

Favored But Fallen

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 20 October 2024

Preacher: Sam Bunnell

[0 : 0 0] Are y'all excited? I'm excited. We're starting a brand new series today on the life of Joseph.

How many of y'all have read the life of Joseph in the Bible before? Many of you. How many of you have heard the life of Joseph taught in Sunday school or maybe preached in a service before?

You're familiar with it? Yeah, many of you. That is one of my favorite Bible stories. Kind of growing up, it was always what I said was my favorite Bible story from the Old Testament.

It's also my middle name, so maybe that had something to do with it. But I love Joseph. It was always my favorite. And so I've never actually preached a sermon series on Joseph before. This was a first for me. And diving into it, I quickly realized this is an epic saga in the Old Testament, and there is so much there. And condensing it into a five-sermon series is going to be very challenging. So here we go. All right. Number one, Joseph, part one. Here we go. Would you take your Bibles with me and go to Genesis chapter 37? Genesis chapter 37. Week one, our theme here is favored but fallen. Favored but fallen. Let me give you a little brief introduction into the story of Genesis. The story of this part of Genesis of Joseph. All right. The overarching biblical theme here that I believe we can take away from the life of Joseph is that man meant this for evil, but God used it for good. Man meant this for evil, but God used it for good.

The theme of Genesis, much of it can be traced to the family of Abraham. Abraham's family leading up to the story of Joseph would be a good background if we were going to study through the book of Genesis. And I tried to do as much study through Genesis as I could leading up to chapter 37 here in preparation for preaching this morning. And my takeaway here is that we live in God's good world gone bad. And that was the situation in which they found themselves in Genesis 37. They were living in God's good world gone bad. And through so much sin and failure, God kept giving his people chances.

[2 : 3 5] His chosen people, the Israelites. And of course, nowadays through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we get to be part of God's chosen people. It's no longer just the Hebrew people. Now he has opened it up to the Gentiles and all of us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Now there's no longer Jew and Gentile. There's no longer Jew and Greek. There's no longer male and female. All are now one Ephesians teaches us through the blood of Jesus. Thank God for his sacrifice, right?

So now through so much sin and failure, God keeps giving us a chance to, and we thank God for his continued grace. He extends toward us. We also see this thing, that God's ways are not man's ways.

Isaiah chapter 55 verses eight and nine reminds us that God's ways are higher than ours. God's ways are not man's ways. So the overarching biblical theme is that God continues to extend grace in spite of failure. And while man's evil conspires to throw God's plan off track, somehow through God's divine sovereign power, his good always wins the day. So let's see how this happens. Let's look at Genesis chapter 37, beginning in verse two, before we dive into the text, I'd like you to look at the screen with me. Would you real quick throughout the life of Joseph, we are going to see different types of Christ. How many of you have heard the phrase? If you've been in church for a little while, type of Christ, you ever heard that before?

Type of Christ. Don't be afraid. You can raise your hand. It's okay. Yeah, there you go. I got a couple of you out there. A type of Christ is someone who is not Jesus. The Christ is generally who we would call Jesus, right? That is Jesus, the Christ child. So Christ is another name for Jesus, God himself.

But a type of Christ is someone who is not God, who we see in scripture, who portrays a character trait of God, someone who is not God, and we should not confuse them for God, but someone who is a forerunner, someone who would portray part of the story of who Jesus would become. And so we see part of who Jesus would become in the life of Joseph. And arguably, Joseph might be our most accurate, our best type of Christ that we see in the scriptures. You could certainly make an argument for that as we go through the life of Joseph. When we see the first type of Christ right here in Genesis 37, the favored son. Anybody know that Jesus was the favored son?

[5 : 35] Up in heaven, God's son. He was the favored son. John 3, 16, the only one, only begotten son, right?

Jesus was the favored son. So let's get into the text here. I've got some of it on the screen for you today. Genesis 37, verse 2. I'm reading from the New Living Translation. This is the account of Jacob and his family. When Joseph was 17 years old, he often tended his father's flocks.

