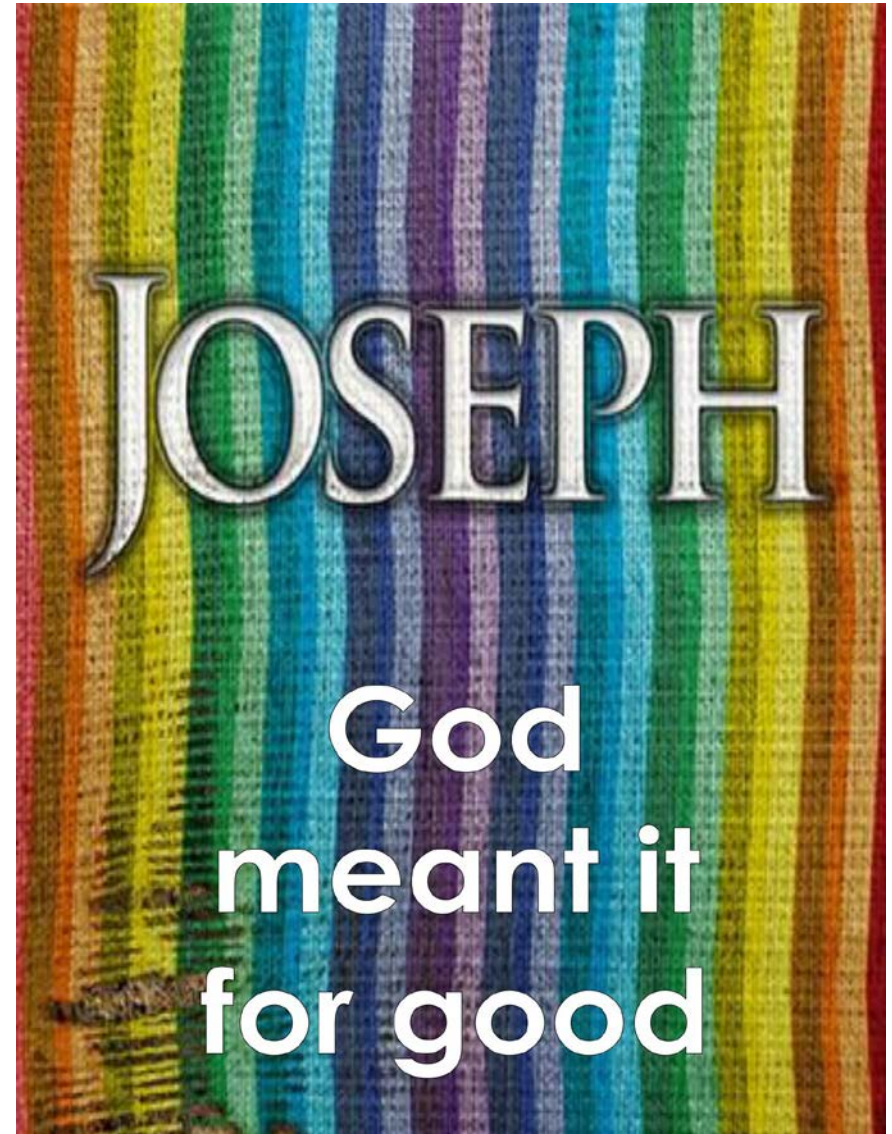


### Study Questions

Ice breaker: "Describe your past week in weather terms" (Was it sunny, cloudy, foggy, stormy or what?)

- 1/ How was Joseph's faith in this chapter?
- 2/ When is it hardest to pray and why?
- 3/ How did Potiphar's wife frame Joseph? Does this kind of thing happen today?
- 4/ How was God at work in this situation despite the injustice?
- 5/ What did his goodness get Joseph? (39v20-23)
- 6/ Why did Potiphar not kill Joseph? Do you think he believed his wife?
- 7/ Did the prison sentence shake Joseph's faith?
- 8/ How do we sustain a healthy prayer life even when the going gets tough?



**Viewfield Baptist Church, Dunfermline**

**Sermon 7- 7<sup>th</sup> April**

**"Coping when life stinks" Genesis 39**

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## “Coping when life stinks” Genesis 39

**“Prayer is the oxygen of the Soul.”** Individually and corporately we must be involved in the essential work of prayer.

