

Joseph Is Sold By His Brothers

Genesis 37:3-36

MEMORY VERSE

MATTHEW 5:11

"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake."

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Baby food jars, 1/4 cup of warm water for each jar, 6 teaspoons of salt for each jar, paint brushes, and black or dark red construction paper.

A piece of embroidery or cross-stitch.

As many 1 1/2" wooden blocks and sheets of tissue paper as the number of children in your class, a sheet of foam, stamp pads in various colors, and glue.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Evaporating Paint

You will need baby food jars, 1/4 cup of warm water for each jar, 6 teaspoons of salt for each jar, paint brushes, and black or dark red construction paper. Mix the water and salt in the jars and have the children paint pictures on the paper then let them dry. When the water evaporates, it will leave sparkly pictures.

Point out to your class that sometimes we can not see the beauty in a situation until later, "after the water has dried." In today's lesson, we are going to learn about Joseph who had to trust that the Lord was doing something good in his life even when it looked like things were pretty bad. **God is working a wonderful plan for our lives, even when it does not seem like it.**

LESSON TIME!

Sometimes, circumstances in our lives may seem unbearable. At times we may wonder why we must suffer so greatly. Although we may not understand why certain things happen to us, we can be confident that our heavenly Father loves us and is working out His good plan in our lives. **God is working a wonderful plan for our lives, even when it does not seem like it.** If any one could question God about the circumstances he was facing, it would have been Joseph. Things were looking pretty bad, and then things got worse.

GENESIS 37:3-4

Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors.

But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

Israel favored Joseph. He made him a tunic (coat) of many colors. In those days a coat with sleeves represented authority. This favoritism created jealousy and resentment among Israel's other children.

The Bible teaches that we should not show any partiality towards others. As brothers and sisters in Jesus, we need to love one another the same. Favoring one person over another will lead to hurt feelings. Let's be careful to love one another without partiality; for Jesus loves us without partiality!

GENESIS 37:5-11

Now Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more.

So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed:

"There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."

And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me."

So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?"

And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

The Lord gave Joseph two dreams that revealed his future. Through these two dreams, God revealed that Joseph would one day rule over his family. There would come a day that Joseph's brothers would bow down to him. Such a thought was too much for Joseph's brothers who already resented the favoritism Joseph received.

While the dreams made Joseph's brothers angry, Israel pondered these dreams with the understanding that God's ways were not as man's ways, for he too had been called to lead as the younger.

Joseph received assurance from God through the two dreams. God had a plan for his life. Later on Joseph would have to keep his eyes on the Lord through some very difficult circumstances.

Trusting in God's Word, alone, gives us the strength, peace, and hope we need to hold fast in the midst of difficult times. We can rest, because we *know* He will work everything out for good in our lives (Romans 8:28).

GENESIS 37:12-17

Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.

And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am."

Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.

Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?"

So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding their flocks."

And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.

Joseph displayed a willing and obedient heart to his father; for he faithfully followed his father's command to go to his brothers, knowing he would be taunted, mocked, and hated.

Like Joseph, Jesus came as a willing and obedient servant to the Father, though he knew he would be rejected, mocked and hated. Joseph and Jesus are examples for us to be obedient in what we are asked to do, even when it is difficult. **God is working a wonderful plan for our lives, even when it does not seem like it.**

GENESIS 37:18-22

Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him.

Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming!

"Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"

But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him."

And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"--that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.

Joseph's brothers became so consumed with hatred and envy that they plotted together to kill him. The wickedness they harbored in their hearts finally came out in full. Reuben planned to rescue Joseph; so he convinced them to not kill him, but rather to throw him into a pit.

Hatred is a very strong emotion. As Christians we are not to hate anyone. Jesus compared the hatred that we can have in our hearts to murder (Matthew 5:21-22). In Ephesians 4:31, we are told, "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice."

As we will see in our story these brothers let their anger get the better of them. They ended up causing great pain for Joseph, Israel, and themselves. **God is working a wonderful plan for our lives, even when it does not seem like it.**

GENESIS 37:23-28

So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him.

Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it.

And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt.

So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood?"

"Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh." And his brothers listened.

Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

Joseph's brothers had grown so hardhearted they did not even respond to his cries from the pit but planned to let him die the slow, tortuous death of starvation and dehydration. However, God spared his life, and he instead was sold as a slave into a strange, foreign country.

Beauty from Chaos

Bring a piece of embroidery or cross stitch. Show the children the back of the piece and ask them if they think it is beautiful. Then turn the piece around and show them the beautiful picture or pattern. Ask them to describe the difference of the front and the back.

Explain that sometimes we only see the "back" of our lives, but God always sees the "front," and it's something beautiful that He is creating. **God is working a wonderful plan for our lives, even when it does not seem like it.**

Through trials and difficult times, we can be preserved by faith in our Maker; for we know He will work all things out for our good. God knew Joseph needed to suffer for righteousness sake before becoming a leader just as God knows what is best in each of our lives. We can trust in Him no matter what the circumstances, because God is in control--He sees our lives as a tale that has been told.

GENESIS 37:29-35

Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes.

And he returned to his brothers and said, "The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?"

So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood.

Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, "We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?"

And he recognized it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces."

Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days.

And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

Joseph's brothers lied to their father, showing him Joseph's tunic soaked in goat's blood. Here we see the same deceit Israel had used on his own father earlier in his life. His sons' hatred and deceit caused unbearable pain for Israel. Yet, through it all, even Israel's pain was among the things that would work together for good.

Note, the trap of lies and deceit: once a lie is told, another lie is often necessary to keep from getting caught, then another lie to cover the additional tracks of deception. Do you see the picture? What a mess! Eventually, our sin will be found out. Be warned! Often one sin leads to another. If and when we do sin, we need to pray, confessing it to the Lord immediately; then, in the case of a sin like deception, we must make it right with the person we have hurt.

GENESIS 37:36

Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.

Joseph had been sold as slave and would be starting a new phase in his life. There were probably many times Joseph thought that things were not fair or right in his life. Yet, through all the reviling and persecution, he would be blessed; for he was in the Lord's will, placed perfectly in His eternal plan. It is amazing that even when life seems out of control, God is still in control. In coming lessons, circumstances will get even "worse" for Joseph. Yet, God's promises remain true; everything will work for good according to His plan.

Being a Christian and embracing Jesus as Lord does not mean we will not encounter difficult circumstances. God has called each of His children to be "conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29). We will face trials in our lives just as Joseph did through which God will build character and work His eternal purposes. Because we are Christians and Jesus is our Lord, however, we can be confident that no matter what may happen, "All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). **God is working a wonderful plan for our lives, even when it does not seem like it.**

Home-made Rubber Stamps

You will need 1 1/2" wooden blocks, a sheet of fun foam, stamp pads in various colors, glue, and sheets of tissue paper. Let the kids use their imaginations to cut out shapes from the foam that will fit on the wooden blocks. Have them glue the foam to the blocks, stamp the blocks on the pads, and decorate the tissue paper into "custom" wrapping paper.

Explain that little, funny looking pieces of foam, when assembled with wooden blocks to make stamps, can make a beautifully decorated and useful wrapping paper out of ordinary tissue paper. Sometimes, we do not see how our lives will be all put together, but God is working a wonderful plan for our lives, even when it does not seem like it.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to trust the Lord no matter the circumstances. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.