Study of Joseph - Part 3

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[0:00] Now, seeking the Lord's blessing, we'll turn to the scriptures which we read in the book of Genesis, the 39th chapter. And we'll read at verse 7.

Genesis 39 at verse 7. And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph, and she said, Lie with me.
But he refused and said to his master's wife, Behold, my master knoweth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand. There is none greater in this house than I.
Neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?
Particularly these last words of verse 9. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? Now, we saw how Joseph was betrayed by his brothers, and how he was sold to the Ishmaelites for 20 shekels of silver, which was the price of a young common slave.
[1:34] That was what they esteemed their brother to be worth. And that was a type of the way in which the Jews would treat the Lord Jesus Christ, who came to save them.

Judas himself would sell him for 30 pieces of silver, again the price of a slave. Now, once Joseph is sold to Egypt, that leaves behind a family home that is suddenly wracked with great guilt.
And there are signs already that the brothers, for the first time, are feeling some kind of consciousness of guilt when they try to comfort their own father, and their father refuses to be comforted.
And Jacob, on his own part, is so overwhelmed with grief that he cannot seem to get over it at all. The Lord hath smitten himself, and he is bitterly wounded, and he says that he will go to the grave, weeping for his son.
Now, although the situation looks desperate, and I'm sure it did for Jacob, and I'm sure it did for Joseph as he was making his way in that Ishmaelite caravan down to Egypt.
[2:43] Though it looked desperate for him and for Jacob, who was wondering how on earth his family would ever bring the messianic seed into the world. Nonetheless, God was at work in all this.

He was at the helm, and he was still in its midst. And there are many times in which God works in such a way that it is impossible for us at times to discern him.
We just need to lay hold, by faith, of the fact that he is in control of our lives and of the situation in which we found. And this was one of these instances for Jacob and for Joseph.
But when the curtain falls in Canaan over a bitterly divided and guilty home, it rises in Egypt. And it's the Lord's purpose to bring his own chosen one down into Egypt.
And there he's going to raise and exalt him to bring repentance to his own brothers. Now, when the curtain rises in Egypt, it rises over one of the greatest civilizations in the history of the world.
[3:48] And most of you, to some degree or another, are aware of that. That the Egyptian civilization, certainly at points, was amongst the greatest in the world. Now, at this particular point, when Joseph is sold into the Egyptian country, we are placed, say, around about 1800 BC.

And it is the time of the late Middle Kingdom, or perhaps the beginning of what they call the Second Intermediate Period. And in that time, an interesting providence took place, and that was this, that a new group of rulers began to rule, or they began to become pharaohs in Egypt.
They were known as the Hyksos people. And they were shepherd kings, basically Semitic people from Asia. They entered into Egypt in considerable numbers, and they entered in at a time of weakness and division.
And they speedily entered into positions of power and influence, until eventually they seized the throne. And they became very powerful dynasties.

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Now, their dynasties continued until the 17th dynasty, when a new king arose. You remember how Exodus opens by saying that a new king arose who knew not Joseph.
[5:09] What that means is this, that a new dynasty appeared in Egypt that had no respect for the Israelite people. And that was the advent of the 18th dynasty. And the very first pharaoh of the 18th dynasty, Amose I, he drove out the Hyksos people.

And that is why that fiercely nationalistic dynasty turned against the Jewish people and oppressed them in Egypt. But up to that point, when the Hyksos were still ruling, while they were still the pharaohs, there was great tolerance in Egypt towards incomers, especially those of a Semitic background.
They had a very open policy, especially if you were a Shemite. Now, isn't it interesting how the providence of God is ruling over all things, all events, the times, the seasons, the places.
The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord. And he ordains this new dynasty just at the time when this young Semitic man is sold as a slave into Egypt.
And on this day when the Ishmaelite caravan appears, this slave which they bring, now we have no way of knowing if he was the only slave or not.
[6:24] But certainly this slave, Joseph, was put into the marketplace where slaves were usually bought and sold. And who saw him but this man Potiphar, the captain of the guard, a man of a very privileged position, a man of great power and influence underneath Pharaoh.

