

JOSEPH—A YOUNG MAN WHO REFUSED TO DO WRONG

Presented by

Justin Schumacher

In Blake's sermon, "Daniel—A Young Man Who Refused to do Wrong," he mentioned that there are many interesting stories in the Bible that help us understand how God wants us to live. He told you about a young man who refused to do something he knew was wrong. I would like to tell you about another young man who refused to something he knew was wrong. Here is what happened.

A man by the name of Jacob had twelve sons. The next-to-the-youngest of those sons was a 17-year-old boy by the name of Joseph. Genesis 37:3 tells us that Jacob "loved Joseph more than all his children." This made his eleven other brothers jealous and angry. So, one day when their father was not around, they sold Joseph to some slave traders from the land of Midian. The Midianites eventually took Joseph to Egypt and sold him to a powerful man by the name of Potiphar, who worked for the pharaoh. Genesis 39:3-4 tells us that Potiphar "saw that the Lord was with Joseph and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand. So Joseph found favor in his sight. Then Potiphar made him overseer of his house, and everything he had he put under his authority." Joseph had gone from being a slave to being in charge of Potiphar's entire house! Things were **really** looking up for Joseph. But all of that was about to change.

Potiphar was married to a woman who was not very nice. In fact, on several occasions when Potiphar was not around, she tried to get Joseph to commit adultery with her. But Joseph always refused. In fact, in Genesis 39:9 we see Joseph saying to this evil woman, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Later, on another occasion, Potiphar's wife physically grabbed hold of Joseph. But Genesis 39:12 tells us that Joseph "left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside." Joseph did not **walk away from sin; he ran from it!**—just as we today should do. This is why James 4:7 instructs us, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." To his credit, Joseph resisted Satan's temptations with all his might. But the story does not end there.

When Joseph ran away, it made Potiphar's wife very angry. When her husband returned home, she showed him the coat that Joseph had left behind when he ran away from her. Then she lied, and told Potiphar that it was **Joseph** who wanted **her** to commit adultery with **him!** Genesis 39:20 tells us that Potiphar believed this lie and became angry—so angry, in fact, that he had Joseph thrown into prison! Poor Joseph; he did what was right, yet he had to suffer anyway.

Does that statement—"he did what was right, yet he had to suffer anyway"—describe anyone else in the Bible whom you know very well? It should immediately cause you to think of **Jesus Christ!** The writer of the book of Hebrews said that Jesus "was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). In 1 Peter 2:22 we are told that Jesus "committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His

mouth.” In fact, John 8:29 records Christ as saying, “I always do those things that please My Father.” Yet what happened to Christ? First the Jews rejected Him. Then they convinced the Romans to crucify Him! Pilate, the Roman ruler in Judea, was forced to admit, “I find no fault in this man” (Luke 23:4). King Herod interviewed Christ after Pilate had finished with Him, and admitted that “nothing deserving of death has been done by Him” (Luke 23:15). Yet Pilate still had Christ beaten, mocked, and crucified—in spite of the fact that everyone knew that Jesus had done nothing wrong.

Joseph had done nothing wrong either. Yet he was stripped of his position as the chief of Potiphar’s household, thrown into prison, forgotten, and left for dead. Just like everything seemed to be hopeless for Daniel when he was thrown into the lions’ den, so everything also seemed hopeless for Joseph when he was thrown into prison. But just as God saved Daniel from the mouths of the lions because “there was no error or fault found in him” (Daniel 6:4), so God also saved Joseph from dying in prison because “the Lord was with him; and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper” (Genesis 39:23).

Eventually, Joseph was removed from prison so that he could interpret one of Pharaoh’s dreams (Genesis 41:1-36). As a result, Pharaoh said to Joseph, “You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you. I have set you over all the land of Egypt” (Genesis 41:40-41).

What happened because these two young men refused to do wrong? As a result of Daniel’s faithfulness King Darius said, “I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom **men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel**. For **He is the living God**, and steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall endure to the end” (Daniel 6:26). Because of one young man’s refusal to do what he knew was wrong—people all over the land came to know about the true God.

And because Joseph refused to do what he knew was wrong, he ended up being second in command in the land of Egypt. No one except Pharaoh had more power than Joseph. And because of that, many years later when the Israelites came to Egypt to look for food during a terrible famine, Joseph was able to use his power to save God’s people by providing food for them. As a result, the Israelites—the people through whom the Messiah would one day come—were able to survive the famine, endure for many more years, and ultimately give birth to Christ so that He could “take away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). How amazing is **that**?!

Did Daniel **want** to be tossed into a lions’ den? No. Did Joseph **want** to be taken away from his family, sold into slavery, and thrown into prison? Of course not! Yet even when bad things were happening to these two young men, they refused to give up their faith in God. They must have known the same thing that the apostle Paul knew when he said in Romans 8:28, “All things work together for good to those who love God and who are called according to His purpose.” We would do well to remember that today,

wouldn't we, when things don't go well for **us**? We, like Daniel and Joseph, **must never give up**—because God may have big things planned for us just as He did for these two young men. And what a thrilling thought **that** is!

What about you? Have you refused to do what you know is wrong? And have you done what you know to be right? If you are not a Christian, but have been taught what you need to do to become one, we would be happy to help you with that today so that you can be forgiven of your sins. Or, if you are a Christian who needs the prayers of the church for any reason, we would like to help you, too. If we can do anything at all to help you, we would like to do it. Please let us know what we can do as we stand and sing.