

## SERMON OUTLINE

**SERMON TITLE:** Practicing the Presence of God

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Genesis 37

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #2247

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) The greatest tragedy of all would be to come to your deathbed, being ready to die, and to discover that you've never lived.
- b) John 10:10
- c) Many people are enduring and existing, but they are not living.
- d) There are some people who seem to be born with so little, and yet, they accomplish so much; there are others who are born with so much, and yet, they accomplish so little.
  - i) The difference, the secret, is the presence of God.
- e) The Old Testament shares with us the life of a young man named Joseph who learned how to practice the presence of God.
  - i) There is a continual refrain throughout the life of Joseph that states, "And God was with him."
- f) 25% of the book of Genesis is about Joseph.
  - i) This is an amazing fact given that the creation of the universe is summed up in only five words: "He made the stars also."
    - (1) Genesis 1:16
- g) Perhaps the most Christ-like character in the Old Testament is Joseph.
- h) Joseph came from a dysfunctional family.
  - i) His father, Jacob, was a con artist by nature.
  - ii) Joseph's mother, Rachel, died when he was in his mid-teens.
  - iii) He lived in a swarm of wicked, ungodly brothers.
- i) Joseph was his father's favorite son.
  - i) Joseph's mother, Rachel, who was Jacob's favorite wife.
  - ii) Jacob loved Joseph so much that he gave Joseph a coat of many colors.
  - iii) Joseph had some dreams, in which God told him that one day all of the world's resources would be at his disposal, and all of the world's rulers would bow at his feet.
    - (1) Genesis 37:5-11
    - (2) Joseph was seventeen years old at this time.
    - (3) Joseph shares these dreams with his brothers.
      - (a) His brothers envy him because of his coat of many colors and his distinctiveness.
      - (b) The brothers are jealous of Joseph because of their father's love for him.
      - (c) The brothers resent Joseph because of his dreams and visions.
- j) Joseph's brothers wanted to kill him, and they stripped him of his coat and threw him into a pit to die.
  - i) But a caravan heading to Egypt passed by, so the brothers sold Joseph to them for the price of a slave.
- k) When he gets to Egypt, Joseph is put on the slave block and sold to the chief of Potiphar's guard.
  - i) Potiphar was the one who protected Pharaoh.

- ii) Potiphar made Joseph a household slave, but Joseph was of such character and ingenuity that he began to rise up in the ranks.
  - iii) Soon, Joseph was running Potiphar's household for him.
  - l) Potiphar's wife tried to entice Joseph into an adulterous affair, which Joseph refused.
    - i) Potiphar's wife falsely accused Joseph of assault, and Joseph was thrown into prison.
      - (1) Joseph was in prison, not for doing something wrong, but for doing something right: for keeping himself pure.
  - m) In prison, Joseph began to rise to the top again.
    - i) He helps a man who is released from prison.
      - (1) This man promises to speak a good word for Joseph, but he forgets about Joseph upon his release.
  - n) Then, Pharaoh has a dream and needs someone to interpret it.
    - i) Joseph is taken out of prison because he has the wisdom of God about him and can interpret dreams; so, Joseph is brought to interpret Pharaoh's dream.
      - (1) The dream means that there will be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine.
    - ii) Pharaoh was so impressed with Joseph that he put Joseph in charge.
      - (1) Joseph began gathering grain and became the savior of that known world in the physical, material sense.
  - o) Pharaoh exalts Joseph to Prime Minister of Egypt.
  - p) Joseph's wicked brothers have to go to Egypt to buy grain because of the famine in the land.
    - i) The brothers do not recognize Joseph.
      - (1) Joseph is grown up and dressing like an Egyptian.
    - ii) The brothers appear before Joseph to ask for grain.
    - iii) Finally, Joseph reveals himself to his brothers and forgives his brothers.
  - q) There is a theme throughout Joseph's story.
    - i) Genesis 39:2
    - ii) Genesis 39:21
    - iii) Genesis 39:23
    - iv) The Lord was with Joseph.
  - r) No matter what happened, Joseph was practicing the presence of God.
  - s) The story of Joseph shows us four principles to having real prosperity.
    - i) Prosperity is the progressive realization of the will of God for our lives.
- 2) EXPRESS YOUR GOD-GIVEN DIFFERENCE (GENESIS 37:1-4)
- a) When God saves us, He makes us different.
  - b) Joseph was distinct and different.
    - i) The multi-colored coat he wore was a mark of distinction.
      - (1) Joseph was given the birthright, which was spiritual as well as material.