Now, he immediately saw Joseph as a young man with stature, a man of strength. And with the kind of master's eye that would be used to these things, he would immediately say, this is a man who I want in my household, involved in the affairs of my household.
And he bought him. And so Joseph is sold into the household of this man Potiphar. Now, Potiphar immediately discovers that Joseph is a very reliable man.
Because the Lord was with Joseph and he was a prosperous man. And verse 3, his master saw that the Lord was with him. In other words, Potiphar himself recognized that Joseph was a unique individual.
And that there was a power with him. There was a righteousness in him. There was a nobility in his soul that set him apart from himself. And that set him apart from everyone else around him. And he saw that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand.
[7:47] And the result of that is that Potiphar elevates Joseph and makes him an overseer over his whole household. Until the point finally arrives when he puts him over absolutely everything and feels that he has no need to look after anything himself.

Joseph is as reliable as though he had been his firstborn son. He doesn't find him a cheat. He doesn't find him a liar. He has Christian honesty. He has Christian uprightness.
His word can be relied upon. His life can be relied upon. Because he fears the Lord. And he is upright in all these things. And not only that. But because of Joseph's presence in the house, the Lord greatly blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake.
Just as God blessed the house of Obed-Edom when the ark of God was in it, so Joseph blessed Potiphar's house for Joseph's sake.
And the Lord blesses many a home because a Christian person is in it. The Lord blesses his people. And many of us perhaps in this place, many of you are experiencing goodness at the hands of God.
[9:02] Not perhaps because of yourself, but because of someone else closely identified or associated with you. That doesn't mean that you're saved. It didn't mean that Potiphar was saved.

But it meant that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake. The Lord takes care of his own and he makes them a blessing. And so finally, as I said in verse 6, he left everything that he had in Joseph's hand.
Now in many respects, that reminds us again of the Savior. It is as though the history of the Savior is again being brought before us. He appears in the world, in the darkness of the Egypt of this world.
And he appears in a low condition. He appears as someone who was born in Nazareth. Someone who was born in poverty. Born in a stable. But even as he grows up, there is a certain nobility about him that men are constrained to recognize.
And that's why it's written at the beginning of the Gospels that he grew in stature and in favor with God and man. And God's stamp was on Joseph.

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[10:13] And there were evidences that he was God's man. And that was a visible thing in Joseph's own life. Now, you can't expect that to happen without the devil going into action.

And so he does. After all, here is a child of God entering the very citadel of the devil, Egypt. The devil goes into action.
He's tried already to destroy Joseph by roaring like a lion. But he's not going to roar like a lion this time. He's going to hiss like a serpent.
And in that way, he's going to seek if he can bring down the child of God. Now, you learn to watch, my friend, for the lion and for the serpent. It's one thing for the devil to tear you apart.
It's another thing for the devil to undermine you and to subtly enter into your life. And that's the way he saw to come into Joseph's life. Because not only had Joseph found favor in the eyes of men, but in another different way, he had found favor in the eyes of a woman.
[11:22] And this woman was all too willing to be the agent of the devil in bringing Joseph down in Egypt. Now, we're told that after these things in verse 7, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph, and she said, Lie with me.

Now, I want to look with you at three things. First, the temptation. Secondly, how Joseph resisted it. And thirdly, the outcome of that.
The temptation, how he resisted it, and the outcome of that. Now, the temptation. She cast her eyes on him and said, Lie with me.
Now, there's an obvious element to that that I have no need to elaborate on. It is an appeal to the carnal instinct. It is an appeal to the flesh. And there is no doubt that this woman, being a woman of power, being married to Potiphar, the captain of the guard, would in all likelihood be an attractive, perhaps an intelligent woman.
And she seeks to ensnare Joseph in that way. But like every temptation, it is perhaps not just as simple as that. And there are elements in this temptation that make it a little more complex.
[12:44] Let's put it this way. Who, after all, is Joseph? Well, he has appeared in Egypt as a slave. Yes, but that's an appearance.

In a sense, it might be a reality. But deeper down, there is another truth. Who is he? What is he? Well, he is a son. He's the son of a prince with God.
He is the son of Israel. What is more, as far as Joseph is concerned, in spite of his circumstances, he's a man of rank. He's a man of dignity. And he is a man of destiny.
Appointed by God to attain great things and to do a great work. Did he not see that in his dreams? Did God not tell him, as a young man, that the Lord was going to use him and was going to do a mighty work through him.
That was his position. That was his rank. And that was his dignity. And I'm sure it was a contradiction to Joseph to find himself in the circumstances in which he was when he was really the man entitled to wear the coat of many colors, when he was the heir of the land of Canaan, when he was the heir of the world and the channel of blessing and the channel of mercy.
[14:01] That is who Joseph was. Now, if you look at that in one way, and just wait till I finish before you pass judgment on the thing I'm saying. If you look at it one way, you'll understand that this invitation from a woman in such high position and in such power would be a flattery to himself.