He worked for his half-brothers, the sons of his father's wives, Bilhah and Zilpah. We're going to have all kinds of fun with the names in the Old Testament during this book, okay?

Have you noticed that I've primarily preached from the New Testament since I got here? There's a reason for that. The names are a whole lot easier, okay? That's not the real reason. But Joseph, now I did go through Jonah. Did y'all have fun in Jonah? I had so much fun in Jonah.

We're going back to the Old Testament. We're going to go through Joseph. Here we go. But Joseph reported to his father some of the bad things his brothers were doing. Anybody ever done that? Anybody ever reported to your dad some of the bad things your brothers were doing?

[6 : 49] How did that work out for you with your brothers? Did they appreciate that? Were you very popular with your brothers after you did that? Did that win you favor with your siblings after you went and told on them to your dad? No? Can't imagine why. Here we go. Verse 3. Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other children because Joseph had been born to him in his old age. So number one, we've got Joseph telling on his brothers. Number two, we've got the dad loving Joseph more than all the other brothers.

Let's keep reading. So one day Jacob had a special gift made for Joseph. What was it? Coat of many colors. I've got up here a beautiful robe. Your Bible probably has something very similar staring back at you.

So it should be no surprise to us to read in verse 4, but his brothers hated Joseph because their father loved him more than the rest of them.

They couldn't say a kind word to him. Why do you think that was? Y'all talk back to me.

Jealousy because Joseph was the? The favorite. Yes. I mean, this isn't too hard to understand, right? Let's look at this coat. Now, is this exactly what the coat looks like?

[8 : 36] Who knows, right? But somebody made a pretty good attempt here. So I was reading John MacArthur. He's a famous Bible teacher out in California and pastor.

And he did a lot of study on this and a lot of others have done a lot of study on this. And the best that they've come up with is this coat seemingly could have signified that this coat was kind of who the family would pass on to.

So the coat should have gone to the oldest son because whoever got the coat got the family, got the inheritance, all the family wealth, riches, land, everything would go on.

So the coat was more than just a pretty piece of material. It was very important. If that was indeed the case, then this was more than just, oh, he went out and bought me a new pair of Nikes, or he went out and bought me a new pair of cowboy boots, you know?

This was more than just, dad had a nice coat made for Joseph. This was a massive, massive blow.

[10 : 02] And do you realize where Joseph was in the line of the sons? He was the youngest. Now, if you've read ahead in the story, you know there was going to come another one later, right?

But at this moment, he was the youngest of how many? At the time, it was 11. At the time, it was 11. So he was 11th.

So there's 10 angry brothers who are saying, well, I understand if he's mad at the oldest, and I understand if he's mad at the second oldest, but he should have given it to me.

And he's like, forget you, he should have given it to number 4, or number 5, or number 6. For sure number 8. What about number 9 or 10? But unbelievable, he gave it to number 11?

How in the world can he justify that? So, we've got a highly dysfunctional family on our hands. And his brothers hated him for it.

[11 : 10] They absolutely hated him for it. Please don't raise your hands right now. But how many of you come from a dysfunctional family? Don't raise your hands right now. They might be sitting next to you.

Look, we can identify with that to a certain extent. All of our families have a level of dysfunction because we are all sinful people. We all struggle. Every one of us, none of us come from a perfect family.

We all struggle a little bit. We all have our fights. We all have our disagreements. We're all plagued by sin. So, we can all relate to a degree with what Joseph is going through.

What's going on with the favoritism shown here, right? So, let's take a warning. Warning number 1. Promotion can lead to pride.

What are we talking about? Promotion can lead to pride. We're about to see it unfold in this story. The 11th son got the family coat that should have gone to the oldest, meaning that he would be in charge of the family when Jacob died.

[12 : 16] It's a big deal. And now you've got all these seeds of anger. And anger can lead to bitterness. And bitterness can lead to hatred. And then hatred can lead to all kinds of tragedy.

