

Joseph

Part 1

Speaker	Jeff Brett
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[00:00:00] These are the generations of Jacob.

Joseph, being 17 years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought unto his father their evil report. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a coat of many colors.

Verse 23, And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colors that was on him.

[00:01:06] And they took him, and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty. There was no water in it. Chapter 39 Verse 12, And she, that is, Potiphar's wife, caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me.

And he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him away.

Chapter 41 [00:02:08] Verse 14 Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon. And he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.

Verse 39, And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art. Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled. Only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. [00:03:09] And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck. And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had, and they cried before him, Bow the knee. And he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Chapter 42 Verse 21 And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother. In that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear. [00:04:03] Therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto thee, saying, Do not sin against the child, and ye would not hear? Therefore, behold, also his blood is required.

And they knew not that Aunt Joseph understood them, for he spake unto them by an interpreter. And he turned himself about from them, and wept.

Chapter 43 Verse 29 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, [00:05:01] Is this your brother of whom ye spake unto me? And they said, And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son.

And Joseph made haste, for his bowels did yearn upon his brother, and he sought where to weep. And he entered into his chamber, and wept there.

Chapter 45 Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him. And he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud. And the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. [00:06:05] And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph.

Chapter 50 And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him.

Verse 15 And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall he say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren and their sin, for they did evil unto thee. [00:07:12] And now we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.

It has been pointed out that the last four patriarchs in the book of Genesis are characterized by the number five. Our dear brother this afternoon made reference to Abraham, the man of the altar, five altars.

The altar speaks of communion.

[00:08:02] Isaac, figuratively, the man out of death at the right hand of God, we're told in the New Testament that Abraham received him as a figure out of death.

He dug five wells.

Wells speak of the activity and the power and the refreshing streams of the Spirit of God.

Sent down from a heavenly man.

Jacob had a very checkered history.

What a man was Jacob.

[00:09:02] What a problem we might have thought with God. No it wasn't.

God had something in view with his dealings with Jacob.

And God brought him to the end that God had in view.

And you can trace at least five milestones in his history because every time he went through an experience with God and gained something by it, he erected a pillar. Jacob erected five pillars.

They speak of testimony.

But when you come to Joseph, you have a double five.

Because Joseph in the book of Genesis would direct our hearts to the glorious end that God has in regard to his son, the Lord Jesus Christ. [00:10:11] The ultimate administer of the whole land for God.

We've read firstly of the five times that scripture takes account of the fact that his garments were changed. And then we've read of the five occasions when he wept.

There's something very, very wonderful about the book of Genesis.

It has been called the seed plot of the scriptures. And you know there's something very, very beautiful about Joseph. [00:11:04] If I were to ask you to name probably the two men in the Old Testament who would jump into your mind in answer to the question, who are the two most beautiful types of the Lord Jesus in the Old Testament, I've got a pretty good idea. You would say Joseph and David. And I think you'd be right. Have you ever noticed something about those two men, Joseph and David? There was a similarity at the beginning of their history. They were both sent by their father.

[00:12:01] Those two men.

I know the Spirit of God doesn't actually put on record any failure in regard to Joseph, and in that respect he is unique.

There is one incident, however, where he perhaps was not fully converse with the mind of God in regard to the blessing of his two sons. But we leave the matter. The Spirit of God doesn't see fit to lay on scripture any record of sin.

It's quite the opposite with David, wasn't it? He sinned grievously.

But put these two men together and the Spirit of God uses them in a remarkable way to bring before us the beauty, the glory of the person, of God's beloved Son, [00:13:11] our Lord Jesus Christ.

I want to briefly look at these five changes of Raymond and five occasions when he wept. But before I do that, I want you to think about one thing particularly. Isn't it remarkable that you never read of Joseph weeping until after he was exalted?

Why is that?

I no doubt there were many a tear that fell from his eye when he was in the prison. Remember how it says in the Psalms, the iron entered into his soul. [00:14:01] He was a man of intense feeling, and I no doubt he shed many a tear. But the Spirit of God doesn't record it. But when the Spirit of God would bear testimony to the exaltation of Joseph and the remarkable way in wisdom he dealt with the recovery of his brethren, we read of five occasions when he wept.

And the last one, I believe, is the incident that broke his heart.

It's delightful to be engaged with the one that delights the Father's heart. [00:15:02] It's delightful to

follow his pathway through this world. It's delightful to have the Spirit of God uplift the soul to that glorious person who fills the throne.

There's something majestic, something glorious about that. But, you know, glory can appal because it's beyond us.

But, you know, I delight to know a man who can weep because it tells a great deal about his heart. What a person that he is. And I believe in many ways you learn more about the man Joseph by looking at his tears [00:16:02] than perhaps the first part of his history.