Prayer was of paramount importance within the life of the early church. Prayer was central to their life together! In almost every chapter in Acts you find a reference to prayer, and the book makes it very clear that something happens when God’s people pray. We must make prayer the priority. It is the most important work. Try praying. However, sometimes when we pray it appears that God is not answering our prayers. We wonder where is God? What is he doing? Why is heaven silent?

Sometimes life can stink and God can feel wholly absent. It may be that suddenly and unexpectedly you lose a loved one. You may get called into the boss’s office to be told that they have to let you go. It may be the doctor telling you news that you didn’t want to hear. In the journey of life sometimes it stinks. Certainly in the rollercoaster of Joseph’s life this was often the case.

**Where we left the story?** The Lord had blessed Joseph and he was promoted to oversee all of Potiphar’s household. However, Potiphar’s wife had her eye on Joseph and began to come on to him. Joseph resisted the temptation but eventually she wouldn’t take no for an answer, so she grabbed him and then accused him of trying to rape her. Joseph was falsely accused and wrongly imprisoned. As we consider the end of chapter 39 we see that for Joseph at this point his life stinks.

As you mature in your faith you begin to realise that God has a purpose in our sufferings. God was working out his providential will for Joseph, for the nation of Israel and indeed for the whole world. This is the central theme of this whole story.

**Let’s consider how the Lord sustained Joseph during a time when his life stunk.**

### 1/ Falsely Accused v11-18

One day Potiphar’s wife finds Joseph alone in the house v11. I am sure this wasn’t a coincidence. She had decided that she was going to take things further with Joseph. Rather than verbal advances she now grabs him. *READ v12.* When Joseph rebuffs her advances and flees, her lust turns to hatred, and she makes a false accusation against him v13-18

The one who wanted to sleep with him now becomes vindictive against him. Having lusted after him, she now despised him- which resulted in a trumped up accusation of rape. Now she wanted revenge. To accomplish this she built a false case against Joseph, using a piece of circumstantial evidence- his robe. The false accusations are repeated twice as the tension is heightened and the shameful charges are levelled against God’s man.

But God is not through with his man Joseph, yet. God is not like us. He patiently and faithfully works in ways we would never employ. God sees far beyond this situation and knows what needs to be done deep within Joseph’s life as he prepares him for greatness in the years ahead. Therefore, he remains silent even although Joseph is falsely accused.

We could fast forward from here and think upon another who was falsely accused. We can consider the Lord Jesus and how he cried out to God: **“If it possible please take this cup of suffering from me. Yet not my will be your will be done.”** In both circumstances, *“Men meant it for evil but God meant it for good to accomplish now what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” Gen 50v20.* God’s ways higher than our ways.

Have you been falsely accused? It might not be as extreme as Joseph’s situation. It might be more subtle. It might be slander and gossip being spoken about you. When heaven appears silent, God is still at work. Take comfort from the fact that higher hands are holding you.

### 2/ Wrongly Imprisoned

As well as being falsely accused, Joseph is wrongly imprisoned. Understandably, Potiphar is seething with anger when he hears the news. *READ v19.* Consequently, Joseph is thrown in prison. Even in these moments we can see the hand of the Lord at work.

God spared his life and through being in the prison he would come into contact with Pharaoh **v20.** God also blessed him while in prison. **v20-23.**

We are told that while Joseph was in prison, **“the Lord was with him” v21, “The Lord showed him kindness” v21, “The Lord granted him favour with the prison warder”, He was given responsibility READ v22, The Lord blessed him READ v23.**

Even in the darkness of the prison experience God was present and was working out his plans for Joseph. This was all part of a work of preparation in Joseph so that God could work through him in greater ways. He had run Potiphar’s household, He was now running the prison, soon he will be running the country.

Sometimes the circumstances of life can stink.

**David Watson said: “Suffering can often produce great depths of character, mature understanding, warm compassion and rich spirituality.”**

**Harry Ward Beecher said: “Tears are often the telescope by which men see far into heaven.”**

So let’s try praying and keep praying despite the suffering and challenges we face.