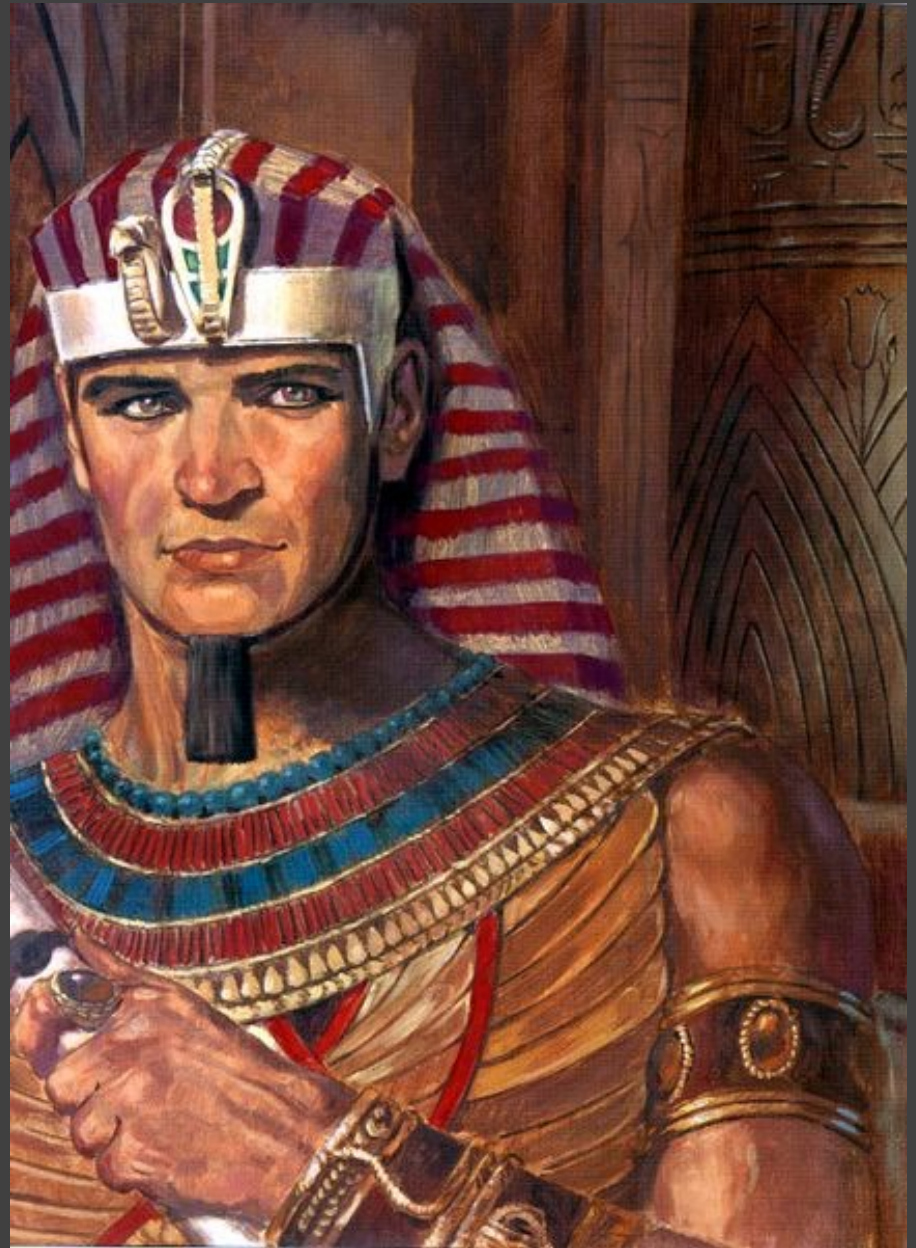


The Man
Who Dared
to Dream
Again—
Joseph



GENESIS 45:1-7

¹ Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, “Have everyone leave my presence!” So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers.

² And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh’s household heard about it.

³ Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still living?” But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.

⁴ “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! ⁵ 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. ⁶ For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will not be plowing and reaping. ⁷ But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.”

- Dreams are powerful.
- They give life. They give hope. They give us compelling, magnetic images of what can be.
- All of us have dreams. But we are often caught in the morass of disappointment, frustration, and hopelessness.
- Life is filled with broken dreams, shattered plans, and lost hope.