And the reason why I bring this to you, beloved brethren, it's really his tears more that I'm concerned with this afternoon. I want to challenge my own heart and I want to challenge your heart. You may think it remarkable my asking you this.

How much do you know the heart of God's beloved Son?

How much do you understand the beating of that heart, the feelings of his soul, the movement of his bowels, so to speak, those bowels of compassion? Yes, they were seen to the full in his pathway in this world. [00:17:06] How often do we read, particularly in the Gospel of Luke, he was moved with compassion, which you've probably heard me say before is a very, very strong word, very, very difficult to explain in English the meaning of compassion.

The word in the original comes from the description of the way that the female womb protects and guards the unborn child, which I think the medical profession will tell you is the most intense of human feelings.

I cannot explain that, but that's where the word compassion comes from. It's a very deep, inward feeling.

[00:18:03] The compassions of God have been displayed in this world by his beloved Son.

Do you think for a moment that one could display the compassion of God in this world who wasn't equal with God?

God is absolute. He's above everything.

For one to come into this world and display God and to make God known, a prerequisite of that must be that he's equal with God. How else could he display God if he was not equal with him?

He knew every unfathomable depth of the heart of God, the love of God and the Father, and he came to earth to make it known, God's beloved Son.

[00:19:09] And he has made it known. And in the power of the Spirit, we have the ability, the capacity, to know the sweetness of God revealed fully in this world by his equal, his beloved Son.

And so we start with Joseph very, very quickly, where we read of him in chapter 37. I've always been amazed at this.

Israel loved Joseph. It doesn't say Jacob there. It says Israel.

More than all his children, he was the son of his old age. Joseph had a singularly unique position in the affections of his father.

[00:20:09] Joseph is one of the firstborns in Scripture who was not born first, because the term firstborn in Scripture has got nothing to do with genealogy. It has to do with occupying the unique place in a father's affections.

Isaac, likewise, was Abraham's firstborn.

He's called that in Scripture. But he wasn't his firstborn, was he? Ishmael was.

Joseph was unique in that family because his father loved him.

[00:21:02] And, beloved brethren, there's been a man in this world who in the complete and full way was the object of a father's affection.

Uniquely so, a man in this world, and that was God the Father.

And it was seen. It was made known.

We beheld his glory en route.

The glory as of an only begotten with a father, full of grace and truth.

And it should bow our hearts in worship that such an one has become our Saviour. But it not only is a delight to those who love him. There is one thing pre-eminently in the Gospels that brought out the enmity [00:22:06] of the nation of Israel with its leaders, Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes.

This man ought to die because he made himself the son of God.

You see, that blessed person that was so delightful to the heart of God became the object of hatred to those who were his enemies. And the central thing that brought that out was the uniqueness of his person and his relationship as a man to his father.

And that's how the story of Joseph begins. Israel gave Joseph a coat of many colours or many parts.

[00:23:02] We needn't go into that.

That coat was distinctive. It marked him out from his eleven brothers.

That coat irked them dreadfully.

But it was the mark of the father's appreciation of him.

Oh, my dear friend, dear brother and sister, you can go through the Gospels and you can find that coat of many parts and colours displayed time and time again. The beauty of the Lord Jesus, that

perfect harmony. You know, I don't know what that coat may have looked like. Some people have tried to picture it. They're probably all wrong. But I know this.

If it was a coat of many colours which would appeal to the eye, I'm absolutely certain that every one of those colours blended [00:24:04] and was in harmony with all the other colours.

And you know, the life of the Lord Jesus was like that. Everything was in harmony. There was nothing lopsided. I use that word very guardedly.

Everything with the person of Jesus was in perfect balance. Faithfulness to God, love and kindness to men.

There was perfect harmony in those two things. You know, we're not like that, are we? We can be overzealous in the one or perhaps be influenced by natural feelings in the other way. But the Lord Jesus was never like that. He kept in perfect balance what was due to God and what was due to men. [00:25:03] That is the uniqueness of his moral glory.

There was a perfect blend and harmony in his life. The things he said, the things he did. Why was that a perfect harmony? Because he was a perfect person. He was a perfect person.

And he was delightful to his father when he was a man in this world. But he was hated by the nation of Israel. And that's where we moved on to next. Behold this dream cometh. And they plotted. I'm not going into the details. You know it all and you've heard this many, many times before. But isn't it significant? What was the means of covering their guilt?

[00:26:04] They stripped him of that coat and they soaked it in blood. And you read the story of poor old Jacob when he soaked.

Verily, Joseph, without doubt, is torn in pieces. Torn in pieces.

The heart of a father concerning the loss of the object of his love.

And where did that happen, beloved brethren? It happened at Calvary, didn't it? Where men stripped him.

Or tried, should we say, to strip him of the beauty of his person. [00:27:03] They didn't do it. But they tried to do it.

