

## The People God Uses

God dismissed the creation of the universe in five words “He made the stars also.”

Two chapters or less is given to discussing the development of the Cannanite civilization.

And yet, one fourth of the book of Genesis is devoted to Joseph, a man who was not even in the messianic line.

Why?

I think the answer lies with the author--Moses.

Moses wrote the entire Pentateuch and although Exodus-Deuteronomy came from his own personal experience ...

... what Moses knew about the stories in Genesis were first learned from his mother.

Picture his mother Jochebed in Pharaoh's palace with Moses in her lap ...

... the princess had found Moses floating in the Nile River, adopted him, and then unknowingly hired his mother to be his nursemaid.

... there, holding her little boy, she knew that her time was limited.

Very soon Moses was going to be put into school in the courts of Pharaoh ... to learn the ways of the Egyptians.

... He would become a part of the Egyptian aristocratic class forever ... in Pharaoh's palace.

What better example for how an Egyptian noble could be a follower of God than Joseph?

... I can imagine that Jochebed spent a lot of time telling her son about Joseph so when Moses began to write the book of Genesis the Spirit of God endorsed her perspective and led Moses to write about Joseph with the same emphasis.

Here is Genesis 37 is the story of Joseph who was Jacob's favorite son.

... in fact Jacob gives Joseph a multicolored tunic (robe).

... one of the reasons they hate Joseph is because he had these 2 dreams and in both of the dreams his brothers are pictured bowing down in servitude to Joseph.

... these things along with others made the older brothers jealous.

... they hated Joseph.

Although Joseph is just a teenager apparently his father sends him out from time to time to check on the brothers.

Here in chapter 37 when they see Joseph coming they decide to kill him

... however Reuben convinces them to only capture him and throw him in a pit.

... and for whatever reason, Reuben had to step a way and while he was gone the other brother's sold Joseph to some Ishmaelite/Midianite slave traders.

There are a few key things in the story that point us to Jesus Christ.

- V. 8 – the brothers ask Joseph, “are you really going to reign over us?”
- V. 23 – They stripped Joseph of his robe
- V. 26-28 – Judah sells Joseph for 20 shekels of silver
- The brother's treachery led to Joseph's exaltation

There are two key lessons that come to us from the life of Joseph: First, in Joseph we see the kind of people God uses and Second, Joseph is a type of Christ.

Let's begin by looking at 3 kinds of people God uses.

## 1. God Uses Ordinary People

*(Gen 37:1-2 )<sup>1</sup>Now Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan. <sup>2</sup> These are the records of the generations of Jacob. Joseph, when seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers while he was still a youth, along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father. (Gen. 37:1-2)*

Joseph is just an ordinary person ... he gave his dad a bad report about his brothers and this made them angry.

... one brother telling on the other brothers and them getting angry ... what could be more ordinary than that.

The heroes of the Old Testament were never perfect people.

... They are often broken men and women, the product of troubled homes.

... some of them were deceivers, frauds, liars, and spoiled brats.

... others cowards, thieves, and murderers...

... over and over again we see how God cleanses these imperfect people and uses them for His glory.

God uses ordinary people ...

... we sometimes miss this when reading the OT because we misunderstand the difference of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit before and after Christ's redemptive work.

Christ had to die for our sins, arise from the dead, and return to the Father in order for the Holy Spirit to come and take up residence in us.

Jesus prophesied of this ... "I must go away so that the comforter/paraclete can come."

But we miss that ... we're readin the OT and thinking, "I'd like to be like Moses, Elijah, Elisha ..."

Corinth made this same mistake and finally Paul had to just bluntly ask them, “Do you now know that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit.”

It was always God’s intention to;

- redeem us
- fill us with His Holy Spirit
- to then give us the fruit and gifts of the spirit in order that His work might be accomplished in the earth.

This is what the church is supposed to be!

This is why Jesus says that He is the vine, we are the branches and we must abide in HIM.

His Spirit is to be in us and flow through us!

US ... ordinary people ... and when this happens God is glorified!

*“We need more Daniels, Elijahs, Jeremiahs, Davids!”*

NO WE DON’T!!! That’s not God’s plan!!!