- The *loss of a job* can shatter dreams of financial security, professional advancement, and comfort.
- A *divorce* can shatter dreams of home, family, and a loving relationship.
- A serious *illness* can shatter dreams of a vibrant, active life full of accomplishment.
- The *death* of a loved one can shatter dreams of companionship and years of gracefully growing old together.

So what do you do when your dreams are broken, when your plans fail, when immovable barriers stand in the way of your vision for the future?

- You can *give up* and say, “It’s not worth the effort,” and then just be and do the least you can with the rest of your life.
- You can *grow bitter* and lash out at God, society, and others, living a life that's sour to you and all you touch.
- You can *live in the past*, the good old days, and miss God's present and future blessing and victory.
- Or, you can *dare to dream again*.

- This morning we look at a young man who more than once saw his dreams shattered, but who did not stop dreaming, and in the end saw God fulfill all his dreams beyond his wildest imagination.

- Joseph was the *favorite* of Jacob's 12 sons, born to him in his old age by his beloved wife Rachel, who had since died. The famous *coat of many colors* was no doubt only one of many gifts lavished upon the boy.



- ***Jealous*** of the favored position he held with their father and annoyed by his grandiose dreams, his brothers hated him. So much so, that when they met him they couldn't even bear to say "hello," "how are you," or "how 'bout them dogs." The thing they hated most were Joseph's ***dreams*** that one day he would rule over his brothers and that all of them would bow down before him.



- When he was 17, his father sent him to check on his brothers who were grazing the sheep some miles from home.
- When they saw him in the distance, they **plotted to kill him**.
- Reuben, the oldest, persuaded him not to murder Joseph directly, but to throw him into a **pit** in the desert and let him die on his own.



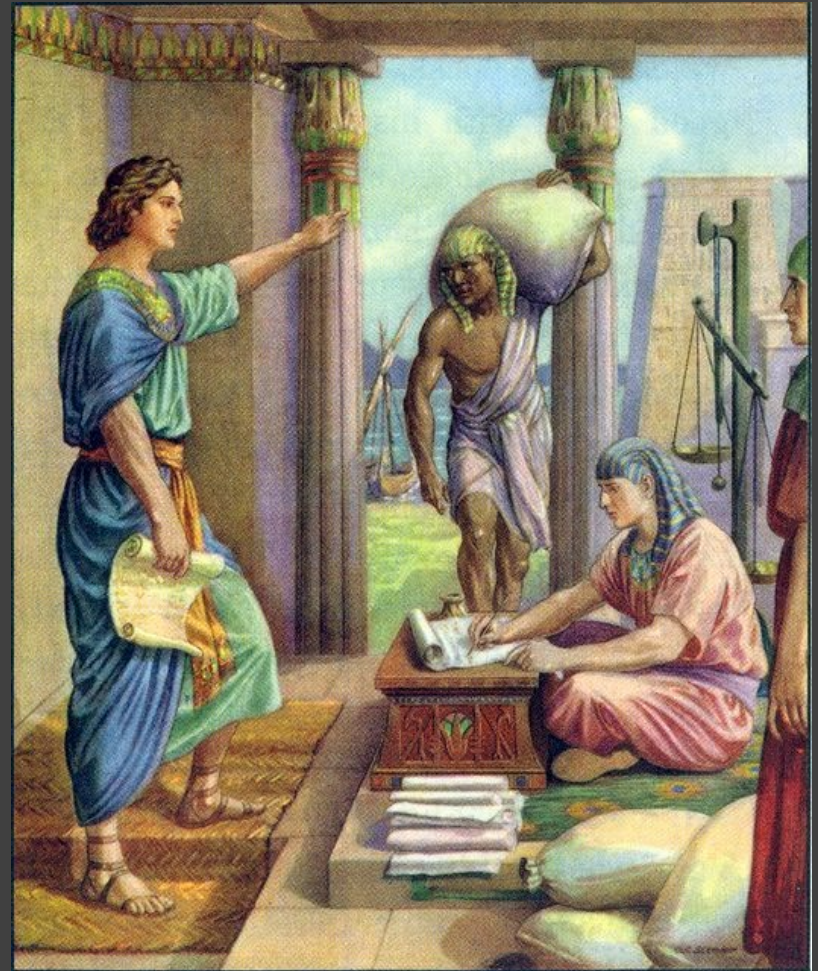
- Feeling some sense of responsibility, Reuben planned to return and rescue Joseph.
- But before Reuben could return to the scene, the other brothers decided to sell Joseph as a slave to a passing caravan of Arabs on their way to Egypt.





