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I was watching that [introductory video] clip and just sitting there enjoying it—then [realized] oh, man, I've got to preach; I'd better get up there. I was [thinking]: I wonder what they're going to show next? Go out of the country for ten days, I forget where I live, you know?

Hey, welcome to The MET; glad that you are here. Welcome to The MET at *Fry Road [Campus]*. Welcome to The MET at *Jones Road [Campus]*. Welcome to all of you who are joining us via the internet, and those of you that have come to our Web site to download this message, God bless you. We're in the second part of a four-part series entitled *Resilient*. We're talking (basically) about the life of Joseph.

Let me start by saying: Thanks for praying for me. Last week we were in Uganda, Africa. We were visiting (and) seeing the progress on the orphanage site that we're developing—can't wait to show you that video. I've got a lot of great stories from the people that are there. They wanted me to tell you how grateful they are that you have cared enough to care about those that live so far away. Literally, people are living today because of your generous giving. And your prayers have brought them great hope. And so from about 400 pastors that I had a chance to visit with from several churches that I was in and from the very mouths of those who are orphaned or those who are endangered as children over there—and they're protected by the ministries of this church—they say to you: Thank you and God bless you for that.

In December we're going to have a great time as we (kind of) unveil all the things that God is doing through our church in Africa, in Mexico, and several other places.

If you have a Bible—and if you don't have one; if you're at *Fry Road*, you can find one on the back table and they'll get one for you. So if you need one, just hold your hand up and they'll bring one to you. If you're here at *Jones Road*, there's a Bible in the back of the pew rack in front of you. And so grab that, open it to *Genesis*—easy to find—first book of the Bible. *Chapter 39*—everyone is a Bible scholar this morning—you can find *Genesis, chapter 39*.

We're talking about Joseph. This is a very resilient young man. This is really one of the first Bible stories I read when I became a believer. I started in the book of *Genesis*—real quick got boring. I kind of went fast forward and found the life of Joseph and I began reading it and I was enthralled. It was like a made-for-TV movie or a big-screen production—just the ups and downs, the highs, the lows, the betrayal—all of the stuff that Joseph goes through. It just blessed me (even as a young Christian) to know that God had a plan for this young man no matter how difficult the time that he went through. And so this morning, we're going to talk about being resilient.

RESILIENT PEOPLE DO RIGHT WHEN DONE WRONG

Resilient people always do good even when they've been done wrong. How many of you all have ever been done wrong in your life? You don't have to lie, this is a church; put them up [your hands]—all of us have. You're going to be done wrong. And our tendency is wanting to do wrong back. Our tendency is:

- Wanting to take our life into our own hands
- Execute justice as quickly as we can

- Call to attention the things that have been done wrong with us (and)
- Refuse to do right until that wrong is done right

You can't live life that way. Because some bad things happen to good people and tough times do come.

In our country we would consider right now: Oh man, it's a tough time. And I want to remind you though after visiting Africa again, they would call this blessed beyond belief—[what] we're living in right now—blessed beyond belief. And so when we think of tough times, there are tough times all around the world.

And just as an aside, when I got off that plane and my feet hit the ground I said: Thank God I'm an American. Thank God I'm an American and (you know) immigrated American. Thank God for my father, who was an American, that brought us—that brought me—to America and I got to live here.

And now we have a great big responsibility because this may seem like a tough time, but it is nothing like I've seen around the world. Those of you who get to travel around the world, once you get out of the American hotels and you get out of the American compounds, you see how the people live, you get back here; the first thing you do is: Thank God I'm American. Do you know why?—because we can do good for the rest of this world that's in a very tough time all the time, all the time.

Joseph is a great example of how to be resilient in tough times. We're all going to go through them. Bad things are going to happen to us. How do we come out on the top at the end? *Chapter 39*—I'm just going to read it—you can follow along if you'd like to in those Bibles. Let's see what the Lord has for us this morning.

¹ Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there.

² The LORD was with Joseph {very important phrase—notice how many times as we read this—the Lord was with Joseph or the Lord blessed Joseph} and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. ³ When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, ⁴ Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his {entire} household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. ⁵ From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. ⁶ So he left in Joseph's care everything he had; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.

Now Joseph was well-built and handsome {kind of like your pastor— why do you laugh at that?}—Now Joseph was well-built and handsome {and your pastor use to be}, and ⁷ after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"

⁸ But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. ⁹ No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" ¹⁰ And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

¹¹ One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. ¹² She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.

¹³ When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, ¹⁴ she called her household servants. "Look," she said to them, "this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. ¹⁵ When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

¹⁶ She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home.