And if you know the story, you know that that's about to happen. So, this is the account of Jacob and his family. And we read on and we see what happened.

But promotion can lead to pride. Proverbs 16 and verse 18. Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. So, let's see what happens.

Back in Genesis 37 and verse 5. One night, Joseph had a dream. And when he told his brothers about it, they hated him more than ever. You ever had a dream and told somebody about it?

Have you ever had a dream that you were going to rule over somebody else and then told them about it? Was that just Joseph? I can't say I've ever had that kind of dream ever.

[13 : 21] Verse 6. Listen to this dream. He said, we were out in the field tying up bundles of grain. Suddenly, my bundle stood up. And your bundles all gathered around and bowed low before mine.

Now, y'all look. I could be reading this wrong. And I'm not going to say that every theologian who has studied this passage agrees that Joseph was giving in to the sin of pride here.

They seem to be split on this. So, I'm just going to give it to you how I read it. And I'm going to say some of them agree with me and some of them say, no, Joseph wasn't being prideful here.

Whether or not Joseph was being prideful here, we should probably take a warning from this, okay? His brothers responded, so you think you will be our king?

Do you? Do you actually think you will reign over us? And they hated him all the more because of his dreams and the way he talked about them.

[14 : 30] And then what was actually included in the ancient Hebrew and then removed later were the words, no duh. Now, I'll catch up with you in just a second.

Yeah. You think? Yeah, they're already mad at him. They're already hating him. And then he goes and tells them, I had a dream, guys.

And the dream is that I'm going to rule over you someday. You think that was going to work out well for him? No, it didn't. And so then, verse 9, and soon Joseph had another dream.

And again, again, no one was there to tell him, read the room, Joseph. Don't keep telling these guys about these dreams.

Again, he told his brothers about it. Listen, I've had another dream. The sun, moon, and 11 stars bowed low before me. This time, he told the dream to his father as well as to his brothers.

[15 : 36] But his father scolded him. Remember, he was his father's favorite son. And even his father got a little upset at this one. He said, what kind of dream is that? He asked, will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?

But while his brothers were jealous of Joseph, his father wondered what the dreams meant. Now, let me ask y'all, where do you think those dreams came from? God, right?

Because did those dreams come to pass? Yes, they actually did. We know the end of the story if you've read ahead. And you know they actually did. Do we know that God told Joseph to go share those with his family?

We don't know that. We don't know that he didn't. So we can't say with authority, Joseph, you were wrong in doing this. But we can take a warning to say that there could have been pride involved.

I don't know. But I do know that it is certainly not wise for us to always tell all that even God tells us. Sometimes it's wise to hide it in our heart, ponder it in our heart, and wait for God to promote us, not try to promote ourselves.

[16 : 52] A haughty spirit will come before a fall. Did Joseph approach his brothers in a haughty spirit? I don't know. I wasn't there. But we can certainly take a warning from that and be careful in how we approach others.

We do know that they were angry at him. We do know that they hated him. And that his interpretation of those dreams that God gave to him certainly did not help him win any favor with his brothers at that time.

Now God is sovereign over all. God would protect him. And we know what happened up ahead. But the warning could be silence is often wisest.

Silence is often wisest. There will be a time when God wants you to speak up. There will be a time when God wants you to say what is right, to say what is true, to speak the gospel, to speak the truth.

But how are we to speak the truth? Speak the truth in love. Speak the truth in love. Did Joseph speak lovingly? I don't know.

[17 : 59] But certainly the Bible teaches us that a soft answer can turn away wrath. And wrath is how his brothers responded that day. So we must take a warning that silence can often be wisest.

And then we can move on to our reminder that God knows his plan for you. So we're not just taking a negative lesson from these dreams.

We can also take a positive that God knows his plan for us. Now God cryptically revealed his plan to Joseph.

