

## Fleeing Fornication (4)

*The Life of Joseph*

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**Bible Text:** Genesis 39:7-20  
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This morning, we return to our series on the life of Joseph and this morning the text will be found in Genesis 39. Genesis 39. The text will be verses 7 through 20 of the chapter, but we will read the entire chapter.

1 And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither. 2 And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. 3 And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. 4 And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. 5 And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field. 6 And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured. 7 And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. 8 But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; 9 There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? 10 And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. 11 And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within. 12 And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out. 13 And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth, 14 That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in

unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice: 15 And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out. 16 And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home. 17 And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me: 18 And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out. 19 And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled. 20 And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison. 21 But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. 23 The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.

Thus far we read God's word.

Let's pray now and ask God's blessing on the preaching.

*Our Father which art in heaven, we hear this morning an important word, important word about the sin of fornication, important word this morning for us because we live in a world that surrounds us with this sin and that tempts us to walk in that sin as well, tempts our children, our young people, and us as adults as well. So we pray that thou wilt use this word to put a fence around us to protect us from this sin and the seduction of the world around us so that we would live in purity before thy face. So Father, give us ears to hear this word, and if there are those, this morning, struggling with this sin in particular, I pray that thou wilt use it to drive that sin out of their lives that they would live in purity as well before thy face and they would be brought to repentance. All these things we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

In this passage of the life of Joseph, we find an amazing display of the power of God's grace, in fact, maybe one of the most powerful displays of God's grace in the lives of his people. I say that because here you have a young man, Joseph probably in his early 20s, and a powerful, attractive, older woman relentlessly pursues him and seeks to seduce him as well. She keeps saying to him, "Lie with me. Go to bed with me." She wants him and for any young man who would be in that position, that would feel good, that would be a great temptation. In addition, he's far away from family and accountability, but yet through all of it, through all of it Joseph says, "No," and the only explanation for that is God and his work and his presence with Joseph. That's the only explanation. We see here the powerful work of God and that's an encouragement for us in the age in which we live. We live in a sexually-saturated culture. The only one who is able to give us strength so that we don't conform ourselves to the world in this, to all of the sexual impurity that's

found around us, the only thing that can protect our children and our young people from this, is God and his powerful grace.

Now there are tools that he gives, and we will see that as Joseph uses those tools here in the text, but it's God who does that work, and we see that powerful work of God here today. Remember that that fits so well with what we've been seeing in the life of Joseph so far. The beautiful truth that we've been seeing in the life of Joseph is the presence of God with Joseph. Joseph has been in difficult situation after difficult situation in his own life, but in all of these things, Joseph is doing what is right. When his brothers are against him and they mock him and then they're angry with him because he's doing the right thing, he obeys his father. He's walking in godliness in contrast to all of their ungodliness. What's the explanation for that? It's God's presence with Joseph. Then Joseph is thrown down into the pit. He's sold as a slave into Egypt; that's what brings him here to Potiphar's house. And we don't read here at all that Joseph was angry, that he's angry with his brothers, but instead his perspective is, "Ye meant it for evil but God meant it for good." That's what we read in Genesis 50:20. Even as a young man, a teenager, who's hurt, who's abused by his own family, still he responds in the right way. It's because of the presence of God. He knows God's sovereignty over his life. He experiences the powerful work of God's grace in his life, and now that continues as we look at this part of the life of Joseph when he was tempted to sexual sin and he fled fornication.

So that's the theme that we take this morning, "Fleeing Fornication," as that describes what Joseph did. We take those words from the scriptures from 1 Corinthians 6:18 for the command is given to us, the church, "Flee fornication." That's exactly what Joseph did, he led fornication. We look at that theme under these three points: first, the powerful seduction, we look at what Potiphar's wife was doing and what this world says to us as well; secondly, the amazing flight looking at the powerful grace of God that gives Joseph the strength to do this; and then the striking outcome, where does this bring Joseph. Well, it brings him to prison.