¹⁷ Then she told him this story: "That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. ¹⁸ But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

¹⁹ When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, "This is how your slave treated me," he burned with anger. ²⁰ Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined.

But while Joseph was there in the prison, ²¹ the LORD was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. ²² So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those {who were} held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. ²³ The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

Genesis 39:1-23 (NIV)

Resilient people like Joseph—resilient people like us—always do right when done wrong. Why?—because resilient people have godly character and they have integrity and they have faith. Joseph was a man just like that. And he, in his public life, showed how resilient he was:

- Showed that he had character
- Showed that he had integrity (and)
- Showed that he had faith in God

RESILIENT IN THEIR PUBLIC LIFE

Verse 5 tells us that (when) after Potiphar had observed Joseph and put everything in his charge—

⁵ From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. ⁶ So he left in Joseph's care everything he had; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.

Genesis 39:5-6 (NIV)

Now Joseph is in a tough spot. His brothers have captured him. Then, rather than killing him, they sell him into slavery. Those that got him sold him to the Ishmaelites; the Ishmaelites to the Egyptians. [The] brothers go home and lie about him: Oh yeah, we found his cloak here; it looks like a wild animal ate him. His father's absolutely heartbroken. Everybody's forgotten about Joseph but God. And now Joseph is in a foreign nation. The name Potiphar literally means a worshiper of the sun.

And so he's in a foreign nation, they have foreign gods, and he's in a foreigner's house and there God places Joseph. And he is so close to God; (and) he so trusts God. And the Egyptian is watching his character and looking at his integrity and sees his faith and says: Okay, I think I can trust you with everything. The God that you serve, He's on your life. And so everything that I have I know is going to be a whole lot better if I give it to you and you take care of it all. All I worry about is when I am going to eat every day; because, Joseph, I see that you are a man of faith. I see your God is real, you have character, and you have integrity.

And so Joseph did right even though he was done wrong by his brothers. He could have gotten there and he could have said: I'm not going to work for anybody. Life owes me. Look what my brothers did to me. Look at the situation that I am in. I am not going to be faithful any longer. How can I trust God and these dreams that he gave me if this is where I'm going to end up? I refuse. I refuse. I refuse. But that's not what he did.

We tend to do that sometimes. When life goes bad for us and we wind up where we really didn't think we ought to be and—we are slave to some company or to some person or to some boss—sometimes we just put our feet down and say: You know what? It didn't do me any good to walk with God. Look what I have right now.

But Joseph didn't do it. Joseph had character, Joseph had integrity, and Joseph had faith. And because of that God blessed him. Joseph showed Potiphar that God was real. Joseph showed Potiphar that the sun isn't God but that the Son of God—in our situation—is God.

Now when you go into work—whether you have the job that you want or not, it is a job that God has given you and God wants to bless you there—can your boss see a difference in your life because of God? Can your boss come to you and say: You know what? I've been observing you. And he's sitting down; he's doing your evaluation: Here's what I have observed. You have great character. You have great integrity. And you know what?—there's also something about you that I really don't understand, but I think it's the key to your success. I think God is with you. And this God-thing that you've been talking about, that every now and then comes up in conversation; I think that really may be the key to all your success. And because you are a person of faith and you do have character and you do have integrity, here's what I want to do: I want to make you vice president over everything.

Have you ever have that kind of conversation with your boss? I think God would like us to have that kind of conversation with our bosses. God puts us in very difficult places so that we can be lights that shine and not to succumb to all the bad/negative things that have happened to us. But right there in that office place, right there with that little flock that you have from God—just like Joseph did with Potiphar and Potiphar's wife and if he had any children and all the rest of the servants—Joseph knew: I am here because this is the hand of God for me.

- I'll not compromise my integrity
- I'll not compromise my faith (and)
- I'll not compromise my character

Joseph believed that God could bless him right where he was. So he didn't wait for a better situation to be blessed by God.

Now don't raise your hands on this one. How many of you all are waiting for a better situation to be blessed by God in this tough time? [Saying:] I just can't wait till I get through this and I can really be blessed by God.

This is a tough time for Joseph—no family, no friends, doesn't know the language when he gets there, totally doesn't know the cultural system when he gets there—and he didn't wait till he had a better situation for God to bless him right there where he was. [With] no mother or father, no brothers, no family structure at all, no religious structure any longer, he said: I'm going to trust God. And when he did, God blessed him.

If you're waiting for the right situation to come along and you're not being faithful now, don't expect the right situation to come along; it won't. But it did for Joseph, and you're going to see (as we go through this book) how God moves in the life of anybody who will do right when they are done wrong.