***(2 Ch 16:9)<sup>9</sup> "For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.***

Is your heart completely God’s?

I believe the reason the modern church is languishing is because God’s people are unsundered and unwilling!

... God’s work is hindered because we grieve the Holy Spirit.

God is sovereign! .... but God’s sovereignty does not negate our responsibility!

To quote Paul's words to the Ephesian Church:

- Don't give the devil an opportunity! (4:27)
- Don't grieve the Holy Spirit! (4:30)
- Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness! (5:11)
- "Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you." (5:14)

One of the biggest lies that Satan tells the church (that we believe) is that God is looking for extra-ordinary, unusual people.

God delights in using weaken, broken, imperfect people for His glory.

"All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on God being with them." – **Hudson Taylor**

## 2. God uses Misunderstood People

*<sup>5</sup> Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. <sup>6</sup> He said to them, "Please listen to this dream which I have had; <sup>7</sup> for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf." <sup>8</sup> Then his brothers said to him, "Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. (Gen. 37:5-8)*

It said in verse 4 that the brothers hated Joseph so much they couldn't even talk friendly to him.

They hated the coat, they hated Joseph's checking up on them, they hated his dreams ... Joseph actually had 2 dreams where his brothers and parents were bowing down to him.

Joseph knew early on that God was going to do something unusual in his life.

... Joseph understood ... but everyone else misunderstood.

If you choose to follow God ... mark it down ... a lot of people will not understand you.

- Who do you think you are?
- You just think you are smarter and better than we are.

Can you name one OT heroes that was not misunderstood?

- Noah, Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Jeremiah etc ...
- Cain in anger killed Abel
- Noah was called a fool
- Job's own wife and friends turned against him
- Moses was called a dictator
- David's son called him a weak and uncaring leader
- Elijah was called a troublemaker
- Jeremiah was thrown into a pit
- Jesus was called a seditionist
- Paul was called a heretic

Obedience to God, loyalty to Christ doesn't make sense to a disobedient self-centered world.

... and I'm afraid that sometimes when we feel we are misunderstood that becomes an excuse to quit serving God.

[You've heard it: "This happened and I am never again going to ... whatever."]

... we just throw up our hand and quit

... and then we wonder why our Christian life has become “hum drum” and cold...

... we wonder where our passion for God went.

Here is an interesting quote from Spurgeon:

**I believe that many professing Christians are cold and uncomfortable because they are doing nothing for their Lord; but if they actively served him, their blood would begin to circulate spiritually, and it would be well with them. – Charles Spurgeon**

A serving Christian is a healthy growing Christian ...

### **3. God Uses Hated People**

*<sup>18</sup> When they saw him from a distance and before he came close to them, they plotted against him to put him to death. <sup>19</sup> They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer! <sup>20</sup> "Now then, come and let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; and we will say, 'A wild beast devoured him.' Then let us see what will become of his dreams!" (Gen. 37:18-20)*

Jacob showed favoritism towards Joseph and this was why he gave Joseph a coat of many colors.

... to the brothers that coat symbolized that he was to be his dad’s replacement.

... To Reuben, the first born, it meant that he (as the rightful heir) was being overlooked.

The 12 brothers saw the favoritism and they hated Joseph.

*<sup>18</sup> "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup> "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. (Jn. 15:18-19)*

### **4. Jesus was all of these**

**Ordinary:** *He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. (Isa. 53:2)*

**Misunderstood & Hated:** *He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. (Isa. 53:3)*

You see in today's story we are not Joseph ... we are the older brothers who stripped him of his robe and sold him into slavery...

... we are the betrayers who hated Joseph.

... and yet like Jesus ... Joseph loved his brother and in the end he forgave them.

- Joseph was the favorite son of his father and Jesus was the only begotten son of the heavenly father, ***“This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.”***
- Joseph exposed the sins of his brothers and Jesus exposed the sins of the whole world because ***“In Him was life and that life was the light of men.”***
- Joseph was rejected by his brother and Jesus, ***“came unto his own and his own received him not.”***
- Joseph left his father's house to seek for his brothers, Jesus left heaven ***to seek and to save those that were lost.***
- Joseph was stripped of his royal robe, thrown into a pit, and sold for 20 pieces of silver. Jesus was sold for 30 pieces, stripped of his robe, and nailed to the cross.
- Joseph forgave his brothers for their crimes against him and as Jesus hung on the cross he cried, ***“father forgive them for they know not what they do.”***

**Now, what is the point of all of this?**

God used ordinary people back then and God wants to use everyone of us today.