First, the powerful seduction. Potiphar's wife seduced Joseph, deliberately enticing him to have sexual relations with her although she is a married woman. The text says, first of all, about Potiphar's wife, that she cast her eyes upon Joseph. This means that she lusted after him with her eyes. She wanted Joseph with a carnal, sexual lust. Why was it that she wanted Joseph? Well, first of all, we should understand it was not because of anything that Joseph had done. The text gives us no indication at all that Joseph was flirting with this older woman. No doubt she was probably a beautiful woman as well, which is why Potiphar, a high up man in Egypt married her and wanted her to be his wife. But it wasn't because Joseph was flirting with her. It wasn't because Joseph was doing anything inappropriate with her. We don't read in the text that Joseph was making advances towards her. He did not put himself in a difficult situation by getting too close to her physically or emotionally. That's a danger men put themselves today and that danger can be in a in a workplace setting or with friends or whatever it may be.

Joseph did not put himself in harm's way in anything that he had done, but instead the idea is this: as Joseph is working there in the home and he has control over all of the affairs of Potiphar's home, Mrs. Potiphar is watching him. She's looking at him and what does she see? Well, she sees a young man who is handsome and who has a winning personality. That's the idea of the end of verse 6. That could really even be part of the text. The end of verse 6 we read, "And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favored." The two things that are mentioned there point out this: first of all, he was a handsome young man; secondly, he was a likable young man. He had a nice personality. He got along easily with people. He was fun to be around even in the work there in the home of Potiphar.

Now he came by that honestly, that's a way that we might say that that was in his genes, and it was. This is exactly the way that his mother Rachel is described in Genesis 29. She is described as beautiful and with a winning personality. No doubt that was why Jacob wanted her to be his wife and even work another seven years after receiving Leah via trick, he worked another seven years to be married to her. So it's in the genes that Joseph was handsome and had a winning personality.

Potiphar's wife, then, as she watches Joseph begins to lust for him. You see, she's not a godly woman. She's not focused on God and living to the glory of his name. She's worldly. And in 1 John 2:16 the world is described for us as, "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." That describes not only Egyptian culture and our culture today and the sinfulness of our own hearts, but that described Potiphar's wife. She was living in the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

Now maybe there were other circumstances, maybe Potiphar wasn't around very much because of the work that he had protecting Pharaoh and being captain of his guard. Or maybe Potiphar didn't pay much attention to his wife. Or maybe she wanted to feel young and attractive again by having a younger man. We can speculate about some of those things we don't know about, some of those things, but Joseph was there. He was in the house. She had constant contact with him and she lusted after him and that lust of the eyes then became manifest in an attempt to seduce Joseph to go to bed with her. She constantly was saying to Joseph, "Lie with me." She wanted Joseph to go to bed with her.

She attacks Joseph, a single young man, where he is probably the weakest and most vulnerable. He is a young man. He has hormones. He desires this. There would be that desire, sexual desires that he has and she's seducing him with the opportunity to give in to his own lusts and desires, and no doubt she speaks, again, seductively about how wonderful it would be and that they won't get caught and that everything will be okay. And the text tells us, as well, that she's relentless in her pursuit, day after day, verse 10 says, "it came to pass, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her." So it's every day she's on Joseph. She's trying to wear him down. She's speaking to him daily about this and you can begin to picture it a little bit. She flirts with him. She walks by him and just gives him a little touch on the arm. She's looking at him, maybe winks at him across the room when no one else is looking. She's making daily propositions to him to come join her in bed. She's working hard to

arouse him so that he would give in to his lusts and desires. She's the woman who's described in Proverbs 6:24 as a woman having a flattering tongue and using that flattering tongue to try to get Joseph to join her.

Then the opportunity presents itself, we read in the text. No one else was in the house. Maybe Joseph doesn't even know it at the time but they were alone. And she knows it. She knows that no one else is around and so she says to Joseph, "Lie with me. No one else will know. We can get away with it." And Joseph could have easily reasoned that it was okay and no one would know, but he didn't. What we have here is the stuff that romance novels are made out of. We have here what the Hollywood movies are made out of, this attempt of Potiphar's wife to do this with Joseph.