Here's how it works out in *Ephesians* [in the] *New Testament*. If you work for somebody—how many of you all work for somebody?—let me see your hands. And if you're an employer, you're working for a lot of people—I mean self-employed, you're working for all your customers. Every one of us works for somebody. Here's what the Bible says in *Ephesians 6, verses 5*

through 9 [NIV]: “Slaves,” that means employees “obey your earthly master with respect and fear,” —this is God talking to us now: obey them with respect and fear “and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ.” Did you hear that? I don’t want you to miss that. Is that on the screen? Yeah, look at it—“just as you [would obey Christ.]”

And so you are to go to your boss basically and say: God, you are going to speak to me through this man or through this woman and I’m going to listen to what You are saying to me. That’s what Joseph did. And when you do that,

⁶ Obey them not only to win their favor {don’t just cheese up to them} when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. {Joseph did his job with all of his heart.} ⁷ Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, ⁸ because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.

Ephesians 6:7-8 (NIV)

Joseph said: God can bless me in the foreigner’s house and I don’t know the language, and I have no family structure, and nobody believes in me, God does. And God prospered him.

How many of you all want me to come and tell this to your employees Monday morning? Let me see your hand. Obey them! Listen for God’s voice. Joseph did. Joseph in his public life did not compromise his faith, his integrity, or his character.

Listen to *Titus, chapter 2, verses 9 and 10*:

⁹ Slaves must obey their masters and do their best to please them. They must not talk back ¹⁰ or steal, but they must show themselves to be entirely trustworthy and good. {Listen!} Then they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive in every way.

Titus 2:9-10 (NLT, 1996 edition)

That’s what happened to Joseph.

Do you know why God has given you the job that He has given you? And though it may be a tough thing right now in your life, it’s because God has lit a light in that office—it’s you! There on display are two systems—the world’s system and God’s system—trust in God [displays]:

- Character
- Integrity (and)
- Faithfulness

Or the world [system displays]:

- Back-biting
- Back-stabbing

- Promiscuity
- Lying
- Cheating
- Stealing

And everything else that goes with the world. And God has you there in a very tough time so that you can point people to the true God, exactly what he did with Joseph.

Never complain about your job because you're telling God: I don't like what You're doing with me right now. Rather, say:

- Lord, what are You doing with me right now?
- What are You trying to show me?
- How can I be faithful?
- In my public life, how can I do good when I've been done wrong?

Secondly, and we'll spend some time on this one, in their personal life.

RESILIENT IN THEIR PERSONAL LIFE

Now when I said we'll spend some time on this one, I got home late yesterday. I went to bed and I got up (like) 2:00 in the morning just like I'd slept 10 hours almost. And I (kind of) have jet-lag and so my clock is off. I told that to someone in between services and they looked at me and said: Pastor, your clock's off every Sunday for as long as we're in here. And so I've got a real excuse today.

In their personal life—okay—publicly, this is how I conduct myself. When I'm away from the church and I'm away from everybody else, I'm going to live for Jesus Christ as if my boss were Jesus Christ. I'm going to listen for God's voice through my boss and I'm going to serve my boss just like I'm serving Jesus. And even when I've [been] done wrong; because I'm serving Jesus, I know Jesus doesn't do wrong with me and God will work out whatever detail needs to be worked out regarding me.

And then there is my private life, my personal life.

"Now Joseph" {end of verse 6} "was well-built and handsome"—probably in his 20's, all of those hormones just cruising through his veins. He's (kind of) a foreigner, so he probably has that (you know) exotic European look (you know) that all the girls go for. And man, he's [got a] flat-belly, he's in charge, he's young, he's up at the top of the ladder, and he's just—the Bible only says this about three people: Absalom, David and Joseph; three of the best-looking men in the world (basically) is what the Bible says. So Mrs. Potiphar (kind of) starts eyeing him, as she is a desperate housewife here—*verse 7* [paraphrased]. And after awhile his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said: Hey, let's cut to the chase. Come to bed with me. Man, let's have sex. I think you look so good. Let's get together.

But he refused. {And this is what he said:} “With me in charge,” he told her, “my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care.

Genesis 39:7 (NIV)

[In other words:] Wait a minute! You want me to compromise my integrity? You want me to compromise my ethics? You want me to compromise my character? You want me to compromise my faith? You want me to disappoint? I’m not going to do it, not for a few moments of pleasure with you. I am not going to do it.

Now, you would think once he said that, end of story, right? Not end of story. I’ve noticed this: Refuse somebody something and they will want it, want it, want it, want it, want it, until they wear you down and they get it. Temptation is just like that.

