



Your Future - Talk 2 - Genesis 37:

MAIN POINT

God orchestrates our families, our circumstances and our dreams to provide fulfillment and mission in our lives.

INTRO

Review of last week's talk.

Last week, we looked at Genesis 1 and thought about what has God created us for? Does that question ever bug you? It's a deep question that I'm sure many of you have thought about either in philosophy class or with your friends during late night pizza.

What are some common answers that you have heard about the meaning of life? Turn to the person next to you and give a 30 second answer to this answer.

(Possibly show a movie clip about the meaning of life)

Last week we looked at Genesis 1 and talked about how God created order from disorder, fullness from emptiness and meaning where there was none. He brought order over stars and planets and the solar system, he filled the water and the air and the land with creatures and with humans! He created us in His own image! And God started everything with purpose. He wanted everything that was created to be fruitful.

And the same applies to us. We walk in our purpose when we bring order, fullness and meaning to the various environments in our lives. God does everything on purpose and God creates us with a purpose. What part of that purpose do you want to be a part of?

Last week we watched the opening clip from the movie UP. It showed the life of Carl, who falls in love with his elementary school sweetheart and gets married and has all these dreams for their lives together. But Carl's wife dies and he becomes a grumpy old man. Until he meets Russell, a neighborhood boy scout and his life finds new purpose and meaning.

I think God uses all the stuff that has happened in Carl's life to make his purpose even fuller. And in the same way, God uses all of our stuff to make our purpose fuller. He uses the families, ethnicities and cultures for his purpose. He gives us certain talents, gifts, ideas and points of view. He gives us dreams and goals for our lives and I believe it is all for a reason. It is not by accident. Our purpose lies at the intersection of these important elements.

We are going to look at one of the most interesting people in the Old Testament. He has amazing perspective on purpose when nothing in his life was going well for him. Everything came down around him and somehow he still maintained his focus on his life.



Joseph's life is a huge roller coaster and I think he has a lot to say to us tonight. Let's look at the life of Joseph to think more about how God has created us and how he has a unique purpose for us.

You won't believe how dysfunctional this family is.

Summarize Genesis 37 in your own words.

Three main points in chapter 37.

Dad plays favorites.

Dad's favoritism breeds contempt and resentment.

Joseph is kicked out.

This family plays favorites much worse. Can you imagine in our families that they youngest child is the favorite? Can you imagine your family doing these things? Turn to your neighbor and share how your family is similar or different to this family.

FIRST POINT

God places us in our families for a reason.

I believe that God places us in our families for a reason. If we believe that God created everything and everyone, then we have to believe there is a reason that God placed us in the families that we have. I'm sure all of us have wondered why at some point in our lives. Why did God place me in this family?

Your family may be just as dysfunctional as Joseph's family. They hate Joseph, they are fighting and have huge amounts of sibling rivalry and jealousy. And it doesn't help that the parents are showing favoritism to one of the kids.

I'm sure Joseph is asking some questions too. I'm a young man with big dreams and my daddy's favor. Why am I in this family? What's the point? Sharing the dreams probably crossed the line a little bit for me, but aren't families supposed to support your dreams?!

So Joseph is spoiled and a little proud and arrogant and even though his family situation looks miserable, God is still working through the situation. Sometimes, it's obvious what God is doing. Sometimes, it makes no sense at all at that moment in time. But I encourage you to trust that God put us in our families for a reason.

(Insert personal story about personal family dynamics. Maybe show a picture of your family and some stories about the journeys of family members)



Growing Up - Talk 2: Genesis 37

God put you in your family for a reason. It might be really hard to see and understand that right now. But could you ask God to show you why? God is the creator of everything and He fills everything with purpose. God will show you.

SECOND POINT

God takes us through circumstances for a reason.

If we look back at Joseph's life in this chapter, there are some really great times. Joseph was the favorite son, he's young, he's received a beautiful coat and it signifies wealth, power, and status. And what's even more, he has these two dreams let him know his future's looking bright! He will be powerful. He will be a ruler some day. He is living a good life.

There are times in our lives when everything seems to be going well. People around you speak highly of you, maybe your parents and relatives show you favor or give you nice things, maybe your peers vote you into high positions in the school or clubs you are a part of. You are getting an education right now which will put you in the top 1% of people in the world. You are starting to have some ability to make some nice money in your future.