- (2) Joseph was distinct because of his nobility; the multi-colored coat was a mark of nobility.
  - c) As Christians, we are nobility in the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - i) 1 Peter 2:9
    - ii) The world resents our nobility in the Lord Jesus and wants to squeeze us into its mold.
      - (1) Romans 12:2
      - (2) Joseph's brothers hated him, and Joseph would not conform.
      - (3) The world wants us to conform.
        - (a) There is something about nature that makes us want to conform.
    - iii) As children of God, we are different.
      - (1) What we believe starts at a different source, it follows a different course and it ends at a different conclusion.
      - (2) We are twice-born people in a world of once-born people.
        - (a) We will be going against the tide most of the time.
  - d) If we want to have the presence of God, then we must exhibit our distinction and our difference.
- 3) EXPLORE YOUR GOD-GIVEN DREAMS (GENESIS 37:5-8)
- a) Joseph was only a teen, but God put a dream in his heart.
    - i) In Genesis 37:9-11, Joseph dreamed another dream.
    - ii) We should let God put a dream into our hearts.
  - b) God spoke to Joseph through a dream, but He may speak to us another way.
    - i) God has a plan for our lives.
  - c) Joseph had a vision, but God did not give him the roadmap.
  - d) Romans 12:1-2
    - i) This passage provides us with a formula for formulating our God-given dream.
    - ii) Presentation plus transformation equals realization.
      - (1) Presentation
        - (a) Present yourself to Him.
        - (b) Most people don't truly present themselves to God.
          - (i) Many people are afraid that God will send them as missionaries to a remote land if they truly present themselves to Him.
      - (2) Transformation
        - (a) When we present ourselves to God, then we are transformed.
        - (b) Romans 12:2
        - (c) The word "transform" is the word from which we get our English word "metamorphosis."
          - (i) Metamorphosis is a change of form.
            - 1. It literally means that which is on the inside comes to the surface.
          - (ii) Matthew 17:2

1. On the Mount of Transfiguration, the Bible says that Jesus was “transfigured,” which is the same word “metamorphose.”
  2. Jesus went through a metamorphosis; His inner nature, which is glory, came to the surface.
- (d) The inner nature of a child of God is Jesus; Christ lives within us.
    - (i) When we present ourselves to God a living sacrifice, there will be a metamorphosis and that which is on the inside will come to the surface.
  - (3) Realization
    - (a) We will then know the good, perfect, acceptable will of God.
      - (i) Romans 12:2
    - (b) We need to get our hearts right with God, present ourselves to Him, let the glory of Jesus come out of us, have the mind of Christ, and we will find out that God will be guiding us.
      - (i) We don’t tell God to show us what He wants us to do and then we consider if we want to do it.
  - e) We need to make sure that it is God who is speaking to us.
    - i) Dreams in this context are not carnal ambitions.
    - ii) Jeremiah 29:8
    - iii) God wants us to dream dreams; not daydreams but God-given dreams.
      - (1) Joel 2:28
        - (a) Let God be real in you.
    - iv) To know whether a dream is God-given, we need to think about it and pray over it.
      - (1) Luke 2:19
      - (2) Proverbs 4:18
        - (a) Soak your dream in prayer, and God will guide you.
        - (b) Ask the Lord to keep speaking to you.
  - f) When we get a dream in our hearts, we can expect the devil to try to keep us from fulfilling it.
    - i) There will be people who will say that it can’t be done.
      - (1) If it’s a God-given dream, it can be done.
- 4) ENDURE YOUR GOD-GIVEN DIFFICULTIES (GENESIS 37:8-27)
    - a) When there is a God-given dream, there will be some God-given difficulties.
      - i) Joseph was scorned by his brothers.
      - ii) There was a conspiracy against Joseph.
      - iii) He was thrown into a pit and sold as a slave.
      - iv) He was falsely accused and languished in prison.
      - v) God was never out of control.
        - (1) Genesis 50:20
        - (2) Romans 8:28
    - b) God will allow us to have difficulties in life.
      - i) God does not cause these difficulties.

- ii) But wherever man rules, God overrules.
  - c) Through all the difficulties, God was not finished with Joseph.
    - i) When we have difficulties and our dreams are shattered, it does not mean that God is finished with us.
    - ii) No matter what Satan does and no matter what happens, God is still in control and over it all.
- 5) ENLIST YOUR GOD-GIVEN DYNAMIC (GENESIS 39:2, 21)
- a) We have the dream, we have difficulties, but there is also a dynamic.
    - i) The dynamic is that God is with us.
  - b) Acts 7:9
  - c) There is no place where God is not.
    - i) Philippians 2:9-11
  - d) The difference in Joseph's life was not God's actual presence.
    - i) When the Bible says that God was with him, it means that God was for him.
    - ii) God was engineering things for Joseph, on his behalf.
      - (1) God was with Joseph in times of persecution and in times of responsibility.
      - (2) God was with him in times of temptation and in times of slander and suffering.
      - (3) God was with Joseph when he died.
  - e) We should all desire that there be something about us that cannot be explained apart from the fact that God is with us.
- 6) CONCLUSION
- a) If we want the presence of God in our lives, then we need Jesus.
  - b) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today and ask Him to come into your life.
  - c) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
    - i) Romans 3:23
    - ii) Romans 10:9-10
    - iii) Romans 10:13
    - iv) Acts 16:31
    - v) John 3:16