There's no way to believe that Joseph knew how this was going to unfold. He didn't get those dreams and then go share them with his family and predict that someday he knew how all this was going to play out.

There's no way. And there's no way that you could possibly know what God's plan is for you and how it's going to play out with God's design. But you can rest that God knows his plan for you.

[19 : 04] And he's in control of it. And if you walk closely with him he'll make sure that you get where he wants you to go. And you reach that desired outcome that he has for you.

So God knows his plan for you. We read that in Jeremiah 29. I love that. And I believe that even though this was written in the Old Testament to his people that we are now his people and we can claim these promises as he says I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord.

Plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future. And so I believe that's what my God says to me and says to this church. That he knows the plans he has for us.

He knows the plans he has for us individually. And God knows the plans he has for First Baptist Henrietta. Plans to prosper us and not to harm us. Plans to give us hope and a future.

Man it's great to look back on the past. We've got a former pastor here today who served faithfully in this place for 15 years today. And we can look back and celebrate what he did for those 15 years.

[20 : 13] We can look back at Ron Gunner. We can look back at Ted Traylor. We can look back at the wonderful legacy that God has done. And then we can turn around and look forward and say we believe also that not only has God been faithful but God will continue to be faithful and give us a hope and a future.

Because he promised it. He'll do it for me. He'll do it for my family. He'll do it for our church. If we walk closely with him.

If we're faithful to him. Sometimes even when we aren't faithful to him. He's far more faithful to us. What a wonderful God we serve.

So, God knows his plan for us. And then we move on to the second type of Christ. So, we've got this favored son and then he's betrayed by his own people.

Let's go back to Genesis 2. Down in verse 12. Soon after this the brothers went to pasture their father's flocks at Shechem. They've been gone for some time.

[21 : 30] Jacob says to Joseph, your brothers are pasturing their sheep at Shechem. Get ready and I'll send you to them. I'm ready to go. Joseph replied. Anybody else remember another time this happened in scripture? Jesse sent David to go find his brothers.

Remember that happened? That interesting parallel there. And in verse 14, Jacob says then to Joseph, go and see how your brothers and the flocks are getting along.

Then come back and bring me a report. So, Jacob sent him on his way. Joseph travels to Shechem from their home in the valley of Hebron. When he arrives there, a man from the area notices him wandering around the countryside.

What are you looking for? He says. And Joseph says, I'm looking for my brothers. Do you know where they are? You know where they're pasturing their sheep? And he says, yes, they've moved on from here. But I heard him say, let's go on to Dothan. So Joseph followed his brothers to Dothan and found them there.

But they saw him coming. Verse 18. When Joseph's brothers saw him coming, they recognized him in the distance. And as he approached, they made plans to kill him.

[22 : 39] That escalated quickly. We go from, wow, they're jealous. They're mad about the coat. They're mad that he's the favorite. They're mad about the dreams.

And now they want to kill the kid. Wow. Verse 19. Here comes the dreamer, they said.

So now we learn Joseph's nickname among the brothers. Here comes the dreamer. Come on. Let's kill him and throw him in one of these cisterns. We can tell our father a wild animal has eaten him.

Then we'll see what becomes of his dreams. Y'all, this path of anger and bitterness and hatred will lead you places that you never thought you would go.

Don't let anger fester in your heart. So, verse 21. Thankfully, somebody wasn't quite there.

[23 : 43] Reuben. One of the brothers, Reuben. When Reuben heard of their scheme, apparently he wasn't within earshot. So when he heard of the scheme, he came to Joseph's rescue. And he said, let's not kill him, guys.

Maybe we don't want to go quite full murder at this moment. Goodness gracious. Why would we shed any blood? Let's just throw him into this empty cistern.

And you can almost see Reuben's mind panicking. Like, can I come up with a scheme that's going to satisfy their blood lust and maybe save Joseph's life in the process?

Like, I don't like the kid. He drives me nuts. Can't stand him. But I'm not ready to kill him, for goodness sakes. So, let's just throw him in this empty well out here in the wilderness.