The brothers packed Joseph off to Egypt, pocketed 20 Shekels of silver, dipped Joseph's coat in goat's blood and told their father some ferocious animal had eaten him.

- Meanwhile, Joseph was sold to an Egyptian named **Potiphar**, who held the influential position of Captain of Pharaoh's guard.
- Because God was watching over Joseph, he prospered in Potiphar's house and soon found himself in charge of everything Potiphar owned.



Who would have dreamed that God would take a simple Jewish shepherd and make him the chief operating officer of one of the wealthiest and most prestigious estates in Egypt?

- But Joseph's troubles weren't over.
- The Bible says that Joseph was "*well-built and handsome*," and that *Potiphar's wife* took notice of Joseph and began to entice him to sleep with her.



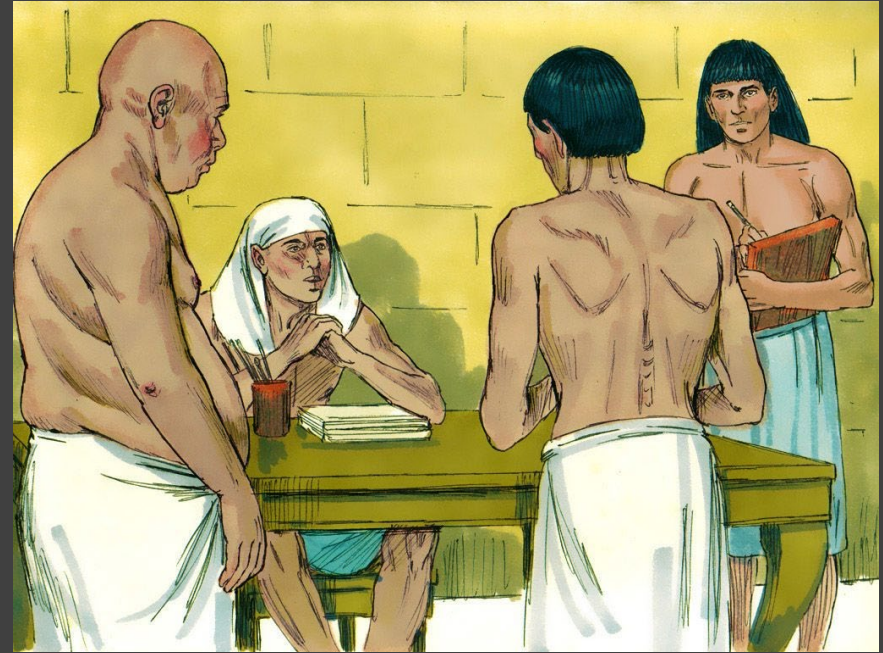
But Joseph refused. *"How could I do such a wicked thing against my Master and against God?"* was his reply.

Genesis 39:10 says: *"And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her."*

- One day as Joseph went into the house to attend to his duties, she caught him by his cloak and tried to seduce him.
- But Joseph ran out of the house, leaving his cloak in her hand.
- Angered at his refusal, she accused Joseph of attempting to rape her and he was thrown in prison.



- Still, even in prison, the Lord was with Joseph and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden.
- The warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there.



Genesis 39:2

“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.”

- While in prison, God gave Joseph the chance to expand his network among influential Egyptians.
- Pharaoh had become angry with his **chief baker** and with his **butler**, so they were thrown into the prison that Joseph was running.
- While there, both men had dreams they could not interpret. But God had not only given Joseph a dream about his own future, but he gave him the **gift of interpreting the dreams of others**.
- Joseph told the butler that in three days he would be restored to his position at Pharaoh's side, but that the baker would be hanged.
- In 3 days, it happened just as Joseph said.