But sometimes, like in Joseph's life, something goes wrong. A circumstance changes. Or maybe all of your circumstances change. Joseph's brothers decide to get rid of him. Actually they want to kill him, but instead sell him off.

There are times in our own lives where the world is crashing in around us. Maybe it's a health issue or disease. Maybe it's some sort of personal attack. Maybe it's something with our mental health. We can be misunderstood by friends and family. Or maybe someone hurts us. Everything we've worked for can be stripped away and we feel alone, depressed, and separated from God and your community.

We are put in a place where we feel far away and enslaved by other people or their agendas. Or maybe we are enslaved by our own desires that are detrimental to everyone around. God sees these circumstances but holds us through these moments. God is with us in triumph and God is with us in tragedy.

Some people might tell you that God will take away all of the lows in life, that somehow all of the miserable times just disappear. Trusting in God means He is with you in every circumstances whether it be a highlight or a lowlight in life. God does not leave us ever.

(Share personal story of God using a hard time in life to deepen your relationship with Him.)



God will use anything and everything in your life to draw you to Him. He wants to build a deep relationship with you, and wants to be with you during the roller coaster of life. God doesn't leave you in tough times. God has a plan and He is using your circumstances to mold you for your future.

Whatever you are going through tonight, maybe private heartaches, maybe stress and obligations to your family or community back home, whatever it is, God knows, He cares, and He loves you. God takes you through circumstances for a reason.

THIRD POINT

God fills us with dreams for a reason.

At this point in the story, Joseph is completely discouraged. He's taken away to Egypt but I'm sure those dreams are still on his mind. Maybe he tried to reinterpret the dreams to figure out what they would mean? What does it mean?

I'm sure Joseph clung to those dreams and didn't give up on it. I believe that God has given us ambitions, passions and even dreams for our lives. Sometimes, those dreams might feel really distant, and sometimes God's dreams can be crowded out by other things or our own desires. Sometimes God's dreams can fade away because of our circumstances.

But Joseph holds on to those dreams. In the next few chapters of Genesis, we see more twists and turns in Joseph's life. From being in prison, to interpreting dreams for other people, to being forgotten again, and he finally ends up before Pharaoh and successfully interprets his dream. Joseph is then told to be in charge of all of Egypt!

Because Joseph held on to his dreams, he saved thousands of lives from a famine that ravaged many nations. Because Joseph held on to this dreams, he was reunited and reconciled to his family! The same family that sold him off! Because Joseph held on to his dreams, he ends up being second in command of Egypt!

Holding on to a dream is not easy. It can take you to the depths of the sea. But hopefully, it will also take you to the mountaintop.

(Insert story of holding on to a dream)

God has given us ambitions, passions, and dreams for our lives. These ambitions are not just to get wealthy or to have power or for selfish use. These God-given passions are using our gifts and talents and makes a difference in the world. It helps people. These dreams are clues to what you are supposed to do in life. If you don't have a dream, ask God for one!



RESPOND

Tonight, we talked about how God places us in our families for a reason. It might be confusing to figure out how God is working through your family, but ask Him to show you! We talked about how God takes us through circumstances for a reason. And you might want to just run from stuff that has happened to you in the past. But God walked with you and will redeem the good and the bad. Ask him to reveal a deeper understanding. I talked about how God gives us dreams and passions for a reason. And if you just aren't sure where God is taking you, He delights in nothing more than for us to come to Him and want to follow Him wherever He might take us.

Allow worship team to play a song so that students can reflect on what they have heard.

So tonight, I invite you to respond to what you have heard. First, if you are struggling with understanding your family or just clashing all the time with your parents, I want to pray for you. If you would stand right where you are, I want to pray over all the folks who just feel trapped by the expectations from their family.

Pray.

Second, some of us understand seasons of depression and disappointment. We have gone through battles within ourselves. God wants to redeem these parts of our lives if we open our hands and invite him into the pain, depression and disappointment. Come holy spirit. Would you stand tonight if you want to receive some prayer. I know all of us have some baggage in our lives, but when we know that God is with us through it all, it can take a weight off our shoulders. It can take pressure and stress and guilt off of us.

Pray.

Finally, some of us tonight need to make our own decision to follow Jesus. Maybe you've experienced some roller coasters in your life, but tonight you want to allow Him to lead you in your life. Jesus came to the earth to show us what love and hope and truth really mean. And Jesus invites us to join with him in his mission. When we decide to join in mission with Jesus, our lives are transformed.

Pray.