**Old School – Week 7 (Joseph—Faithfulness)**

**July 20-21, 2019**

Hey everyone! Thanks so much for being here with us for another week of Northview Students! We are in week 7 of our Old School series so I am excited to keep it rolling with today’s message!

Our Old Testament stories that we have been discussing over the past several weeks have looked at a lot of different families in the Bible. Today, we will be looking at a man named Joseph and his family. Let’s watch this video and hear some of that story!

**(Leaders Note: Show “Joseph” message video)**

Joseph had 11 brothers…big family! He was also the youngest and the Bible says that he was his father’s (Jacob) favorite son. Now, I know parents are not supposed to have favorites even though I know some of you probably think you are the favorite. Simply because Joseph was his favorite, Jacob gave him a gift.

Check out what it says in Genesis 37:3-4: *“Now Israel [Jacob] loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made a richly ornamented robe for him. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.”*

Joseph’s brothers were so jealous that he got to wear his fancy robe and every time they saw him wearing it, they only became angrier. Well, it only got worse because Joseph began to have these dreams. In one of the dreams he and his brothers were gathering some wheat and all of a sudden, Joseph’s bundle of wheat stood up and all of his brother’s bundles gathered around and bowed down to it. In another dream, Joseph said the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.

I mean, you can just tell that this stuff really got under their skin. The fancy robe, the dreams, the fact that Jacob likes him the best…it led the brothers to do the unthinkable. As we just saw in the video, one day when Joseph went to check on his brothers working in the field, they plotted to kill him. One of his brothers, Reuben, sticks up for him and says they should just throw him into a well or cistern.

Just for some context, here is a picture of an ancient cistern **(show picture of cistern).** Obviously, you can tell this is pretty deep…about 15-20 feet and the one Joseph was thrown into was one that didn’t have any water. Well, the brothers start to feel pretty guilty about how they treated him so they decide to pull him out and sell him to some merchants passing by. They slaughter a goat, take some of its blood and put it on Joseph’s robe to make it look like he had been killed by an animal. Jacob is overcome with sadness.

**Now this is where the story turns a corner. Joseph went from being the favorite son to losing his family. Talk about a major challenge! Why would God let that happen?**

**What we are about to see is how faithful Joseph is…that’s a key word for our message today: faithfulness. Our THP for today focuses on the definition of faithfulness:**

**THP: Faithfulness is obeying God no matter what happens.**

Joseph begins to have all kinds of challenges in his life where he is faced with a decision: does he try to stick up for himself and prove his innocence…or does he simply obey God and trust Him no matter what happens?

Now, obviously the video we watched showed us that God helped him resist Potiphar’s wife and he eventually ends up forgiving his brothers when they come to visit him to buy grain during the famine. Imagine…you are faced with a person or group of people who tried to kill you, wronged you, sold you into slavery…and then you see them again. What would you say? How would you feel? How would you react?

**Joseph had a choice and he chose to show God’s forgiveness and love to his brothers in spite of what they had done to him. That is the true definition of faithfulness: doing the right thing EVEN WHEN IT’S HARD!**

**(Leaders Note: Share a real-life example…either from your own life or someone else…about being faithful/obedient to God in the midst of difficult circumstances)**

I am sure many of us can think of some challenging situations that we have gone through in life. Maybe you are here today and you have been mistreated by someone…they’ve said something mean to you, or hurt you, or bullied you. If that person was here right now, what kinds of things would you feel towards them? It would be easy to think negatively about them and even wish bad things to happen to them.

Joseph does the exact opposite of what is easy: he is faithful and obeys God when it’s difficult. This story sets us up for an even better story in the Bible: one about Jesus; who instead of taking revenge on those who mocked him, made fun of him, beat him, and eventually killed him… he decided to forgive them and love them anyway.

1 Peter 4:19 says, *“So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.”*

**How faithful to God are you right now in your life? Are you obedient to Him when things are hard or challenging…or just when it’s easy? Do you treat people with love and respect even when they don’t do the same for you?**

**I want to remind us of our THP again: Faithfulness is obeying God no matter what happens. Let’s make a commitment to rely on God for His help in doing the right thing…no matter what! Let’s pray.**