As much as to say, well, here is someone who does recognize that I am a man of stature, or a man of destiny, or a man of power.
Here is an invitation from this woman that would pander to that instinct if it existed in Joseph in any kind of wrong way at all. Let me put it this way.
If he succumbs to this, will he not gain a position of power and influence for himself? The world would be his oyster.
Anything would be open to him. To rise to the giddy heights of power, where in Canaan, not just in Canaan, but in Egypt. To reach perhaps to the top, or as near to the top as possible, in one of the greatest civilizations and countries of the world.
[15:13] Now, my friend, when you look at it that way, how messianic all this becomes, and how closely it relates to the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Just go back a few Sabbath nights to the temptation of the Lord in the wilderness.

Satan comes to him. Just after the word of God said to Christ, This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. Immediately after that, Christ is driven out into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit.

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And he fasts forty days and nights, and he is hungry. And Satan comes and says, If you are a son, if that is your rank and your dignity, if that's the position and the stature that belongs to you, then why not take these stones and turn them into bread?
Why should you put up with a wilderness? Why should you be in this situation? Alleviate yourself and make the stones bread. Eat them and be satisfied.
Is that not the same kind of way in which Joseph is being got at by Satan here? In a different sense, but the same kind of way. Use your stature.
[16:26] Use your dignity. And get into a position of power or a position of influence. Or let me relate it to the third temptation of Christ. The devil comes to him and brings him to the top of a high mountain.

And what does he say? All these things will I give you if you will just fall down and worship me. Can you not hear the serpent hissing in Potiphar's wife?
All this Egyptian glory, Joseph, is yours if you will just fall down and do as I require of you. And Satan hisses through her mouth in order to make Joseph succumb.
And that is a test. And it's not just a simple test of whether Joseph is a man self-controlled by the grace and the power of God. It's not just a test of that. It's a test of this.
Whether Joseph loves his brothers or not. It's a test of whether Joseph loves what God has asked him to do to bring a spiritual ministry and a spiritual mission into the world.
[17:28] Or whether Joseph just wants to serve himself and to serve the lusts of his own flesh. Is that not the real point at issue? Put it this way.

If Joseph really just wants one up on his brethren, if he wants glory and fame for himself, then he'll succumb. But if he's God's man, and if he lives by the grace of God, and if he's dependent on God, then he will follow the path that God has ordained for him.
And it's not just not the difference between the true believer and the man of the world. Satan is always putting in your ear, my friend, you who are not a believer, that if you walk this way, you'll get power in the world.
You'll get advancement. It may even involve something like this. How many people advance in business in the world in this kind of way? Today. Thousands upon thousands.
This is the means through which they advance. And all the time Satan is saying, you will advance. You'll get dignity. You'll get popularity.
[18:34] Stature. Respect. Money. Wealth. Influence. Power. All the pantheon of gods which this world has. You will be them.

They will be you. All these things will I give you if you fall down and worship me. And that is precisely what you do. Whether you do it consciously or not, you are falling down by serving the lusts of the flesh and you are worshipping Satan for something that will appear to you at the end of the day as just a mess of pottage.
He fools you. And he deceives you. He promises you glory. And he gives you nothing. Nothing. But what will waste and vaporize away.
And I think I mentioned with respect to the temptation of Christ itself that when the Lord refused to fall down and worship him. When he refused to turn the stones into bread.
Oh, he had to pass through a valley after that. He didn't get his reward as it were immediately. He had to descend deep into the valley. But how does Christ leave the world? He leaves it on top of a mountain.
[19:46] And on top of the mountain he says to the disciples, all power in heaven and in earth is given unto me. Now I can't help but relate that to the temptation at the beginning of his ministry.

The devil took him to a mountain and said, I'll give it to you. All of it. Christ said no. And even to march into Canaan and destroy all his brothers.
But he didn't take it because he loved the Lord and he was in this world to serve his God. He didn't take it. What happened? Did he get his reward immediately?
No, he did not. He went down, down, down into the depths of a dungeon. But, what happens finally? He is exalted.
He is exalted by God and he becomes a means of repentance and blessing to others. That's the desire of Joseph Sartre. Is that the desire of yours, my friend? Is it to be good?
[20:44] To do good? To be a blessing? To be blessed? To do the work of the kingdom and to serve Christ as long as you have breath in this world? Now, if it's you desire to advance yourself,

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then the devil will find his way with you.