TEMPTATION NEVER QUILTS

It never quits. Mrs. Potiphar wasn’t going to give up, wasn’t going to quit. And after awhile she probably thought: If I keep doing this long enough the dude finally—he’s not married, I know he doesn’t have a girlfriend, he lives by himself, he’s 20-something years old—the guy’s got to give in sometime.

And that’s what Satan thinks about you and me. If he keeps coming at us enough with some temptation, finally after awhile we will give in.

The person who thinks that when you become a believer, or somehow as you mature, that the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is no longer a problem, and you would stand up this morning and say: I don’t have a problem with temptation; I’d say: You’re right; you’ve got a problem with lying!

Everybody does—everybody has a problem with temptation. We don’t like to talk about it because sometimes it’s embarrassing to us. Or sometimes we feel like: Well, I won’t be spiritual then, if I tell people that I have this temptation. No, you’re not spiritual if you say: I don’t have any temptation. You’re dead, period. The only person that isn’t tempted with anything, [they] are the people that are getting ready down at the funeral home right now. Nothing; they’re dead, they’re gone. As long as you’re in this body, something’s going to stir you up. Something’s going to try to get you distracted.

And here is God blessing Joseph and what’s the distraction?—Mrs. Potiphar, a desperate housewife. So, he refuses her, but she did not stop.

A couple of things—*verse 10*:

And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

Genesis 39:10 (NIV)

I mean, every day she comes: Are you ready to go to bed yet? [Potiphar] is gone. Do you like the dress? Do you like the perfume? Do you want to touch my skin, it's soft. Come on, Joseph, you know you want me.

(I mean) we read things (you know) black-and-white in the Bible—it's like every day she came but he refused to go to bed with her. If she came to him every day, it just wasn't like: Okay, it's 10:00 and here she comes. It was like wherever Joseph turned, there she was.

- An unbuttoned blouse here
- A high skirt there
- A leaning over at the right time (and)
- A sly word
- A movement back

All those things that go into sexual temptation, she knew and came to Joseph every single day. But yet Joseph shows this remarkable character, this remarkable integrity, and this remarkable faith in God—he never wavered; never.

Some scholars believe he spent 11 years here with her—nearly 11 years. Can you imagine 11 years constantly, this woman after you, with lots of reasons that you should do it? So finally, he made up in his heart: I'm not even going around the woman. Wherever she is, I'm not going to be.

Now, the Bible tells us that in the difficult times of temptation we are to be resilient; that we ought to know that there will be planned a way of escape; because if temptation never quits, resistance should never quit.

RESISTANCE SHOULD NEVER QUIT

You are going to be tempted till the day that you die. At any point that you give up resisting temptation, you will fall into sin. You see, it's like the old preacher said: I can resist anything but temptation. (That was a joke. Maybe my timing's off because of the jet lag.)

So, if you're being tempted, do you know why?—because Satan wants you to sin. Temptation never puts anything in you. Guess what it does? It draws what's already there out of you. And inside we have this raging war every day with that which we are tempted with. Now you may not be tempted the same ways that I am tempted in, and vice versa, but you are tempted nonetheless. And Satan wants you to think that your temptation is so unique to you that no one can understand what you're going through. That's the first step to falling down.

Joseph could have said: Well, you know, there aren't any Israelite women here. I can't even—(you know) I'm a slave. What's a woman going to want to do with me? This is a good-looking Egyptian woman. Potiphar isn't there a lot of the time. She's probably never going to say anything. And after all, wouldn't they understand? I mean, look at me! All alone, my brothers did me wrong, my dad hasn't come after me, and I'm here in this place. And who knows? God probably doesn't even see me, why don't I just go ahead and do it?

And that's how you begin to rationalize the steps to sin. They'll understand. But listen to what God says in *1 Corinthians, chapter 10, verse 13*, "The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience." What Joseph is experiencing is no different from what we experience. "And God is faithful." God said: I promise [to] you, I'm sufficient for you. I'm going to take care of you. "He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand." [*1 Corinthians 10:13a-c (NLT, 2004 edition)*]

Year after year, day after day, moment after moment, every time: here comes this woman, here comes this woman, here comes this woman [repeatedly]. And Joseph is running away. Joseph is saying no. He's avoiding her. He's doing everything he can.

...He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand.
When you are tempted, He will show you a way out so that you
can endure.

1 Corinthians 10:13c-d (NLT, 2004 edition)

Do you know why we can't see the way out sometimes?—because we don't want to see the way out. We want the sin. That's why temptation feels so good. That's why sin feels good in the act. (And) that's why at the end it brings forth death—it's tricky, it's temptation, it's satanic, it's blinding.

