

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF JOSEPH

4. Handling Injustice

(Leader's Notes)

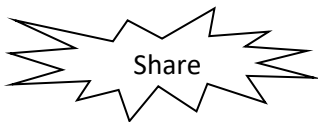


Have you ever been blamed or treated unfairly by others? We may wonder why these things happen to people who try and do what is right. Joseph could have asked these same questions! Not only was he treated unfairly by his brothers, but also by his master, even though he had served him faithfully. As if that was not enough, he was falsely accused of something he had not done.

Scripture Reading: Genesis 39:20-23

- ☆ What was Joseph accused of, and how was he subsequently treated? Genesis 39:17, 20, 40:15
Compare this with Psalm 105:17-19.

(He was accused of sexual misconduct and as a result, thrown into a dungeon. In Psalm 105 we see that his neck was put into irons and his feet into shackles.)

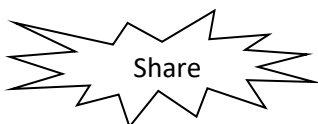


Put yourself in Joseph's place. How do you think he must have felt?
Have you ever been falsely accused? Share your experience.

Joseph was no different to us. He must have had questions in his mind and felt betrayed and angry at being falsely accused. As we see in Genesis 40:14-15, he wanted to get out of prison! When we face unjust situations like this it is easy to become bitter, but Joseph did not. There is so much we can learn from his example.

- ☆ How did Joseph respond to the injustices he experienced? What helped him respond in this way?
Genesis 45:4-8, 50:15-21

(He responded by choosing to forgive those who had treated him unjustly. Also he came to understand that God had used these things to fulfil his plan, not just for his own life, but his entire family. Perhaps one of the things that helped him and gave him courage, was the dreams God had given him at the age of seventeen.)



Are there any difficult experiences you can look back on, where you now see that God has used this to accomplish his purposes in your life, and perhaps that of your family too? Share.

Conclusion

Joseph's life foreshadowed that of Jesus. Both were treated unjustly! When Jesus was beaten and nailed to a cross, he said, "Father forgive them." He understands what it is like to be treated unfairly, and he is able to give us strength and comfort when we go through similar things. In Hebrews 4:15-16 it says, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."