And there are many, many people who even wear the name of Christ who desire nothing but self-advancement and self-glorification. Joseph was not one of those.
Notice this temptation. It wasn't just a one-off thing in verse 10. It came to pass as she spake to Joseph day by day that he hearken not unto her to lie by her or to be with her.
Day by day. Now, you know yourself that a temptation that occurs day by day is far more difficult to resist than a temptation which just comes once.
And that's the end of it. Joseph was exposed to the hissing serpent in this woman over a prolonged period of time. And that brings me to the second thing. How is it that Joseph resists this temptation? [21:58] And after all, if we understand how he resists this temptation, we have some kind of key or handle into resisting temptation ourselves. It is around and sometimes it will come strongly in one form or another and we are all required to withstand temptation.

How does he do it? Well, first of all, and I can't emphasize this enough, he tries as hard as he can to avoid it. If you're prone to stealing apples, stay outside the orchard.
Simple as that. Notice at the end of verse 10, he hearkened not unto her to lie by her or to be with her. That was the first resolution.
This is where the temptation is coming from. I will do my utmost to avoid being there or to be in the vicinity once he recognizes that that temptation is present.
Now, as I say, that's of the utmost importance. And it's of the utmost importance to mean it. Someone once said that many people when they run from temptation leave a forwarding address. [23:07] And I think that's very true. I think that's very true. The best way to run from it is really not to be too near it. Once you sense it and once you see it.

Now, sometimes that can be difficult. Take Joseph's situation. He is a servant or he is a slave in Potiphar's house. It's not easy.
But he still ensures that as far as possible he is not in the presence of this woman. No. If that is his attitude he will experience the help of God.
There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man. But God is faithful who will make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it.
You are looking to the Lord and dependent upon him and trusting him. Then he will give you that way of escape. He'll give you that way of escape.
[24:07] Now, I'm conscious that a crisis came here. One day Joseph went in and there was just for some reason in the providence of God no one else around. And she seized a hold of him and she caught his garment and she said lie with me.

And what does he do? Well, he doesn't stay. He doesn't plead a sophistry. He doesn't try a casuistry of any kind. He doesn't try a special pleading. None of that.
He doesn't in the heat of a crisis stay to argue the thing. He leaves his garment and out he goes. She sees his garment and lays hold of him. He shakes off the outer garment and he steps outside the house.
Now, I'll tell you a fact that Joseph would never have responded with such strength had he not been prepared beforehand for that. Had he not been a man who was fighting temptation in his day-to-day life he would never have responded to that in a crisis.
And should that not give you yourself a cause for alarm or a cause for self-examination? What if you were exposed to some kind of crisis? Whether of this kind or another how would you respond? [25:17] Can you say that day by day with Joseph you have been resisting and seeking the help and the grace of God in this matter? That's what made him strong in a crisis. Nobody stands in a crisis unless he has stood before the crisis or prepared for the crisis.

If I am a weak unprepared man then unless God by some miracle rescues me out of the situation in a crisis you will fall.
You will fall. And the consequences of that, well what are they? The chastisement of the Lord. And as we've seen often enough in the life of Jacob and in the life of David the chastisement of the Lord is not something that you can say oh it's just the Lord's chastisement.
It is a terrible and crushing weight to come upon you when it appears. In other words you can only stand in a crisis if you're preparing for the crisis throughout your life.
You've got to be ready and Joseph was ready. He was sincerely trying to avoid the thing and when it came he had grace to stand and he had grace to flee.

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[26:25] Now as I said he didn't stay around to argue it. It was a sin. If you try and step in in a situation of this kind and try and argue the thing you will not do it.

The devil is extremely clever. Joseph had only one resource and that was God's grace. He knew it was a sin. He knew it was a wrong and so he fled and left his garment behind.
Now let me just relate that to every single temptation. You could be under the power of one particular temptation tonight. Now when I say keep away from it I mean that.
Learn to identify not only where that temptation is but where you are likely to meet it.
and in so far as possible avoid these things. Now of course we all know people who try and stop say something like even cigarettes or something and they keep a packet of cigarettes right in front of them or they carry it in their pocket.
[27:37] Now I don't know that may somehow work for some people but that's not a biblical principle against temptation. The way to resist temptation is not to keep it close to you and to take a kind of stoic resistance and say I'm determined to get close to this but yet resist it.