It's the same thing that the devil did to Adam and Eve in the Garden [of Eden saying]: Did God really say that? Come on, you're all alone. Look, nothing else is killing you here. Oh, God just is keeping something good from you. And they ate it and guess what happened?—they fell.

(And) when we start believing the lie we fall. Temptation is never easy to resist. It is difficult, it is hard, and it's tempting you to do wrong; but you've got to do right when it wants you to do wrong.

So how did Joseph endure this temptation? How did he overcome it—ready? Let me give you a couple of bullet points. Number one:

JOSEPH LET HIS FAITH BE KNOWN

That house was blessed because Potiphar saw God on Joseph's life. He had to come to Joseph and said: Joseph, what is the story on you? You've got great character, you've got great integrity, but there's something else. This God that you worship—that I hear you praying to, that I hear you singing about—that's the reason isn't it? Joseph got to give his testimony about God in his life.

If we are vocal about our Christianity, it builds up some barriers and some walls of protection. Because people are going to say: Oh, that is a religious person, or that is a Christian, so we're not even going to bother to invite or to ask or to do with them because they've already told us (kind of) where they stand on that. But, if you keep it secret, there's a reason you do. It's because you want to do something. There's something that you want to get away with. There's something that

you want to fall into that if everybody knew that you were a believer, you would not be able to get away with it.

Joseph, right off said: I'm going to protect myself. I'm a follower of Almighty God. Secondly, Joseph kept busy.

JOSEPH KEPT BUSY

Men are usually tempted by the devil but an idle man positively tempts the devil to tempt him. When you're busy your mind doesn't have time to wander off.

- When you are engaged in spiritual disciplines
- When you're engaged at your work
- When you begin seeing God in everything that you do

You will be tempted but not as much as the person that all they're looking for is the temptation and the ability to go and sin somewhere.

Get busy, get busy. Come serve down at the church if you're not busy enough at work, we've got plenty to do up here. Get inside the Bible. Quit watching the stuff on TV that entices you—that you hope nobody catches you watching—don't do that. Be busy renewing your mind in Christ and you will find temptation then becomes a little bit distasteful because you know the ending of it.

Joseph was never alone with his temptation. When we read those verses, Joseph did everything he can to avoid that. You don't advance the way Joseph did by finding ways to fall for Potiphar's wife.

If you're tempted in a particular area, guess what you ought to do?—avoid that area whatever you do. The minute that you find yourself going toward that which you know is going to be a temptation, your wicked heart and my wicked heart just wants to sin. We just feel like there's something being taken away from us and if we could just have that, then we'd feel good.

Now here's what God does. God has some stuff that He says, "thou shalt not" and that pile of stuff is about that high [illustrating ankle-high from the ground]. Then He's got all this other stuff over here saying, "thou shalt" and that pile of stuff is higher than this building. When He said, "thou shalt not" He's saying: don't hurt yourself. When He's saying, "thou shalt" He is saying: Help yourselves.

Why is it we've got to do the few things that God says, "don't do"? It is temptation and sin, that's why. But Joseph did everything that he could never to be alone with his temptation. Do you, in your mind, think of ways of being alone with your temptation? You're going to fall if that's the case.

Fourth thing that Joseph did: Joseph called the act what it really was. He said: How can I do this great—what?—sin. [*Genesis 39:9* (paraphrased)]

JOSEPH CALLED THE ACT WHAT IT WAS: SIN

Sin, that's a word you're not going to hear a lot other than in church and when you read your Bible or the Holy Spirit telling you: Uh-oh-oh, don't do that; that's sin.

But we don't do it that way.

- We don't say that things like anger and hostility are sins; we say: No, that's just the way that I am in my self-expression.
- We don't call pride sin; we say: No, no, I've just got a lot of self-esteem and drive.
- We don't call gluttony a sin; we just say: That's just the good life that I've been living and God's blessed me.

Which—an interesting aside—in Africa (I found this out this trip) most African men want their wives to get as big as they possibly can. (And you know) coming from America I'm thinking: Well, why? I said: Why is that? They tell women publicly: Oh you've put on some weight. (Can you imagine doing that publicly to any female in America?) When they do that, they are complimenting her and they are complimenting her husband. Do you know why?—because food is such a rare commodity in Africa; that if an African woman gets big and puts on the pounds, it is a sign that her husband is rich and really taking care of the old girl. Now, I'm not saying that's right, I'm just saying that's different.

Joseph called it what it was: sin.

You can culturally get in a society where society doesn't call that sin.