... Have you noticed that the world is in a mess?

... there is more bad than good in the news and if we let him the devil will convince every one of us that all is lost...

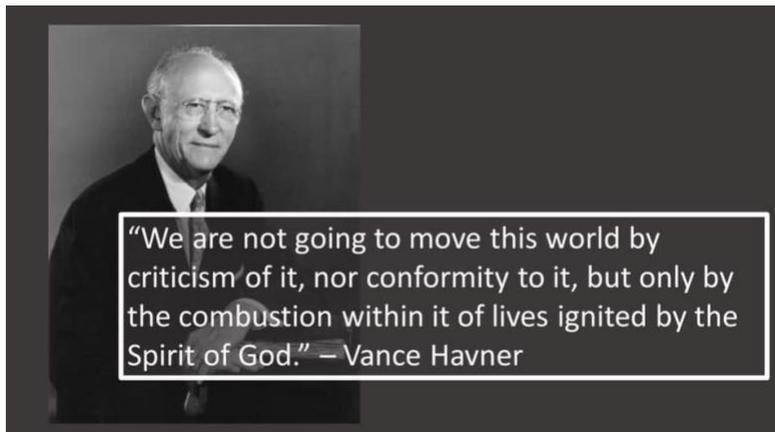
... here is why I know the devil is a liar... WE ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT;  
GOD LIVES IN US ... AND WE ARE THE CHURCH!

... and the world (yes I said world) needs us to walk with God.

... this is not the time to throw up our hands and quit.

**When the world is at its worst it needs the church at its best.**

**Why?** Because precious souls hang in the balance.



Hear me today: **‘When Church retreats, evil steps in to fill the gap!**

... that is why we are where we are today.

We have retreated far too long ... it is time to stand and stand firm!

Revival is a sovereign act of God and it can only come if God sends it ...

... but the Word of God and history has proved that God sends revival when His people desire it.

... We need a God-sent revival!

... We need a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God on believers and the church.

.... And yet **there are those** who use the glorious doctrine of the sovereignty of God to argue that the church doesn't need a revival.

If that is the case then what are we to do with those passages that tell us to:

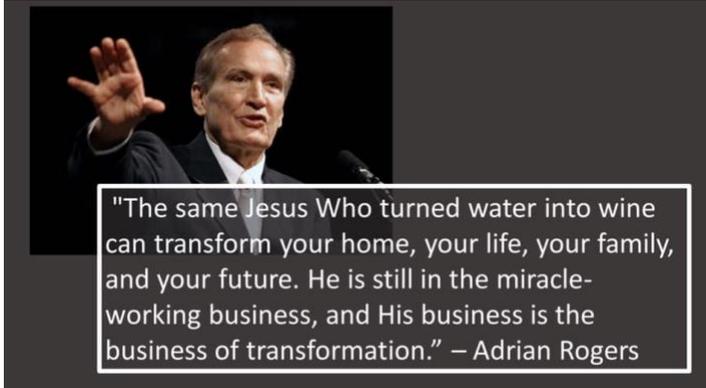
- Present our bodies a living sacrifice
- Draw nigh to God
- Earnestly contend for the faith
- Seek the Lord while he may be found
- Abide in Christ and He will abide in us
- Seek first the kingdom of God

Today I stand with Isaiah who cried out to God, **“Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down that the mountains would tremble before you!”**

Is that not a cry for revival?

My friend the church needs a God-sent revival.

Yes, revival depends on God alone, **but the Lord promises** that He will respond to us when we cry out to Him.



"The same Jesus Who turned water into wine can transform your home, your life, your family, and your future. He is still in the miracle-working business, and His business is the business of transformation." – Adrian Rogers

If God ever did it, He can still do it.

When I look at Joseph's life I am encouraged, not only by the fact that God chose Joseph but also that he used him.