That's not the biblical way. The biblical way is to flee from the thing and to avoid the places where you are likely to come in contact with. If it is drink or something like that that is particularly prone to take over or to master you put it out of the house.
Don't take it in. Put it out. And don't go to places or situations where you are liable to be caught into that kind of thing. That is the biblical way. Now as I said providence may sometimes take you into situations where you are confronted with a thing.
But if you have been earnestly trying to withstand it up to then God will make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it. But don't let me plead that promise if I haven't been sincerely trying to keep away from a thing.
If I am just flirting around something let me not think oh if the crisis comes I'll be helped. It doesn't just work like that. That is not the law of the spiritual kingdom at all.
[28:50] The way of escape you'll find is not present. There will be a fall and you will reap the bitter fruits of it. You will reap the bitter fruits of it. Now very well then that's what he did.

He resisted. He took care that he wasn't near her. He didn't lie by her or he was not with her. Crisis came and he withstood.
But what was his secret? Well there's a few things I want to mention to you. First of all you'll notice that he recognizes that sin hurts people.
Now I'm not taking the greatest first I'm just taking them in this order. He recognizes that sin hurts people. Now I'm going to show you in a moment that the marriage between Potiphar and his wife wasn't the best in the world.
But Joseph knew that nothing gave him license to enter into that most sacred bond between a man and his wife where the two become one flesh.
[29:54] And I say that most sacred bond. Adultery, just like murder, was punishable in the Old Testament by death. That is how that bond is viewed by God.

And it is a heinous crime for a man or a woman to enter into that relationship which God has appointed between two others. And Joseph knew it.
He says, my master knows not what is with me in this house. He has committed it all to my hand.
He has kept back nothing from me. Notice how he's using arguments to prevail with herself.
He's kept back nothing from me but you because you are his wife. sin hurts people. Adultery hurts people. Unfaithfulness, breaches of trust, these things hurt people.
They wreak havoc in people's souls and Joseph remembers that. He doesn't think of sin as a light thing with little consequence. He recognizes the havoc that it wreaks in the world.
[30:59] The hurt, the torment, the despair, the anguish. He knows that these things flow from sin. And he's not going to be a party to that. But that roots in something deeper.

That roots in something deeper. What's that? Well, his consciousness that it is a sin primarily against God. How then can I do this wickedness, this great wickedness and sin against God?
Now again, I can't emphasize this enough. Joseph was, in the last analysis, a man of God. Out and out, through and through, a man of God.
And was God that concerned him most of all. How can I do it, he says, and sin against God who watches over me, God who gave me his law, God who loved me and called me with an everlasting love, the God who is cleansing and purifying me, the God who died in the second person of Christ, died upon the cross in human nature.

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How can I sin against such a God? That is what restrained him and that is what kept him. It wasn't a case of, oh what do people find out?
[32:19] Or, what if I'm caught? That wouldn't keep a person and if it did, of what worth is it? That wouldn't keep a person. What kept him as this, is how can I sin against God?

Or see to it, that your relationship with God and mine with God is so strong that it prevails with us in things like this, that it keeps us from sin and makes us cleave to the path of holiness.
And let's flee from that relationship with God that is so weak that it doesn't desist us from anything.
How can I do this, he says, and sin against God?
And notice, he also gives the thing its proper name. He says, how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?
Is that what you would call adultery? I wonder. How many people in the United Kingdom tonight would call adultery a great wickedness? How many magazines today advocate it?
[33:23] Advocate it? And I don't just mean indirectly, but actually advocate it as a positive thing. Now, you might not do that, but I wonder if you bring it down by doing other things.

For example, you call it by a euphemism. You've euphemized the thing right down to nothing. You call it an affair, or perhaps a fling, or something of that kind.
Now, what do you do when you give names like that to a thing like this? Well, you make it a small, innocuous little thing. That's what you do. You give it a name that makes it just an irrelevant little thing that you can just push to the side and forget about.
Joseph says, how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? And it's interesting that every kind of sexual sin is euphemized in our society today.
It's given a name that makes it moral, or amoral maybe, but certainly not immoral. For example, alternative lifestyle.
[34:28] What's more harmless than that? An alternative lifestyle. I suppose it's like choosing one loaf of bread over another. Alternative lifestyle. Is that what God calls it?