Then he'll die without our laying a hand on him. And Reuben was secretly planning to rescue Joseph and return him to his father. So, we've got one brother, Hussein, in this moment.

[24 : 49] Verse 23. So, when Joseph arrived, his brother ripped off the beautiful robe he was wearing. Then they grabbed him, threw him into the cistern.

The cistern was empty, no water in it. Then just as they were sitting down to eat, they looked up and saw a caravan of camels, not caramels. Very different.

Coming toward them, it was a group of Ishmaelite traders taking a load of gum, balm, aromatic resin from Gilead down to Egypt. Sometime later, the scene changes.

Reuben returned. Where are we at? Sorry, guys. Just lost my place. Thank you. Here we go.

Yep, there we go. Judah said to his brothers, here we go. Judah said to his brothers, what will we gain by killing our brother? We'd have to cover up the crime. So, we don't know exactly where Judah's heart is here.

[25 : 56] But, if you study a little bit further on, you see that there were kind of two brothers here, Reuben and Judah, who seemed to rise above the others as far as who God would use.

One, Reuben saved Joseph's life. And then, two, anybody know anything about Judah? Judah? What was it? The line of Judah?

Jesus came from it. Jesus was the lion of the tribe of Judah. Isn't that interesting? Jesus didn't come from the line of Joseph.

Jesus came from the line of Judah. So, it's interesting that once again somebody else steps in here to save Joseph's life and it was Judah.

So, he says, Judah says to his brothers, what will we gain by killing our brothers? We'd have to cover up the crime. Instead of hurting him, let's sell him to those Ishmaelite traitors. After all, he's our brother, our own flesh and blood and his brothers agreed.

[27 : 02] So, when the Ishmaelites who were Midianite traitors, back then that would have been a big deal in our world today. It's like, who are these people? Why do they matter? But, you know, it made sense.

They would have made a tidy profit by selling him to these guys. They came by and Joseph's brothers pulled him out of the well and sold him to them for 20 pieces of silver and the traitors took him to Egypt.

Sometime later, Reuben comes back to get Joseph out of the well and return him to his father. But Joseph isn't there, is he?

He discovered that Joseph was missing and so he tore his clothes in grief and he went back to his brothers and lamented, the boy is gone, what will I do now? So the brothers killed a young goat and dipped Joseph's robe, that beautiful robe, the family coat that was going to be passed on and they dipped it in the goat's blood and they sent the beautiful robe to their father with this message.

Look at what we found. Doesn't this robe belong to your son? Just a little side note here. Do you notice how they sent it on to their father with a message?

[28 : 20] They didn't even have the courage to face him themselves. Hey dad, Joseph got eaten by a wild animal. They like sent the message on.

Guys had all kinds of courage there, didn't they? So, what happened? The father recognized it immediately, of course. Yes, it's my son's robe.

A wild animal must have eaten him. Joseph has clearly been torn to pieces and Jacob tore his clothes, dressed himself in burlap and he mourned deeply for his son for a long time.

His family all tried to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. I will go to my grave, mourning for my son, he would say, and then he would weep.

So, there's a warning here. Envy can start a spiral of evil. Envy can start a spiral of evil.

[29 : 23] James, the book of James, chapter 3 and verse 13. Let's go to verse 14. Would you turn over there with me quickly? We'll be done in just a moment. James, chapter 3 and verse 14.

If you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your heart, don't boast and deny the truth.

Bitter envy and selfish ambition in your heart. Look over one more chapter at chapter 4. James, chapter 4, verse 2. Back up to verse 1.

Kind of the first three verses there. James 4, verses 1, 2, and 3. What is the source of wars and fights among you? Don't they come from your passions that wage war within you?

You desire and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and wage war. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and don't receive because you ask with wrong motives so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

[30 : 52] We see what happens. We see the warning here in the book of James and we see it portrayed way back here in Genesis chapter 37.

