*Introduction*

Over the last few weeks we have been looking at the subject of faith, and in particular we are looking at how to live by faith.

We have seen, so far, the difference between Faith and sight, faith and Hope, and we have been looking at the fruit of faith and how it needs to be a personal characteristic of each of our lives.

Most importantly, last week we saw that our faith is only good and productive due to and in the faithfulness of God Himself.

We trust in the Trustworthiness of our heavenly Father.

We could easily get despondent over this subject and feel inadequate in our faith, we often think that God does not hear us, or that he never answers the way we want Him to, or he doesn't answer us at all.

So this morning, we are going to look at the life of Joseph, whom I would suggest, is a great man of faith.

We will see, that despite his circumstances that God was ALWAYS with him, that he never wavered in his trust in God and that God used him to do a great work of salvation just at the right time.

**An overview of Joseph's life.**

Humanly speaking, we could say that Joseph was a spoiled brat. He was adored by his father, who treated him differently to his other brothers.

He loved to Lord it over the rest of his family and must have loved telling his dreams to the family.

I'm sure it would have made great Saturday night TV - "Joseph the dreamer"!!!!

He was over protected by his father and because of the way he was, perhaps we could say he was over confident and arrogant, the other brothers disliked him.

One day, the other brothers whilst out on the hillside watching their sheep, saw him coming with their lunch, and they hatched a plan.

"Lets do away with this upstart" They wanted to kill him.

But thanks to the intervention of the eldest brother Reuben, who made them put him in a pit, they did not kill him but sold him to some passing Ishmaelites or Midianites (one and the same) for 20 pieces of silver.

They took him to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar. He was a popular man in Potiphar's house, He was good at everything he did, he could obviously be trusted and was made overseer of Potiphar's house.

Potiphar's wife, on the other hand, could not be trusted, at least not with Joseph, she wanted to have an affair with him.

But Joseph resisted and was eventually set up by the jilted wife and put in prison - but not just any old prison (Kings prisoners prison 39:20).

His life doesn't look good so far - does it.

In prison, he flourished and became in charge of the prison and whilst there, two of Pharaoh's official's were thrown in prison - the Cup-bearer and the baker.

Both of these men had dreams and Joseph interpreted them for them, he said that the cup bearer would be re-instated and the baker would die. That is what happened.

Now we must remember that Joseph has done nothing wrong, he asks these men to remember him when they get out of prison, but they both forgot, one didn't have much choice in the matter, but the other just forgot, until.....

2 whole years later, Pharaoh had some dreams which he didn't understand. The cup-bearer remembered that Joseph could interpret the dreams and told Pharaoh.

He was summoned to Pharaoh, interpreted the dreams, was placed over the whole of Egypt as Prime Minister and got Egypt prepared for the coming 7 years of famine.

As a result of the famine, Josephs family were brought down to Egypt to live and prosper in a place called Goshen and were saved from starvation and death.

I have deliberately left parts of the story out because of time, but I encourage you to go home and read it all, its only a few chapters, will take you about 30 minutes.

Now Joseph is often likened to being a 'type' of Christ', his life was very similar to that of Jesus - something else for you to look at, which you will find very interesting.

Having said that, was Joseph just a normal man, with a normal life? Yes he was.

Joseph did things wrong in the home, wasn't liked by the rest of the brothers - that's normal isn't it?

He got treated badly by his brothers and things happened to him that were unjust and wrong - but that happens to us as well doesn't it?

Eventually, he got recognised for his talents and was promoted to the second highest position in the land. Again that happens to normal people as well.

He became a great man, used by God, to save his own family and the rest of the world from death through starvation - he brought salvation.

SO... lets answer our questions.

***1.despite his circumstances was God ALWAYS with him,***

Joseph was hated by his brothers who were going to kill him. But God was with him and Reuben and Judah both protected him from death

***Gen 37:21-22 When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. “Let’s not take his life,” he said. “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.***

***26-27 Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? 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.***

When he gets to Egypt we read:

***Gen 39:2-3The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did,***

***Gen 39:20-23 But while Joseph was there in the prison, the Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph’s care, because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.***

Now after the cup bearer and the baker were taken out of prison, 2 years passed, which we hear nothing about. Did that mean the God had left him, NO! Did it mean that Joseph was just sitting around doing nothing - NO!,

Joseph would have kept on being Joseph, excelling at what he did. Not becoming disheartened. Because God was working out His purposes, not Josephs.

Even in the naming of his children, Joseph acknowledges Gods hand upon him

***Gen 41:50-52Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On. 51Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh[***[***a***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+41%3A50-52&version=NIV#fen-NIV-1247a)***] and said, “It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father’s household.” 52The second son he named Ephraim[***[***b***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+41%3A50-52&version=NIV#fen-NIV-1248b)***] and said, “It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering.”***

Through all the problems he had been going through, God was with HIm.

***2. Did he waver in his trust in God?***

The simple answer is No. Joseph, if we read between the lines, was a man of integrity and honesty, hard working, able, skilled. In those 2 years that we know nothing about, I am going to suggest to you, that his heart was all out for God. That he never got down, complained or dropped his standards. Why? because He knew that God was with him, because of what he had already been through.

***3.Did God use him to do a great work of salvation just at the right time.***

 All through Joseph's life, God was steering him, and those around him, to get him to where God wanted him to be.

I am sure that, even trusting God, he would have asked the normal questions we ask:

What was that all about? Why did that happen? What was the purpose of that?

We ask those questions don't we?

God uses ordinary and extraordinary circumstances in order to get us where we need to be and to do what He wants us to do.

That's how it was with Joseph.

Gods plan for Joseph, took somewhere around 30 years. We cannot be sure what age he was when he left his Dads house with the brothers lunch, lets say around 15years old? He was 30 years old when he came before Pharaoh (Gen 41:46) and then there were 7 good years followed by 7 bad years, I know that =29 BUT....

Gods timing is perfect.

God used him, throughout his life, but with the end goal being the saving of a family and the establishing of a nation.

*Conclusion*

The life of Joseph teaches us how to live by faith, he is an example to us.

Joseph went through some pretty tough times, he was hated by his family, disowned and looked upon as dead. He was placed into slavery and prison when he should not have been either.

But God was always with him, guiding him and protecting him so that he would be where God wanted him to be in order to get the job done.

As a believer in Jesus Christ, you have already started on the road of faith. You may be going through some tough times, physically and mentally, as well as spiritually, but Gods word says

***Heb 13:5Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”***

*You are not on your own.*

Last week we found that God is trustworthy, He NEVER goes back on his word.

Paul's life wasn't smooth either was it, yet after all he had been through he said

***Phil 3:8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ***

Do we trust Gods word for our everyday lives, no matter what comes at us.

His word says

***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.***

***2 Cor 9:8 And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.***

Put your trust in God, start with the everyday things, and as you see Gods hand at work in your life, you will begin to trust him for the bigger things.

Its not the quantity of faith we have to have, but the quality of the one you put your faith in -

***Matt 17:20He replied, “Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”***

Let's start living by faith, and see what God will do in us and through us. Amen