When you start using the vocabulary of the wicked, don't be surprised if you begin to adopt the lives of the wicked. Call it its name. Call it adultery.
and recognize that although you might escape in this world, the adulterer will not escape the judgment of God in the world to come.
And Proverbs tells us that very clearly in chapter 6 and verse 32. Proverbs 6 and verse 32.
Whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding, he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. He that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.
[35:28] A wound and dishonor shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away. His reproach shall not be wiped away. As Hebrews tells us, the marriage bed is honorable, but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Now, I know there's not much preaching on that kind of thing, it was a well-known fact that, well, I'll just leave that. Now, he saw the evil of sin, and God was first, and because of that, he withstood.
Now, let's move to the outcome of it. You notice the effect that this has on the woman. In verse 12, she caught him by his garment saying, lie with me.
And he left his garment in her hand and fled and got him out. And it came to pass when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and was fled forth, that she called to the men of her house and spake to them, saying, see, he hath brought in a Hebrew unto us to mock us.
He came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice. It came to pass when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me and fled and got him out.
[36:47] Now, here is the woman scorned and here is the fury of the woman scorned. Her advances have been resisted, and the desire which she had has turned very quickly to hatred and contempt.

Now, that is pride. It's nothing but pride, the sin of the devil. And she lays the garment beside her. What a picture that is. It's only a touch by the hand of the Holy Spirit.
He just writes this, that she lays the garment beside her until his Lord came home. You can almost picture her looking at it, ensuring it's there, nursing her wrath, and she's laid her plan, and the plan's ready to be hatched.
And sure enough, the master comes home, and she tells Potiphar her own version of the story, that the Hebrew, this Hebrew, she says, to hold him in contempt, came in to mock me.

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She says, but I've got his garment, and here is the evidence. And Potiphar is enraged, and he seizes Joseph, and he casts him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound, and he was there in the prison.
[38:07] Do you think Potiphar actually believed his wife 100%? Well, I do not, and I'll tell you why. There's a few reasons for it.

In the first place, he only ends up in the prison. Now, a crime like this would have usually been punishable with death right away, no questions asked. But he only casts Joseph into the prison. Secondly, a woman as persistent as this woman was with Joseph cannot possibly have gone unnoticed all the time by Potiphar himself.
I'm sure that a man with his own power and with his own influence suspects perhaps that it might just not be the way that his wife has said it. Now, he has a lot to lose himself.
He has his own pride. He has many things to protect, so it's convenient for him to deal with Joseph in this way, but you get the feeling that perhaps all is not well. And notice clearly here that Potiphar and his own wife are not the way they should be.
[39:12] Let's take for example verse 14. When his wife called the servants into the house, verse 14, she called to the men of her house and spake unto them, saying, see, he hath brought in a Hebrew unto us to mock us.

Now, there's something offhand there in the way that she speaks about her own husband. See, he has brought in a Hebrew unto us to mock us. There is nothing of the respect that the word of God tells us should be there or that you would expect to be there.
There's none of that. He has brought in a Hebrew to mock us and to mock me especially. Potiphar is suspicious that something is not right, but he casts Joseph into prison.
What kind of prison is Joseph cast into? Is it a place where he has liberty and where he can walk around? Well, perhaps you would think so, but the Psalms, oh, how often the Psalms put light on certain things in the scriptures and show us that it's not quite the way you would perhaps think it was.
We saw that this morning with respect to the pillar of cloud. The Psalms tells us that the pillar of cloud diffused over the people, that it wasn't just upright. And here we're told something else.
[40:27] What kind of prison was he in? Well, Psalm 105. And verse 18. Even Joseph, whom unnaturally sell for a slave did they, whose feet with fetters they did hurt, and he in irons lay.

Whose feet with fetters they did hurt, and he in irons lay. he was tied with chains in the depths of the king's dungeon, so tightly that the iron cut into the skin of his body.
Why? Because he was obedient to God. That's why. Does obedience to God lead you out in a rosy path? Ask Joseph.
Ask Moses in the wilderness. Ask John the Baptist in the dungeon just before he had his head cut off. Ask Jeremiah when he's in a dungeon up to his armpits. Disobedience to God means that everybody thinks you're great and you can just roll along.
It does not. obedience to God means reproach, means suffering, means testing, means trial. And that is what Joseph discovered.
[41:52] Now, this is a wonderful verse in the Psalms here. It's a wonderful verse. Listen to this. Verse 19. Until the time that his word came to give him liberty.

