

Doing Time

Participant's Handout

Big Idea: Joseph serves as a model on how to respond to massive setbacks.

Sermon Preview

As we look at the life of Joseph (Genesis 37-40), we see how well he serves as a model on how to respond to massive setbacks in our own lives. How are we to respond to massive setbacks in our own lives? We are to . . .

1. Believe God is working invisibly.
2. Persevere faithfully.
3. The result: God expands our influence and responsibility.

How are we to respond to massive setbacks?

I. Believe God is working invisibly.

Read Genesis 40:1-23. How do we see God working invisibly?

Read Genesis 39:2-5, 21, 23. What words/concepts are repeated that lead us to believe God is working invisibly? In what ways?

II. Persevere faithfully.

What kind of affect can massive setbacks have on our lives?

In what ways could have Joseph been derailed in persevering faithfully?

III. God expands our influence and responsibility.

Read Genesis 39:4,-6, 8, 22. What word do we find repeated and the point the author was making?

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Group Engagement Questions (after sermon)

Icebreaker Question: Pastor Jason opens with the setbacks of Abraham Lincoln's life. Why do you think he was able to persevere? What setback in your life have you experienced, and how did you respond? Or, who have you witnessed overcome a massive setback in their life, and what qualities made an impression on you?

Group Question: What were some points from the sermon that made an impact or challenged you the most? What phrases, points, quotes or illustrations resonated with you and why?

Group Question: In what ways have you experienced a coincidence that might just be God working invisibly in your own life?

Group Question: How does it change your outlook on setbacks knowing that God is with you?

Group Question: Who in your life has displayed a steadfast love for you, or vice versa? How does that affect your relationship with them?

Group Exercise: Read Romans 8:26-28. For those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ are given a helper, the Holy Spirit. In what ways is this passage reassuring? In what ways do you struggle with it? What does this reveal about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit? (The idea of 3 persons, yet 1 God, as the Holy Trinity).

Group Question: Massive setbacks can take place in relationships or just due to the nature of the circumstances whether it be in marriage, the workplace, school, neighbors, health, loss of dreams, or loss of loved ones. Even as believers in Jesus Christ, we are not promised a life free from suffering. But God knows your circumstances, and promises that He is there with you. Life is change, and some changes are beyond our control. However, we do have control over the choices we make. Joseph chose to honor God in making faithful choices. What would help you to persevere faithfully? What is making it so hard? What area of your life do you struggle the most in persevering faithfully, whether externally with other people, or internally?

Rule of Faithfulness

To escape the distress caused by regret for the past or fear about the future, this is the rule to follow: leave the past to the infinite mercy of God, the future to his good providence: give the present wholly to his love by being faithful to his grace. -Jean-Pierre de Caussade in The Joy of the Saints.

Group Exercise: Read the above quote slowly. Restate this quote by Jean-Pierre de Caussade in your own words. In what ways do you struggle, or are affirmed by it?

Group Exercise: We find God expanding Joseph's influence by who and what was entrusted to him. Have different people in your group look up each of the following verses. What are themes are becoming evident? Have your group come up with a statement that captures these themes.

- Genesis 39:4b
- Genesis 39:5b
- Genesis 39:6
- Genesis 39:8
- Genesis 39:23
- Genesis 40:4

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Group Question: What were some takeaways from the interview with Cory Hintz? What were his setbacks, how did you persevere faithfully, and how was God able to expand his influence and responsibility?

Group Question: What areas of trust and influence has God given you to be a blessing to others?

Habit of Wholeness: Prayerful Reflection/Meditating on Scripture. While the group closes their eyes in silence, pray that the Lord would make them sensitive to the words, phrases, or thoughts He may bring to mind as you read Acts 17:25b-27. Read this passage slowly three times. Close in prayer. Have the group share their thoughts as they were meditating on God's Word.

Next Week: *A Big Promotion* (Genesis 41:1-57)

Interested in discussing the sermon as part of a group?

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