

“Dreams, Detours and Destiny” Dr. Dan Johnson, preaching Genesis 41

1. A Paradox: (A) Every human decision has huge moral consequences and (B) Providence: God rules in and over all things. Also, the story of Joseph has many lessons. Here are two: what parents should not do (favor one child over the others - the coat of many colors) and what siblings should not do.
2. The active, confronting, openly engaging God of Abraham and Sarah, Jacob and Rebekah, and the quiet, hidden, subtle ways of God with Joseph. While God called, confronted and challenged Abraham and wrestled with Jacob, with regard to Joseph, the Scripture says only that “The Lord was with Joseph.” The story of Joseph is a story of the Hiddenness of God.
3. Being true to our identity as followers of Jesus in a world where many/most follow a different way. Joseph was a Hebrew in Egypt, a follower of God in a land of a different god.
4. Discerning Right from Wrong - Joseph and Potiphar’s wife. A test of right or wrong:
 - a. Will this decision build trust (or erode trust) in those who trust me?
 - b. How does this decision affect others?
 - c. How will this decision affect me, inside; will it strengthen my character or weaken it?
 - d. How does this decision measure up in the light of the time-tested teaching of my tradition (the church, my trusted elders); experience is the teacher of fools.
 - e. How does this decision hold up under the lens of love (1 Corinthians 13:4-7, Love is patient, love is kind...)
 - f. Can I do this and still stand in the gaze of Christ?
 - g. How does “knowing the Lord is with me” affect my decision?

On Beauty: W.B. Yeats, “A Prayer for My Daughter,” the third stanza:

May she be granted beauty and yet not
Beauty to make a stranger’s eye distraught,
Or hers before a looking-glass, for such,
Being made beautiful overmuch,
Consider beauty a sufficient end,
Lose natural kindness and maybe
The heart-revealing intimacy
That chooses right, and never find a friend.

5. The under-appreciated power of practical wisdom (HOKMA) is the church community. The power of a good plan. Genesis 41
6. How to keep on when things seem to go wrong. How did Joseph do it - from pit to prison to prime minister? Dreams, awareness that God is with him, wisdom, a confidence in life, the will to overcome.
7. Genesis 50:20 / Romans 8:28
Genesis 50:20 - You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.
Romans 8:28 - God works together in all things for good to them that love Him a n d are called according to His purpose.