That's the word of God which gave Joseph liberty. That was some 10 years to come. The word and purpose of the Lord did him in prison trial.
Ah, my friend, what I'm saying is this. What was his greatest trial in the prison? It was the word of God and the purpose of God. What does God mean by this?
And what word of God, the dreams that he received not so long ago. How Satan came to him and said to him, look at you, Joseph.
Look at you. What a pathetic shadow of what you thought God was telling you you would be. Here you are, a wreck of a man, a nobody in the heart of the king's dungeon in Egypt when you thought you would be having the birthright over your brethren in Canaan.
[43:04] God's paths, my friend, are mysterious, mysterious. I spoke of him today as being a mysterious, inscrutable guide. That is how he is. His ways are in the deep.

His paths are in the sea. He takes us in the most unusual ways, but he works out his own purposes. This word of God tried Joseph until it came to pass.

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Until he saw it fulfilled, it tried him. Now, have you noticed that pattern, Christian friend, in your own life? God gives you a word, he gives you a promise, gives you a portion of scripture, and then suddenly you're led into a providence that is just directly against it.
As much as to say, well, here it is, do you believe what I gave you or not? And it's in the teeth of your providence that you have to say, yes, Lord, I believe, and I will hold on, and I will cling on, and I will hold on fast, until I see the thing being brought to pass.
That is God's way. His people are a tried people, they are a tested people, and that's what Joseph discovered in his own life.
[44:13] But what is this but really the humiliation of the Savior? Is that not right? Is this not his Golgotha? Is this not his place of the skull?

Has he not now gone into the place where he can say, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Has he not gone down as low as he can go?
Yes, he has. Just as Christ was going on the cross to descend as low as he could possibly go and cry, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And is the devil not casting in Christ's teeth there upon the cross?
Let go your hold upon God. Let go your notion of being a son. You are a condemned, you are a cursed man. Curse God and die.
Is that not what Satan was casting in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross? But what does the Lord say? He says this, thou art he out of the womb that did me safely take.
[45:14] When I was on my mother's breasts, thou me to hope didst make. And I was cast upon thy care, even from the womb till now, and from my mother's belly, Lord, my God and guide art thou.

He never lost his faith, and he never lost his hope on the cross. And it's important to understand that. It's one thing for the Savior to be in darkness, and to experience darkness, and to feel darkness.
It's another thing to say that his faith was extinguished, and that his hope was lost. No, that would be blasphemous to say that. But he held on in darkness, and you'll have a measure of that.
Let me tell you, at some point in your Christian life, you'll have a measure of that, where you can't really see much light. But you'll just have to hold on, and you'll have to keep going, and trust in the Lord, and he'll bring it to pass.
You'll see his promise fulfilled, and he will bring you to a place of liberty, and a place of wealth, and you will praise and bless the Lord for all that he has done for you.
[46:18] And, interestingly, after a short time, you'll notice how Joseph's situation changes. I want to close just with this. Notice how the chapter closes.

It closes as it began. It's again a case of two brackets here. It closes like this in verse 21, But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.
And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's and all the prisoners that were in the prison, and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand, because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.
Ah, my friend, you can't extinguish a gospel light. You can't kill off a good man. You can't do it. Here he is, and the light shines.
After a while, the keeper of the prison says, there's something remarkable about this man. he unlocks the irons. He lets them out. He stays in the dungeon, but he has some liberty.
[47:30] And he's given an oversight of the other prisoners in the darkness with him. Is this not Christ entering the darkness and about to save those who are in the darkness?

Ah, we'll see, my friend. Next time we're together, that's exactly what this is. In his humiliation, he is working, and he is about to be exalted.
May the Lord give us grace to hold on to himself at all times. Let us pray. O eternal one, teach us the evil of sin and the danger of temptation, and help us to have Christian lives that will be ready to stand when a temptation comes.
O may we not have these weak lives, and these lives of cold and decayed spirituality that enters into sin and that reaps a fearful reward.
Keep us, O Lord, and watch over us. For Christ's sake, amen.

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