- That's not gluttony over in Africa, that's not overindulgence; you're just living the good life—that's the proof that you are.
- That's not adultery; that is a marriage crying out for help they'll say in our society.
- That's not fornication; that's just kids being kids. They're just expressing their love for one another; that's them exploring their sexuality at a different and young age.

No! Let me tell you what that is: sin. You hear that word *sin* and all of a sudden it doesn't sound good anymore, does it?

But when you see it as—

- Your choice (and)
- Your expression (and)
- The way that you want to live your life (and)
- When you hear that perversion is just [an] alternative lifestyle

—then you kind of lose the fear of that and you get sucked into it.

Call it what it is when you're being tempted. Say it out loud: That would be a sin if I did it. It kind of brings some cold water to the situation (if you know what I mean and I think you do).

JOSEPH RAN FROM TEMPTATION

There are some things you just can't be around. There are some things you can't resist enough. You're just simply going to have to run away from it. Now here's this woman, day after day non-stop, everything that she can do, putting the pressure on a 20-something-year-old man:

- That is not married
- That is a virgin
- That has nobody to be with
- Nobody to love him
- Nobody to care for him
- All of those raging hormones that any young man would have

What does he do?—*verse 11*:

One day he went into the house to attend to his duties {probably thinking that she was gone} and none of the household servants was inside.

Genesis 39:11 (NIV)

So she catches him and grabs him and said: Come to bed with me now! You know what he did? He spun out of that cloak and beat it out of there as quickly as he could [*Genesis 39:12* (paraphrased)]; because he knew if he stayed that he would be in bed with her. So he ran.

There's something interesting about cloaks: [there] was one that got him in trouble with his brothers, and now there's one that gets him in trouble at Potiphar's house. If I were Joseph, I would never wear a cloak again—ever. It's just bad news. It does not fit well on me. I'm leaving them alone. He runs away.

Now listen to the *New Testament* parallel of this—*1 Corinthians 6:18-19*—are you ready? "Flee from sexual immorality." Sexual sin is so ingrained in our souls that there are times you've just got to run away from it. You've just got to leave its presence. Now why is it that He says that?

¹⁸ ...All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? ...

1 Corinthians 6:18-19a (NIV)

Now do you remember back in Ruth when we said that she was of a foreign culture, a [Moabite]? She was somebody that, because of their culture, [was] very sexually promiscuous. One day God killed over 24,000 Israelites because of the sexual sin they were committing. Do you know when He did that?—When they actually took one of those women inside the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, and proceeded to have sexual relationships in front of the presence of God [*Numbers 25:1-9* (summarized)].

Now here's what Paul is saying: Don't you know that in your body is the presence of God; and when you unite yourself with someone sexually, you have brought them into the temple of God and you have sinned in the presence of God sexually with God inside of your body? Sobering thought, isn't it?

Again, you're not going to hear that from *Planned Parenthood*. You are probably not going to hear that at school. But listen to what God says: When you sin sexually, you're sinning against yourself, you are sinning against God, and you are sinning against that person (that we will see in a moment).

¹⁹ ...You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

1 Corinthians 6:19b-20 (NIV)

The next time you're sexually tempted, say out loud:

- God, do You want me to sleep with that woman?
- God, do You want me to sleep with that man?
- Do You want me to have sex with that person?

I'm going to tell you that God is going to say: No, I don't. Don't take me in there. I don't want that person here. And just to remember, go read *Numbers* [chapter 25] and see what God did the last time they tried to drag God into that. Amen?

And now, I know it is not easy. I live here in America. I watch advertisements. There is every way possible to be sexually tempted in this country. But I want to remind you, young men and young women and old men and older women: you still can be tempted and sin. It is no excuse to say: I am doing it because everybody else is doing it. It is a—what? [Congregation responds: sin]. Don't sin against God. Don't sin against your body. The Spirit of Almighty God lives inside of you and I want to remind you: He is called the Holy Spirit, not the whoring spirit. Okay, enough on that point for now.

Two principles we need to walk away [with] for doing right—thank you, brother [responding to encouragement from the congregation]: I need a few more votes, but thank you.

TWO PRINCIPLES FOR DOING RIGHT:

(1) GOD IS ALWAYS WITH ME

God's always with me—I am telling you—start practicing that when you are tempted [say]: God, I am being tempted! He says:

- I know; I am here. I feel what you're feeling right now.
- But I want you to know I've resisted this; I have resisted this and I know it is tough.
- I sweat great drops of blood resisting temptation when I was in the Garden [of Gethsemane] submitting to my Heavenly Father and doing His will.
- Even though it was a very tough time for Me, I can be resilient for you.
- I can help you do right when you're getting ready to do wrong if you let Me—I know.

