

THE LIFE OF JOSEPH – SERMON 6

TRIUMPHING OVER TEMPTATION

Genesis 39:7-20

INTRODUCTION

- Joseph spent approximately 11 years in Potiphar's house and 2 years in prison, before being promoted by Pharaoh at age 30 (cf. Genesis 41:1,46)
- Through temptation, the genuineness of Joseph's faith was put to the test.
- It was easy enough to be loyal to the Lord while at home, but now he is far from home surrounded by idolatry and immorality, would he stay true to God?
- As long as we are in this world and in these bodies of flesh, we will be tempted (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- We yield to temptation because of our own lusts (James 1:14-15)
- Therefore we must be on guard against temptation.
- We need to have a proper awareness of the power of our lusts, and how susceptible we are to the temptations of the devil.
- The Lord commands us to pray: "Lead us not into temptation" (Matthew 6:13; Luke 22:40)
- Note that Joseph was in a time of promotion and prosperity when the temptation came.

Joseph teaches us how to triumph over temptation:

I. REALISE THE STRENGTH OF TEMPATION (7)

- A. An immoral society
 - 1. Sexual immorality was widely accepted and practised in ancient Egypt
 - 2. The “course of this world” is set by the devil (Ephesians 2:1-2)
- B. The opportunity to sin in secrecy
 - 1. Joseph was anonymous, with no family nearby
 - 2. There were no apparent consequences
- C. To yield would advance him, to refuse would harm him
- D. The temptation was repeated
 - 1. Satan is relentless in his assaults (Luke 4:13)

II. RELENTLESSLY STRIVE AGAINST TEMPTATION (8-10)

- A. He understood the issue of ownership
 - 1. She was another’s wife, and did not belong to him
 - 2. Adultery is taking and using of someone’s body who justly belongs to another
 - 3. Adultery is to “defraud” your brother (1 Thessalonians 4:3-6)
 - 4. Fornication/adultery is taking without first paying the required price – the marriage covenant
 - 5. The Christian’s body is owned by God (1 Corinthians 6:20)

- B. He called the sin for what it was – great wickedness
 - 1. The world gives euphemisms for sins to make them more acceptable
 - 2. We should use the plain language that God uses in Scripture to describe sin and its consequences
- C. He asserted his accountability to God for his conduct
 - 1. The fear of human consequences will only keep us from sin until we think no one can see us
 - 2. The fear of God will keep us from sin at all times
 - 3. David confessed, “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight” (Psalm 51:4)
- D. He avoided situations of temptation
 - 1. It is one thing to pray, “Lead us not into temptation,” but we have a responsibility to do all we can to avoid it
 - 2. Places and activities of known temptation must be avoided, that we “make not provision for the flesh” (Romans 13:14; cf. Proverbs 5:8)
 - 3. We are to “abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22)
 - 4. *“Learn to say no. It will be of more use to you than to be able to read Latin.”* Charles Spurgeon

III. RESOLUTELY SURMOUNT ALL TEMPATION (11-20)

- A. He did not toy or compromise with sin
- B. He fled from sin

1. We must flee fornication (1 Corinthians 6:18)
2. We must flee youthful lusts (2 Timothy 2:22)
3. We must take drastic action to remove ourselves from those things which cause us to stumble (Matthew 5:29-30; Hebrews 12:1)
4. We are to “resist unto blood, striving against sin” (Hebrews 12:4)

C. He suffered for his refusal to sin

1. The easy way is seldom the right way
2. Suffering as a Christian is a cause for rejoicing (1 Peter 4:14-16)
3. While he suffered the disfavour of man, he enjoyed the favour of God
 - a. He lost his coat but not his character
 - b. He lost his position but not his purity

CONCLUSION

1. Many professing Christians have the goal to “not sin too much”
2. God’s command is that “ye sin not” (1 John 2:1), “be ye perfect” (Matthew 5:48), and “be ye holy” (1 Peter 1:16)
3. We must be constantly guarding what we allow into our souls through our sight and hearing (Job 31:1; Matthew 5:28)
4. The Lord Jesus Christ suffered and overcame temptation, and is able to succour us in our temptation (Hebrews 2:18; 4:15-16)