

that rubbish and live as a slave to Jesus.

Jesus' relationship with his Father is what I believe I get a glimpse of in Joseph. His choices are a reflection of the LORD'S choices. So he chooses not to become bitter and resentful. He chooses not to hate his brothers and be angry with the world. And he is able to do this, not because of his will power, but because of the LORD'S will power. Once the LORD makes a choice, once it is his will, you can build your life on it.

Joseph in spite of all he encounters continues to choose letting what the

LORD has done, and has promised to do, shape his life.

Joseph had every opportunity to blame others, after all they are to blame, but he chooses not to. He chooses to hang in there with the LORD, even when I'm sure he had no idea how things would work out. I don't know about you but I certainly want to live like Joseph, trusting Jesus with my life, with my living, with my choices, even when life feels confusing and unfair. I want to be like Joseph and trust the Fathers' extravagant love for me, and for you, in Jesus.

Let's pray.

Jesus thank you for your forgiveness. Thank you that you don't live responding to my thoughtless words and harmful actions but that you always live focused on the Father and the extravagant love you share with him. Thank you that through your birth, death and resurrection we now can share in that same love. We can live free in you and not slaves to what or what doesn't happen in our lives, but we can bring you into every situation, so that you're love, mercy, grace, peace, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control can change our hearts and minds. Jesus fill us with the Holy Spirit that we daily live free in you. Amen.

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## Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am

Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

17 June 2012

## THE STORY OF JOSEPH

E100



This week as we have been following God's plan of salvation we have encountered Joseph. What did you find special about Joseph?

I'm amazed that I don't encounter a person who has become bitter and twisted by life. I'm amazed I don't find a person who blames everyone else for the sever suffering he goes through. It's interesting to note that he's sold into slavery, but his brothers live enslaved to their thoughts and emotions and Joseph is the one who lives free. I wonder where I'm enslaved? How am I living free?

Joseph's brothers hate him because they are jealous. Which is also the stated reason why Jesus is rejected. Jealousy is a powerful emotion in life. We

almost feel justified, after all it isn't fair for someone to prosper if I miss out. Have you ever had that kind of thought? Has jealous, or envy been having a nibble at you?

Joseph's brothers are jealous and that breeds hate. Who wants hate, anger, bitterness in their lives? Here's a sure way to get it; believe you're hard done by, believe someone is loved more than you and it isn't fair, believe it is your right to get the same, believe you are never good enough compared to another. Let jealous, envy have it's way with you and your heart and mind will be fertile ground for hate, anger, bitterness, getting even, to grow and flourish.

Here I found the Spirit opening a wonderful window on life; am I living a slave to envy, to

jealousy, wanting, needing what someone else has to enjoy my life? Or am I living free, enjoy the love I do have, making my life choices based on the love I do have, looking to give and grow in that relationship?

Joseph's brothers hated him, and they believed getting rid of him would enhance their life. Did it?

Have you ever been tempted to believe getting rid of another person would enhance your life? Have you ever been tempted along these lines? I have.

Did it make life better for the brothers? NO!

Joseph's brothers end up living with HUGE guilt. They have in their mind the image of their brother pleading for mercy, begging not to be

sold, but they heartlessly sell him. The guilt burns and grows to the point they believe the drought is God punishing them. And when Joseph reveals himself their initial reaction is **TERROR**. They project onto Joseph their years of guilt and their heartlessness.

Did it make life better getting rid of Joseph? Not at all.

Did it make their Father love them more now they had gotten rid of his favourite son? Hardly! They end up with Jacob removing himself even more, becoming a recluse as he mourns the loss of his son. They lose even more of their father.

This act of envy and hate looked so good at the time, but how would you describe the outcome? The slave traders are enslaved, but Joseph amazingly lives free!

Do you notice how the brothers come from the wrong place; what they

don't have? What difference would it have made if instead they simply chose to love their father to the best of their ability; not so he would love them more than Joseph but simply because he was their father? No strings attached.

I hear people saying; 'It wasn't fair that Jacob

### Are you a slave to envy or free to love?

loved Joseph more and showed favouritism'. And I hear my mother say; 'Tim, two wrongs don't make a right'. Just because someone hasn't treated me fairly, or I believe they haven't, does that justify me becoming envious, resentful, jealous, in other words, withholding my love from them?

Judah wasn't Joseph, he was Judah. How was Judah going to chose to love his Dad, for no other reason than he's his dad? Do you notice

how envy, jealousy, this it's not fair thinking, begins with the belief that life owes me, that my father owes me, it's my right.

Actually God the Father doesn't owe you anything. How do you think I would go living with a chip on my shoulder believing everyone owes me?

And then we have the amazing contrast of Joseph. Now if anyone could have developed a chip on their shoulder and felt hard done by it was Joseph.

But I don't hear of hatred or revenge. I read this amazing phrase; "The LORD was with Joseph..." (Gen. 39:2) What a beautiful phrase. I'd love to hear; 'Jesus was with Tim'. 'Jesus is with Tim'. That's my heart's desire.

I don't think the LORD could have been with Joseph if he'd chosen to foster a heart of resentment and bitterness and offered no

forgiveness. Resentment, bitterness, being unforgiving, these attitudes never grows you close to another person. Being angry, lashing out in hurt, being totally frustrated never grows you close to another person. Playing the blame game never grows you close to another. Does it feel right at times? Sure. Does it feel justified at times? Sure. Will it destroy you every time? Sure.

Do you notice with the brothers how often they play the blame game? Joseph is open and honest with his Dad and the brothers point the finger of blame at him; he's a goodie, goodie. I'm even tempted to see Joseph as the problem; but the reality is the brothers are living from a sense of inferiority, their mother isn't a legal bride, and certainly not the favoured Rachel, and they have not loved their father but robbed him by their slack work. These brothers remain slaves to their inferiority, hurt and

jealousy as long as they play the blame game, pointing to Joseph who needs to change not them. But Joseph is the one with the open and honest relationship with his father. Where am I tempted to play the blame game?

'The LORD was with Joseph' so that Joseph lived from what he had,

### Who do you build your life on?

not what he had lost. Joseph lived from a trust in the LORD who he came to know threw his father. The father who loved him extravagantly. The LORD who had revealed to Joseph a future very different to what he experienced when he was sold into slavery. Joseph must have trusted that the LORD was with him, and he drew on that wonderful relationship.

When reading the story of Joseph at times it felt to me like I was getting a

glimpse of Jesus and his Father. What kept Jesus from becoming bitter and twisted when his friends betrayed him, deserted him, when he was wrongfully condemned to death because of other's envy, jealousy and mob mentality? Jesus was focused on his Father's love, on that special relationship they shared.

Jesus chose to live from the Father's love and not what other people did or didn't do to him.

This also reminds me that one of the chief qualities of God's love is his choice to love. God's love isn't fickle, but he can be relied on. Once he makes a commitment it can be relied on. Once the LORD makes a promise you can build your life on it, you can let your living be shaped by it, you can let your choices be a reflection of the LORD'S choice. You can live free. Free from the slavery of envy, jealousy, hurt, hate, bitterness, resentment, it's unfair. I certainly want to live free of all