God, this woman says she wants me; this man said he loves me. And what would that be, dear child, if you did that? Oh yeah, God, that would be sin. That would be sin. God is always with me.

You may be in a difficult place and you may complain sometimes about your sorry boss, your sorry job, and the fact that everybody at your office is doing it; or everyone in school is having sex and getting away with it. (And) they are giving you condoms and all the other excuses that [they] can have—you can't. But you cannot get over the fact that—

- God is always with you (and that)
- He knows what is going on (and)
- He's planned a route of escape

—if you'll just shut down your heart and all of that sensuality for a moment and say: God, what are You saying? Here is what He is going to say: Run away, run away. (And) I'm God; I'll make those legs really move—run away. Get away from the stuff.

Maybe you are in a dead-end job and you want to do what everybody else is doing—

- Just half-way do it (or)
- Lie (or)
- Cheat (or)
- Steal (or)
- Talk about your boss (or)
- Be like the rest of the lazy employees that the company has (and)
- Just be in it for what you can get out of it

Or you can choose to believe that—

- God has a plan for you (and)
- It's no accident that you are there (and)
- God's going to provide for you (and)
- God's going to use you as a witness and as a testimony (and)

—God Almighty is going to allow you to rise up the ranks, not when you're ready and when you want it but, when He thinks you're ready and when He wants to give you what He has for you.

Jeremiah 29:11 [NIV], "For I know the plans that I have for you," Joseph, who was betrayed by his brothers, sold into slavery, lied about [by] an old whoring woman—"I know the plans I have for you." And what are those plans?—"to prosper you, not to harm you," Joseph, "to give you...a future," not to end your life, Joseph; "to give you hope" and not to make you desperate, Joseph.

God is always and ever shall be with you wherever you go. God is with you. God is always with me. Do you know what it says in the book of *Hebrews*?

⁵ ...because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." ⁶ So we {can} say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

Hebrews 13:5b-6 (NIV)

I don't have to be afraid. I'm just going to do right when I am tempted to do wrong. And when I'm done wrong, I'm still going to do right.

Number second, I mean number last or whatever it is—

(2) GOD WILL ALWAYS REWARD ME

Second principle [after] God is always with me: God's the One who always rewards me.

So, here is Joseph:

- He was lied about—Potiphar's wife lied, set him up
- Everybody in the whole household probably knew she'd been after Joseph a long time
- Potiphar comes back [and] throws him in jail

Now listen to this and tell me if this doesn't sound familiar with Joseph—*verse 23*:

The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

Genesis 39:23 (NIV)

Sound familiar? It is everywhere Joseph goes. He does right when he's done wrong. He is resilient. He is not going to give up on God. He is not going to fall into sin. He is not going to believe that God is not with him. He is going to believe that God has a plan for him and God ultimately will reward him. He has a dream in his heart. He is resilient. [He knows]: God has spoken and I am going to live for God. And even when he is in jail, the jailer said: I'm not even going to watch after the prisoners, you are. I'm not going to worry about anything Joseph; you're going to do it. God is with you Joseph.

God is with you. God rewards you. *Colossians, chapter 3, verse 22*:

²² Slaves, {again, everybody in this room is a slave to Christ and you have a boss that you're going to answer to} obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. ²³ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, ²⁴ since you know that...{your reward will come from God.}

Colossians 3:22-24a (NIV)

Joseph wasn't working for the warden, he wasn't working for Potiphar, he wasn't working for his brothers; he was working for God. And God, even when people did him wrong, always did him right. You can be resilient in tough times. God is always with you and God will always reward you.

Three bullet points and we are done. Number one:

WHERE GOD DOES NOT RULE HE OVERRULES

Well, how did that bad happen to Joseph? Because do you know what? Obviously Potiphar wasn't listening to God. Potiphar's wife wasn't listening to God. They were not under His rule, but He overruled them. And when Joseph was in prison, he became number one in all of the prison.

Number two—kind of cheesy but true:

BLOOM WHERE YOU ARE PLANTED AND GOD WILL TRANSPLANT YOU SOMEWHERE

But if—

- You are hitting it half-way right now (and)
- You have fallen in with the rest of the people at your work
- ...talking about your boss and how bad things are (and)
- ...starting to look for work when God hasn't released you anywhere—

If you will be faithful where you are, Jesus says: He who is faithful in little will be ruler over—what?—much. [*Luke 16:10* (paraphrased)] Quit looking for the much and start doing right in the little and God will bless you. God will reward you. (And) you may be blooming in a desert right now but God is not going to erase that beauty and that faithfulness, He'll put you in a garden somewhere.

