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No Ordinary Joe, Part 13

A Rep for Right

Text: Genesis 41:1-46

Joseph is in prison, with a cushy position. He is large and in charge. (39:20-23).

Since he was a teen, he has been known as an arrogant, flashy coat-wearing dude, whose brothers don’t like him and want him dead. We are not obligated to live the life others imagine for us. We can, with dependence on God, carve out a life that is distinctive. Joseph is gaining a reputation already. He is known for sexual integrity, the ability to interpret dreams, truth-telling and God-centeredness.

1. Joseph’s reputation had all to do with his **self-awareness.** He knows who he is and what he *should* do. It is clear that Joseph is going to take his cues from some higher plane that that on which he is living. Joseph knows that God is at work in him and this is the key to his success. God is *with* Joseph(39:2,3,21,23). This knowledge of the divine presence in his life shaped Joe.
2. Joseph’s reputation had all to do with his **awareness of God and where he stood with God.**

In verse 16, in Hebrew, “it is not in me” is one word. Joseph knows that whatever skill he has in interpreting dreams ultimately comes from God. Joe is a conduit, an instrument, a tool in the hands of The Eternal. Joseph is gaining a rep for putting God on display rather than Joseph! In verse 25, 28, 32, Joseph points his eager hearer to God.

 This reminds me of a sentiment, a saying, a way of think that is espoused in Psalm 118:23-24:

*This was the Lord’s doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made: We will rejoice and be glad in it.*

*3.* Joseph’s reputation opens doors for him. Joseph models for us the truth that we can control some of what happens to us. In his refusal to lie with Potiphar’s wife and in his commitment to tell the truth to those who had dreams, Joseph demonstrates integrity. Joseph’s rep is recalled by the chief butler (9-13) and by Pharaoh himself (15).

The dream: seven very good prosperous, fat, years of plenty (v. 47) and seven lean, severe, harsh, years of famine (v. 57).

Time frame: Joseph was seventeen years old when we met him (37:2). He was thirty years old when he entered Pharaoh’s employ (41:46). There is a two-year gap mentioned in 41:1. I’m thinking he is in his late twenties in this text.

What is at stake here in this text?

Dreams were quite seriously considered in those days...and are in ours. Joseph makes it clear that if this dream is to be interpreted with integrity, the interpretation must come from God (40:8; 41:16)

Eager to know what his troubling dreams means; Pharaoh sends for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt (41:8). No one could help him!

The place of the dreamer in that culture- Deuteronomy 13:1-5.

**Joseph’s status is changed.** Joseph’s reputation opens doors of opportunity for him.The Hebrew boy has become a man in charge. He is given the king’s signet ring so that he can issue orders that have the weight of kingly authority. He is given new garments and a gold chain and access to the second chariot, presumably the king being in the first chariot (v. 42-43).

Years later Daniel would have a similar experience.

Daniel 5:7

The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. The king spoke, saying to the wise *men* of Babylon, “Whoever reads this writing, and tells me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and *have* a chain of gold around his neck; and he shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.”

Daniel 5:16

**16**And I have heard of you (Daniel), that you can give interpretations and explain enigmas. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and *have* a chain of gold around your neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.”

Dr. Dwayne Dyer:

“Your reputation is in the hands of others. That's what the reputation is. You can't control that. The only thing you can control is your character.”

**Illus.**

In his book, I Almost Missed the Sunset, Bill Gaither writes:

Gloria and I had been married a couple of years. We were teaching school in Alexandria, Indiana, where I had grown up, and we wanted a piece of land where we could build a house. I noticed the parcel south of town where cattle grazed, and I learned it belonged to a 92-year-old retired banked named Mr. Yule. He owned a lot of land in the area, and word was he would sell none of it. He gave the same speech to everyone who inquired: “I promised the farmers they could use it for their cattle.”

Gloria and I visited him at the bank. Although he was retired, he spent a couple of hours each morning in his office. He looked at us over the top of his bifocals.

I introduced myself and told him we were interested in a piece of his land. “Not selling,” he said pleasantly. “Promised it to a farmer for grazing.”

“I know, but we teach school here and thought maybe you’d be interested in selling it to someone planning to settle in the area.”

He pursed his lips and stared at me. “What’d you say your name was?”

“Gaither. Bill Gaither.”

“Hmmm. Any relation to Grover Gaither?”

“Yes, sir. He was my granddad.”

Mr. Yule put down his paper and removed his glasses. “Interesting. Grover Gaither was the best worker I ever had on my farm. Full day’s work for a day’s pay. So honest. What’d you say you wanted?”

I told him again.

“Let me do some thinking on it, then come back and see me.”

I came back within the week, and Mr. Yule told me he had had the property appraised. I held my breath. “How does $3,800 sound? Would that be okay?”

If that was per acre, I would have to come up with nearly $60,000! “$3,800?” I repeated.

“Yup. Fifteen acres for $3,800.”

I knew it had to be worth at least three times that. I readily accepted.

Nearly three decades later, my son and I strolled that beautiful, lush property that had once been pasture land. “Benjy” I said, “you’ve had this wonderful place to grow up through nothing that you’ve done, but because of the good name of a great-granddad you never met.”

Beloved,

“A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.” (Prov. 22:1)

Amen