Y'all, envy, greed, jealousy, these are not to be taken lightly. These are sins that can take root in your life and spiral out of control.

They can actually start to take control of you and start to affect your mind, your brain, and make you make decisions that you would never otherwise make.

They can start to make you an angry person. They can start to make you view people a different way. People that you used to love, people that you used to care about, you can start to see them through a different lens.

You can start to tear families apart, start to ruin relationships, and then anger, bitterness, can take over your life, and end up with you choosing between killing your brother or selling him off.

[32 : 10] What a wild conclusion to this story today. Now is it the end of the story? Oh no. Thanks to our sovereign God, it's not the end of the story.

But that's where we're going to pause today. I want to leave you with this quote. Margaret Thatcher, the great prime minister of England, the spirit of envy can destroy, it can never, ever build.

The spirit of envy can destroy, but it can never build. Romans 12, 24, maybe puts it, well definitely puts it better than that. Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good.

There is a power greater than envy. There is a power greater than anger. There is a power greater than jealousy and greed and bitterness and all this that could drive these brothers to commit these terrible crimes.

There's a power greater than all that. And that is the good that comes from our God. It is our good God himself. He can triumph over all that.

[33 : 14] He can win the day. He can restore those families. He can mend those broken relationships. So don't be overcome with the evil, but overcome the evil with good.

So what's our takeaway today? Our takeaway is this, pride and envy are warning signs in this story, but the start of Joseph's story points us to Jesus. Joseph is the type of Christ.

All throughout Joseph's story, he will be pointing us continually back to Jesus. Always back to our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's where I want to point you today. I want to point you to Jesus Christ, the favored son who laid down his crown, laid down his throne, allowed himself to come down to this earth, be born of the virgin, humbled himself, took upon him the form of a servant, and laid down his life willingly, was betrayed by his own people, suffered greatly, just like we will see that Joseph would, but became the sacrifice for you and for me, not for his own sins, but for your sin and for mine.

Would you bow your heads with me? God, the sins of pride and envy are sins that many of us, if not everyone in this room, have been guilty of.

[34 : 44] We see warning signs in Genesis 37 of pride and envy. We see anger, we see murder, we see bloodlust, we see bitterness, we see so much sin, but we also see sacrifice.

We see some parallels to Jesus Christ, and I pray that this morning our hearts and our minds would turn toward Jesus, that we would remember that 2,000 years ago, you willingly came and sacrificed yourself for our sin.

It's easy to look at those brothers and see them as bad people. It's a little bit harder to look at ourselves and see us as capable of the same.

I pray that you would convict us of our own sin, and if there is anyone here who has not turned from our sin and turned to Jesus, I pray that you would let today be the day that they make that most important decision.

So church, while our heads are bowed in this moment of privacy, I'm going to invite you to slip your hand up right now if that's you. If you'd like to say today is the day and I'd like to turn to Jesus and make him my savior, would you slip your hand up now and I'll pray for you.

[36 : 11] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. You see those hands, God. If that's you, I'd like to invite you while our heads are bowed to just pray this simple prayer.

Jesus, I know that I am a sinner. and I heard your gospel message preached today and as best as I know how, I place all my faith in you to forgive me of my sin.

I don't trust anyone else, not the preacher, not the church, just Jesus. God, I want to meet you after the service.

We can talk more about what it means to be a follower of Jesus and put your faith in him. You come down in just a moment. I'd love to have a conversation with you.

Church, for the rest of you, if there is something that God's working on your heart about, if you'd like to come forward and talk about baptism, placing your membership in this church, anything at all, Jared's going to lead us in just a brief verse of a song.

[37 : 45] Now would be a great time. If you'd just like to come down and use these steps here to pray quietly, this would be the time to do that. Jared, you go ahead and lead us in song.

And this is a time for you, if you'd like to keep your seats and pray, go ahead. If you'd like to sing along, this is a quiet time of reflection at this time.