Third thing:

AN UNFAIR BOSS IS GOD'S PATH TO HIS BLESSING

Period—unfair!

- It was unfair what his brothers did to him.
- It was unfair that Potiphar's wife lied about him.
- It was unfair that Potiphar put him in jail.

But scene three, guess who is number one under the pharaoh in Egypt after this?—Joseph is. And your unfair boss and your bad thing that has happened to you is God's path for you to walk down so that you can be blessed.

Don't do wrong, do right, be resilient; and when you're done wrong, do right. That's what resilient people do. Have some character and integrity and some faith in God; and stand up for Heaven's sake and be different than all the complaining whiners that you've got to work with everyday. Stand up for God and watch God stand up for you. God knows what He's doing. God will bless your life.

Let's pray together—heads bowed and our eyes closed. If you are here this morning, and you cannot help but doing wrong, it's because you have never been made right—you've never been

right with God through Jesus Christ his Son. And this morning, I'm going to ask you to bow your head and give your life to Jesus Christ. And if that is you, I want you to pray this prayer silently in your heart as I do aloud. It goes like this:

Dear Jesus, I want to do right, but I'm not right. I need You to forgive me, Jesus. I ask You to cleanse me from my sin. I ask You to come inside of my life and live there—let me be Your temple.

As our heads are bowed and our eyes are closed and no one is looking around; if you just prayed that prayer—in all the character and integrity that you have in your heart, no one is looking around—just raise your hand so I can pray for you. God bless you up in the balcony, down here in front, along the side—anybody else? Yes sir. Anybody else? Yeah, that is right. You see, Joseph was unashamed of God in a foreign land and you need to be unashamed of Jesus right where you are right now. And those of you that raised your hand, I want to pray for you.

God, I pray for these precious people who just gave their life to Christ. God, I pray and I ask You that You would bless them and they would stand and they would do what is right and they would let their faith be made known; and through that, God, You would bless these precious people...in Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

Let's give a hand to these people that just raised their hands. God bless you so much.

Now let me ask you to do something when we are dismissed. Right here on my left-hand side, lower floor, it'd be your right-hand side (right over here) there's an *Encouragement Room*. Go in there and tell somebody what you did. Say: You know, I just gave my life to Jesus. And say: What all does that mean?—because it's a whole bunch of good stuff that it means. So I'm going to ask you when we are dismissed in just a second, to go into that room. Also on that card that you pulled away from the *Worship Folder* this morning, indicate on there: Hey I prayed that prayer; here's who I am; send me some more information. We would love to do that for you, we really would.

Now, if you're a church member and you brought a friend with you and they did that, encourage them. Encourage them to take those steps.

If you're our guest this morning, we're getting ready to receive our morning offering. Just put that slip of paper that you filled out either for prayer or for information or letting us know you just gave your life to Christ; put that in the offering plate as it comes by. And the rest of us have the privilege and the joy of giving to this faithful God—

- Who always does us right when we're done wrong
- Who always has a plan for us when there seems to be no plan
- Who is always prospering us even in the midst of an economic downturn

We're being blessed by God. It's our privilege, our joy, and our responsibility to give God His tithe and beyond that our offerings of love. And those offerings—never underestimate what you do in the lives of people. I've got footage of 210 young Africans—kids from grades 0 to 8—that eat 2 meals a day because you give. And if they didn't eat that, maybe they might have one, for

sure they'd have lots of disease, and quite possibly they would be dying. And that's just in one village. I cannot wait until you to see their happy faces eating pousha and beans. What's pousha? Hang around—you're going to have a chance to eat it in a few weeks. I enjoyed it, it's pretty good. But thank you, thank you for giving.

Let's pray. I ask our ushers to get in place. We're going to receive our offering, and then afterwards a couple announcements and we will be dismissed.

Father in Heaven, thank You so much for being good to us. Thank You, God, that we have the power through Jesus Christ to do right when we're done wrong. And, God, thank You that of all the places in the world we live here and You bless us continuously. And so, Lord, because You're faithful to us, we give You Your tithes and our offerings and pray You continue Your blessings flowing toward us...in Jesus' Name. Amen.

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**So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed,
you will be strong in character and ready for anything.**

James 1:4

(New Living Translation, 1996 edition)

Legend:

(words in parentheses) = spoken by the preacher *but unnecessary* to the core sentence idea

[words in square brackets] = additional explanation for clarity *not spoken* by the preacher

{words in curly brackets within indented quote} = spoken explanation *not part of the quote*