jeremiah 29:13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

5. If the dream is conceived by God, He'll bring it to reality!

Paul said this to the church at Philippi...

Philippians 1:4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy
Philippians 1:5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,
Philippians 1:6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

In other words, if God conceived it, He'll carry it and He'll complete it!

6. If your dream is God-given you have to trust Him with the details!

The path to fulfillment may not make sense to you! Sometimes it's hard to see how God's dreams for us could ever come to pass when we look at the reality of our present circumstances. What steps can we take to keep the dream alive during these times?

Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;
Proverbs 3:6 in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.
Proverbs 3:7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.

7. Remember God has a way of making good come from even the worst tragedies when we let Him!

We all know there's tragedy in this world. Many of you have examples of how God took something tragic and made good come out of it in your own life. We talked a little bit about that last week. You always hear Romans 8:28 quoted, but the two verses before it are so important to how verse 28 plays out...

Romans 8:26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.
Romans 8:27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.
Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

The Spirit helps us, and prays for us! That's powerful! And then in all things God works for the good of those who love Him and have been called according to His purpose! Joseph would have said amen to that! God knew what he was doing when he worked the circumstances in Joseph's life to exalt Joseph and as we will see in the coming weeks, this would eventually save Joseph's family and many others from a great famine. God used the circumstances and worked

the circumstances so all things would work for good and His ultimate will and plan. God didn't make Joseph's brothers do the bad things they did, but he used their hatred of Joseph to put Joseph in the places he would need to be to carry out and experience God's extraordinary dream!

So if you're suffering from a dream collision today, please know God wants to encourage you today. If the dream is from God He's got a plan to make it happen. Don't give up!! If your dream is self-generated, God takes trade-ins!! Trade the wrecked dreams of your life, for a God designed dream that is extraordinary and will change your life for now and for eternity!! God is able to take your wrecked dreams and replace them with His dreams for you, and He bears the cost of the lopsided trade. And it's an extraordinary cost. Would you like to know how much God was willing to pay for this transaction?

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

And for the details of the cost we go back to the ancient prophecy of Isaiah where the cost was foretold...

Isaiah 53:3 He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

Isaiah 53:4 Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.

Isaiah 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Jesus' dream to save the world and to change hearts and to turn people from their sins to God had a collision with the reality of the religious leaders' hypocrisy, love of power and hatred of truth! This collision ended up with Jesus on the cross. But when the dream is an extraordinary dream from God, God will do extraordinary things to make it come to reality. While it broke God's heart to see His Son suffer, it was in His will and plan. Isaiah said...

Isaiah 53:10 Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.

The only hope for you and me was for the Body of Jesus to be broken and His precious life blood to be poured out on the Cross. When we are willing to admit we have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, believe that Jesus died in order to pay for our sins, and then call on His Name, inviting Him into our hearts and lives, we can begin living the extraordinary life He wants us to have! If you've never done those things, I invite you to do that today! I'm going to pray for us and if you want to pray, asking Jesus to forgive you and to come into your life, then do that now. After we've prayed we'll observe the Lord's Supper. If you don't have a Lord's

Supper cup and wafer, feel free to go now to get one or simply lift your hand and one of our ushers will bring you one. Anyone who has accepted Jesus as their personal Savior is welcome to participate. And parents, for a child, if they've accepted Christ and have followed up with baptism to paint the picture of their faith, they are also welcome to participate. Pray!

Take your package and remove the bread. Jesus had gathered His disciples for a special meal just before His crucifixion!

Luke 22:19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

Remember the broken Body of Christ, pierced that you might be healed of the disease of sin.

Now take the cup and open it. Luke tells what Jesus did next...

Luke 22:20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

Jesus' life blood was spilled to cover your sin and my sin! We drink this to remember the cost of our forgiveness!

As our praise band plays this last song, let's worship our awesome Savior. I'll be in the back if anyone wants to pray with me.