

Genesis 37:12-36 – Judah

Man, Desperately Needs the Grace of God

Section 1: 37:12-17 – Past Sins + Current Sins = Future Sins

¹² His brothers had gone to pasture their father's flocks at Shechem. ¹³ Israel said to Joseph, "Your brothers, you know, are pasturing the flocks at Shechem. Get ready. I'm sending you to them." "I'm ready," Joseph replied. ¹⁴ Then Israel said to him, "Go and see how your brothers and the flocks are doing, and bring word back to me." So he sent him from the Hebron Valley, and he went to Shechem. ¹⁵ A man found him there, wandering in the field, and asked him, "What are you looking for?" ¹⁶ "I'm looking for my brothers," Joseph said. "Can you tell me where they are pasturing their flocks?" ¹⁷ "They've moved on from here," the man said. "I heard them say, 'Let's go to Dothan.'" So Joseph set out after his brothers and found them at Dothan.

Because of the past sins of Simeon and Levi, Israel is sending Joseph to check on his brothers in Shechem.

Because of the current sins Joseph's brothers separated themselves from him.

Because of past sins and current sins...left unrepented from...future sin is inevitable.

Sin is seeking to destroy Joseph, yet God turns that sin into salvation. Why does sin ultimately have no power to stop God's work? Romans 5:20-21, Philippians 1:6

Now...we maybe tempted to say: If sin can't stop God...then why avoid sin? Just live how you want and don't even bother trying to be holy. Well, God addresses that very question in Romans 6:1-2.

Discussion Questions:

- ❖ Why is unrepented sin so dangerous?
- ❖ Why does sin ultimately have no power to stop God's work in our lives?
- ❖ God will complete His work in your life. How does that truth impact you?

Section 2: 37:18-19 – Premeditated Sin

¹⁸ They saw him in the distance, and before he had reached them, they plotted to kill him. ¹⁹ They said to one another, "Oh, look, here comes that dream expert! ²⁰ So now, come on, let's kill him and throw him into one of the pits. We can say that a vicious animal ate him. Then we'll see what becomes of his dreams!"

Sometimes we sin passively and then there are times we commit premeditated sin. Outright malicious disobedience is obviously evil. There is no excuse we can imagine to justify Joseph's brothers in this moment.

Anytime we lie, gossip, slander, lose our temper, act hatefully, cheat, lust...it is outright malicious disobedience. Why? Because we know those things are wrong, therefore there is no excuse we can give. Too often we read verses like 18-19 and think...my sin isn't that bad. Which should remind us of Luke 18:11-12.

Our natural response to our own sin is justification. If we aren't careful, we can find ourselves softening our own sin while magnifying the sin of others.

Discussion Questions:

- ❖ What makes passive sin and premeditated sin similar and different?
- ❖ What is a biblical view of our personal sins?
- ❖ How should we respond to sin?

Section 3: 37:20-28 – Justified Sin

²¹ When Reuben heard this, he tried to save him from them. He said, “Let’s not take his life.” ²² Reuben also said to them, “Don’t shed blood. Throw him into this pit in the wilderness, but don’t lay a hand on him”—intending to rescue him from them and return him to his father. ²³ When Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped off Joseph’s robe, the long-sleeved robe that he had on. ²⁴ Then they took him and threw him into the pit. The pit was empty, without water. ²⁵ They sat down to eat a meal, and when they looked up, there was a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were carrying aromatic gum, balsam, and resin, going down to Egypt. ²⁶ Judah said to his brothers, “What do we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? ²⁷ Come on, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay a hand on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh,” and his brothers agreed. ²⁸ When Midianite traders passed by, his brothers pulled Joseph out of the pit and sold him for twenty pieces of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took Joseph to Egypt.

- (1) Reuben in on a secret mission.
- (2) Judah is reasoning the brothers out of killing Joseph.
- (3) Ismael and Isaac’s descendants in conflict again.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ Why is it dangerous to justify ANY sin?
- ❖ What are some things we can do to keep from justifying sin so much?

Section 4: 37:29-36 – Covering Up Sin

²⁹ When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes. ³⁰ He went back to his brothers and said, “The boy is gone! What am I going to do?” ³¹ So they took Joseph’s robe, slaughtered a male goat, and dipped the robe in its blood. ³² They sent the long-sleeved robe to their father and said, “We found this. Examine it. Is it your son’s robe or not?” ³³ His father recognized it. “It is my son’s robe,” he said. “A vicious animal has devoured him. Joseph has been torn to pieces!” ³⁴ Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth around his waist, and mourned for his son many days. ³⁵ All his sons and daughters tried to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. “No,” he said. “I will go down to Sheol to my son, mourning.” And his father wept for him. ³⁶ Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and the captain of the guards.

One of the great lies of mankind is “as long as I don’t get caught” or “as long as no one gets hurt”. The idea that as long as you get away with something you can move on like nothing ever happened. Sin will ALWAYS come to collect.

Jesus is our only hope against sin. Some of the tools Jesus gives us to battle sin are forgiveness and repentance.

Discussion Questions:

- ❖ Does covering up sin ever work out long term...NO. Then why do we find ourselves trying to cover up our sins?
- ❖ How can covering up your sins be detrimental to yourself and those around you?
- ❖ What practical tools does God give us to battle sin?