- Though the butler was returned to Pharaoh's court, he forgot about his friend until **two years later** when **Pharaoh had a disturbing dream**.
- **Seven fat, healthy cows** came up out of the Nile and began to graze among the reeds. After them, **seven thin, sickly cows** came up and ate the seven fat, healthy cows. Then Pharaoh woke up.
- He fell asleep and dreamed again: **seven heads of grain, healthy and good**, were growing on a single stalk. After them, **seven other** heads of grain sprouted—**thin and scorched by the east wind**. The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven healthy, full heads.



- In the morning Pharaoh was troubled, so he sent for all the **magicians** and **wise men** of Egypt to interpret his dreams, but no one could.
- Then the butler remembered his young Hebrew friend who had interpreted his dream in prison and told his story to Pharaoh.

- Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and told him his dreams. Joseph listened to the dreams, then told Pharaoh their meaning:
- God was about to bless Egypt with **seven years of abundant harvests**, followed by **seven years of famine**.
- He advised Pharaoh to appoint someone to take a **fifth of the harvest** of Egypt during the seven years of abundance and store up the grain to be used during the seven years of famine so that the country would not be ruined by the famine.



- Joseph's wisdom so impressed Pharaoh that he declared:

“Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God? . . . Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.”

—Genesis 41:38-40



- Joseph had gone from a convicted felon to Vice President of the greatest nation on earth and again, God had fulfilled his shattered dreams beyond his wildest expectations.



The story ends with **Joseph's brothers** coming to Egypt to buy food during the famine and the fulfillment of his dream that one day the brothers who had despised him would acknowledge him as their ruler.



As Lord of Egypt, Joseph was able to *move his family* there, give them the *richest land* in the nation, and provide for them abundantly.



Moreover, Joseph was sent to Egypt not only to care for his family, but to provide for Israel a **place to grow in numbers** and strength until the time they would **return** to Palestine, not as a **family of sheep herders**, but as a **mighty nation**.

From Joseph,
we learn four
things about
daring to
dream again.



1. We can dare to dream again when we believe that God is with us.

Genesis 39:2-4

The LORD was with Joseph and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master.
³ When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, ⁴ Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned.

Genesis 39:23

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.

Isaiah 41:10

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”





John 14:18

“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”

2. We can dare to dream again when we believe that God is still in control of things.

Genesis 45:5-7

“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.** ⁶ For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will not be plowing and reaping. ⁷ But **God sent me ahead of you** to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.”

3. We can dare to dream again when we believe that God works all things in our lives for our good.

Genesis 50:20

“You intended to harm me, ***but God intended it for good*** to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”

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.

4. We can dare to dream again when we believe that God wants us to be his agents in accomplishing his will.

Genesis 50:20

“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good **to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.**”

Ephesians 1:11-12

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who **works out everything** in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹² in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.

Remember that when Joseph's family went to Egypt they were a *family of sheep herders*.

When they came out they were a *mighty nation*.

When young Abraham Lincoln's country store in Illinois went out of business, he was hoping to take what little money they had left and study to become an attorney. In the days of self-taught lawyers, Lincoln was hoping to have enough money left over to buy Blackstone's Commentary on English law.



As they were closing the store A wagon pulled up in front of the store, and the man looked up at Abraham Lincoln and said, "I am trying to move my family West and I'm out of money. I've got a good barrel on here that I could sell for fifty cents." Lincoln looked at the family, had pity on them, ran his hand into his pocket and took out, according to him, "The last fifty cents I had" and said, "I reckon I could use a good barrel."

All day long the barrel sat on the porch of that store. His partner kept chiding him about it.

Late in the evening, Abraham Lincoln walked out and looked down into the barrel, and saw some things in the bottom of it, papers that he hadn't noticed. His long arm went into the barrel and fumbled around until he hit something solid. He pulled out a book and stood petrified; it was Blackstone's Commentary on English law.

As Lincoln later said: "I stood there holding the book, looking up toward the heavens. There came a deep impression on me that God had something for me to do and that he was helping me get ready for it."

Conclusion

- Your broken dreams are pieces of a larger puzzle.
- The fact is that everything that happens to us is for our good and God's glory.
- So when, like Joseph, one of your dreams is broken, hold onto to God and . . .

dare to dream again!