I often ponder in my heart that as God looked down into this world and saw the delight of his heart being treated thus by men. There were the feelings of a father, of a God of infinite love. The heart of God told out in suffering on the tree. And there it is in Joseph. They took that coat. They stripped him of it. They dipped it in blood. And they gave it to his father. What a dastardly act. What a dreadful thing to do. Not only to Joseph, but to poor old Jacob. Oh, wasn't he reaping what he'd sowed as a man in this world? [00:28:04] Indeed he was, but that's a different story. We mustn't confuse the two. When we look at an Old Testament type, we've got to look at it with spirit-led eyes and discern what speaks of Christ, what speaks of God, and what doesn't. There's a great deal in the history of Jacob. You couldn't really say that he was the type of Christ and certainly not the type of God the Father. But you know, he's the only man in the 11th of Hebrews that says that he worshipped God. You see, God

got him there in the end. Beloved brethren, God will get us there in the end. He may have a great deal to work out in our lives, but he'll get us there in the end. God got Jacob there, but that's another story. And then we turned over a little bit further, didn't we? We know the story of how he was sold by his brethren [00:29:05] down into Egypt.

There, whatsoever he did prospered. Isn't that a wonderful little statement? That even in adversity, this dear young man, think of it, he was only 17. He was only 17.

And yet he prospered in adversity because he was faithful to God and he was a goodly man to look at. And the lust of Potiphar's wife lighted upon him. Have you ever noticed that Joseph knew the law of God inwardly before it was written? There was no commandment written at that time, [00:30:01] thou shalt not commit adultery, but Joseph knew it in his heart. He was a man that lived with God and he knew God's feelings, he knew God's heart, and he knew God's righteousness and holiness. And he did not succumb to the temptation of that woman. But she grabbed hold of his coat and he fled. The apostles say when he wrote to Timothy, flee, youthful lusts.

That's exactly what Joseph did. He didn't tamper, he didn't hesitate, he ran. But he lost his garment. And that which outwardly spoke of his faithfulness [00:31:03] was that which was used to cast him into prison. And when we come to the New Testament, doesn't the story unfold itself in actuality? The object of his father's heart, the hatred of his brethren, sold and thrown away as worthless, delivered into the hands of the Gentiles, there dishonored. Oh yes, beloved brethren, it was those Gentile soldiers that took away his garments. It wasn't the Jews. You see, Scripture is absolutely perfect. It was when he was handed over to the Gentiles, the Lord Jesus, it was then that those wretched, cruel soldiers tried to humiliate him. [00:32:01] And they did.

But they didn't humble him. He humbled himself.

But he was humiliated. They even took away his garments. Think of what Daniel the prophet said. He should be cut off. Have nothing.

And at the end of his life, that blessed man hasn't got even any clothes. They divided them into four and they cast rocks for the road.

They left him to die destitute.

What a scene Calvary is.

God's beloved son rejected by his brethren [00:33:01] and humiliated by the Gentiles and crucified.

That's not the end of the story, is it? Joseph was cast into prison. He was there what we know, at least two years. It was probably a lot longer than that. Two years.

Probably more like four. Can we understand how the iron entered into his soul when he thought about his father? When he thought about his brethren? And you know, there is something remarkable about that. I don't think there was a vestige of hatred or animosity against his brethren. He lived with God and eventually when they went through experiences where their guilt was brought in [00:34:02] upon their consciences and they confessed it he said to them ye meant it for evil God meant it for good.

You see, it was his father that sent him to seek for the welfare of his brethren.

They weren't where they should have been. They should have been at Shechem but they'd left Shechem and Joseph found them at Dothan. And when God sent his beloved son into this world his own people were not where they should have been because they had departed. But he found them. He found them.

The good shepherd went after the sheep and he found them. [00:35:03] In that prison the secrets of God are revealed to him. I'll pass on, the time is running short. He'll treat us hardly.

And they concocted another cock and bull story and went to Joseph and said when our father was yet alive he said to send and ask Joseph forgive forgive And you know when they came to Joseph and said these things Joseph never said a word but it says he wept. Why did he weep?

I believe he said in his heart [00:36:03] they still don't know me.

And I want to just leave that with you beloved brethren tonight. Do you really know the heart of Christ? Oh yes you can say I know the love that led him to die for me at Calvary. But do you prove the feelings and the heart of Christ each day that you live?

Beloved brethren if we knew the feelings of Jesus at God's right hand even now it would have a dramatic effect upon each one of our hearts and lives because the more we are occupied with him the more we should be like him. Or that something of the attractiveness of Christ might fill and thrill our hearts tonight [00:37:03] that it might in the power of the Spirit of God be worked out in a practical way for God's glory and for the Lord's glory in each one of our lives. And be so for his name's sake.