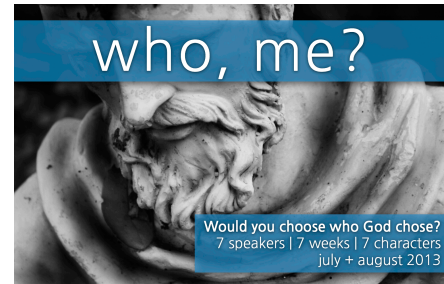


## Who, Me?

Joseph  
Reuben Kramer



### Introduction:

- The story starts by reminding us that Jacob, also called Israel, was living in Canaan with his family, including his 12 sons.
- Joseph is introduced as a young, 17-year old shepherd the second youngest of all the brothers.
- The story of Joseph is a rollercoaster ride that went back and forth from favor to betrayal.

### The Story:

- **Rollercoaster Hill #1 – Disowned** (Gen 37)
  - The first thing we learn about Joseph’s situation is that he is his father’s favorite child and that his brothers hated him because of it.
    - Not only was he the favorite, he was also given a beautiful robe by his father, something that none of the other brothers received.
  - Joseph also had been given prophetic dreams and the gift to interpret them. At the beginning of this story, Joseph dreamt twice that his brothers and his family would one day bow down to him.
    - These dreams made his brothers hate him even more than they already did.
  - Joseph was asked by his father to go check on his brothers as they were grazing the flocks out in the valley.
  - When he arrived his brothers saw him in the distance and started to mock him and plan a way that they could kill him and make it look like a wild animal did it.
  - Reuben, the eldest brother, tried to stop them by convincing them to throw Joseph in a hole and let him die there. That way they would not have blood on their hands.
    - This was really a way for Reuben to try to save Joseph once the brothers had left.
  - So the brothers stripped off his beautiful cloak and threw him in the hole.
  - Reuben’s plan went sideways when the brothers changed their mind and decided to sell Joseph to slave traders when Reuben was not around. They sold Joseph to the traders and they took him to Egypt to be sold.

- When Reuben found this out, he tore his clothes and joined his brothers in covering it up by making it look like a wild animal mauled Joseph. They told this to their father and kept the truth from him.
- **Rollercoaster Hill #2 – Deceived (Gen 39)**
  - After Joseph's takes the first drop on his rollercoaster ride, he starts to ascend when he is sold to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's' officials.
  - Once again the Lord begins to give Joseph favor and before long, Joseph had been entrusted with Potiphar's whole household.
    - So much so, that scripture says that Potiphar only had to think about what he had to eat.
  - Everything was going fantastic for Joseph and Potiphar's household until sin creeps in again.
    - This time the problem was something I know we all face, the problem of looking so good!
    - Genesis 39:6b-7
      - *Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, and after while his master's wife took notice of Joseph..."*
    - After refusing many requests to sleep with her, Joseph rollercoaster rides begins to take another descent.
  - Potiphar's wife ripped off Joseph's cloak and framed him by saying that he came on to her. She deceives' Potiphar and his household and this ends up getting Joseph put in king's prison.
- **Rollercoaster Hill #3 – Forgotten (Gen 40-41)**
  - For the third time, Joseph's ride begins to climb and God once again give him favor in the prison.
  - The warden started to trust Joseph and eventually gave him full responsibility over the prison. Joseph had free rein to do whatever he'd like with the things that he was responsible for.
  - This favor opened up the door for Joseph to oversee the king's chief cupbearer and chief baker when they were sent to prison.
    - When both the cupbearer and the baker had dreams, they went to Joseph for him to interpret. Joseph interpreted them correctly and in the end, Pharaoh hanged the baker and the cupbearer was restored to his position.
    - All this to say, the cupbearer promised to mention Joseph to the Pharaoh, but the cupbearer forgot.
  - Once again Joseph is given favor and once again he is betrayed and forgotten.
- **Rollercoaster Hill #4 – All Things Made Good**
  - The beauty about the 4<sup>th</sup> and final climb on Joseph's ride is that this one does not come down.
  - A couple years later, Pharaoh has a couple dreams and couldn't find anyone to interpret them. The cupbearer then remembers Joseph and recommends him to the Pharaoh.

- Joseph was able to interpret the dreams and through those dreams the Lord revealed to Pharaoh that there was going to be 7 years of plenty and then 7 years of famine.
- The Pharaoh decided to start planning ahead for this famine by storing all of their grain during the 7 years of plenty. He also made Joseph his right hand man and put him in charge of the project.
  - Joseph was not the 2<sup>nd</sup> most powerful person in the whole kingdom.
- By the time the famine had arrived, people from all nations came to Joseph to buy grain from the kingdom of Egypt. This ultimately drew Joseph's brothers to him because of their need for grain.
  - Over the course of a couple years and 2 visits from his brothers, Joseph finally revealed himself to them and they were reunited.
  - He was then able to provide for them, move them to the best land that Egypt had to offer, and be reunited with his father.

### Trust in God's Timing and Plan

- Joseph had every reason in the book to get mad at God for his situation and give up on God's plan.
- But instead, Joseph decided to continue to be faithful and loyal to God even though it may not have looked like God was even with Him.
  - God WAS with him (Genesis 39:3, 21) in the good and bad.
- Many times our plans look a lot different than God's plan. We need to learn to trust Him in those times when He doesn't seem to make any sense at all.
- It takes **patience, faithfulness, love and understanding** to get through those tough times.
- Deuteronomy 6:5
  - "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."
    - The love described here is like the love shown by a subject to his king.
    - It is a love of **loyalty and obedience**, regardless of one's circumstance.
- If Joseph had not trusted in God's plan and timing, he would have never be shaped and prepared to lead the whole kingdom of Egypt.
  - Not only that, but he would have not been able to guide all those people (including his family) through a period of great economic depression and turmoil.
- Smith Wigglesworth:
  - *"Great faith is a product of great fights. Great testimonies are the outcome of great tests. Great triumphs can only come out of great trials."*

### **Who, Me?**

- From the beginning Joseph knew that God has big plans for him.
- Every time Joseph was rejected, disowned, betrayed, forgotten and hurt, he found himself wondering how God could use HIM.
- I am sure he asked the question, WHO, ME? A few times on his journey.

### **Yes, You!**

- God has an incredible plan for your life and even in the times when you feel like you are the least likely candidate, He is still with you.
- Trust in Him, trust in His timing, trust that you are where you are right now for a reason. In the times when we feel like we cannot be used, He is preparing us for something. GOD IS WITH YOU.
- Press on, trust God, and the possibilities will be limitless!

### **Live Righteously No Matter Our Situation**

- It must have been so hard for Joseph to resist the temptation to do what was easiest and not what was best.
- Joseph's character along this journey is a great example for how we should live:
- Joseph lived with integrity.
  - He lived honestly in everything that he did.
  - He was trusted with a lot in Potiphar's house and the king's prison and he never lost that trust. Joseph could have taken advantage of the trust he was given, but he chose not to.
  - In all that he went through, he never gave up his integrity.
- Joseph lived with purity.
  - He resisted the temptation of Potiphar's and ran away from the situations that would cause him to fall.
- Joseph lived with humility.
  - Joseph had some incredible gifts that God has given him, but he never used them for his own glory.
  - When Pharaoh asked Joseph if he could interpret his dreams, Joseph said that it is not him who does it, but God who gives him the interpretation.
- *When life gets tough, we are tempted to throw away our values and give in to temptation. Let's learn from Joseph and live righteously in all situations.*

### **Understand the freedom that comes from forgiveness**

- Joseph was badly hurt by people he only did right to, even by people who were very close to him.
- The outcome of Joseph's story would have looked like it did if he did not practice forgiveness.
  - Not only did he have to forgive Potiphar's wife and the cupbearer, he had to forgive his brothers.

- Joseph could have easily had his brothers killed, jailed, or banned from access to grain.
  - But instead he chose to give them double the grain, money and even move them to the best land in Egypt.
  - NOT ONLY THAT, he chose to forgive them and embrace them with love, knowing that it was all in God's plan.
- Genesis 45:4-7
  - *"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! 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. For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. 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 45:14-15
  - *"Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him."*
- As soon as that forgiveness happened, everything started to fall into place and God's plan came to fruition.
- *Forgive each other as Christ has forgiven us! He will give us the strength and power to do it.*

### **Discussion:**

- How do you respond to trials in your life? How do you trust God's plan and timing during the highs and lows of life?
- Does your character change when things aren't going your way? How do we live righteously in all situations?
- Do you need to deal with some unforgiveness in your life? Is it holding you back from what God has for you?