Before we go on and look at the amazing flight of Joseph, we ought to see that this is the world in which we live. What Joseph faced there in Potiphar's house is what we face in the world in which we live because this world in which we live is filled with sexual temptation. The world is saturated with seduction to enjoy sexual pleasures which are outside the boundaries of the word of God. The temptation is all around us. We know that it is there. The promise, especially in the world today, is that you can enjoy this secretly and without getting caught. I hope we all know that one of the greatest threats for the souls of our children and young people is Internet pornography, not just for them but really for anyone of us, especially the men of the church. That's the promise of that, that it can be enjoyed without getting caught, and that it's so easy and it's so accessible and the world says about that, "It's natural. It's normal to look at those things. It's fun. Explore these things. Follow your curiosities and your longings. It's all okay." And then that's what happens on the Internet as well, it's as if those on the Internet who are there, their pictures, their videos saying, "Lie with me. Lie with me." Relentless day after day, "Lie with me. It's okay, we can enjoy this in secret." This is the world in which we live. This is the world in which our children grow up. It's the world that's talking about sex constantly and putting it out there for everyone to see. You cannot escape it at all. It's in the grocery store when you go to the the tabloid magazines and you see those those magazines there. It's on the Internet. Just making a wrong click somewhere without even looking for it, there it is. It pops up there in front of us. It's all around us on billboards as well. And then there are the people who are talking about it as well, the sexual innuendo, the sexting, the crude talk about these things as well that easily goes on in the playground, even at a Christian school.

These are the things that our children see and they hear, and these things are going on around them and we know who's behind that all. Satan is behind all of this trying to enslave our children, trying to enslave our young people, trying to enslave adults as well to this powerful sin. And the world is relentless, just like Mrs. Potiphar was. She was relentless in her pursuit. So the world is as well. Satan keeps whispering, whispering through the television commercials, the television programs, the movies, the tabloid magazines, the Internet pictures, "Lie with me. Lie with me." Satan is working through that to destroy marriages, to destroy homes, to destroy lives, so they're dominated by this sin. That's the world in which we live. We face this same temptation. As men of the church, we face this same temptation around us.

There's something else the text says here, too. It says something about the way that young men, young women, adult men, and adult women, should conduct themselves as well. Women should not be like Potiphar's wife in her attempts to seduce. Young women, don't be women who are flirting with young men, who are dressing suggestively as well as we're saying by your words and by your dress, "Lie with me." There are women who seek that, who want attention for themselves and know how they can get attention from men by dressing that way, by talking that way, by acting in such a way. And young men and men as well, let's not be attracted to those things. It's not just about the women, the way they act, but we have to make sure that we're not responding to that in the wrong way and giving attention to those things but instead that we're men of purity, that we are men who are pure in where we keep our eyes and what we look at as well. We must not be like this woman, Potiphar's wife.

We see that as Joseph faced this, he fled. He fled. The amazing response of Joseph to the constant propositions of Potiphar's wife is, "No." As often as she asked, "No No. No." And not only does he say no, but then when she comes and she wants to lie with him and she starts touching him and caressing him and wanting him right then and there, he doesn't just say no, but he flees. He puts himself to flight. He flees here from sexual sin and now what we see in Joseph is the way in which we are to deal with sexual sin in our own lives as we are tempted to it in our own lives. We should take notice this morning of four things that are part of Joseph's flight, four things that are part of Joseph's flight that come out here in the text, and then what we want to do in the next point in point B of this, is then understand what this says to us.

The first thing is this: Joseph's immediate response is, "No." His immediate response to the seduction of Potiphar's wife is, "No." He does what we're called to do in Ephesians 4:27 and we're called to give no place to the devil. Joseph doesn't hesitate. He doesn't think about it. He doesn't reason in his own head, "Well..." He doesn't pause. He knows what the answer ought to be and he says it without hesitation. Potiphar's wife is trying to wear him down. Maybe he'll think about it a little bit more if she keeps after him, but the answer is the same and in the same way day after day, "No," without hesitation. "No. No. No."

So that's the first thing we understand, his immediate response is, "No." He fights this sin with that immediate response. Secondly, in contrast to the lie that is always part of temptation, he battles against his sin with truth and Joseph answers Potiphar's wife with truth. Notice here that Joseph verbalizes his response. It's not just action, that's part of it, but he says, "No," and then he talks to her and tells her why it is no, and in his response to Potiphar's wife, Joseph verbalizes the truth of God's word. We want to see especially what that truth is that Joseph verbalizes to Potiphar's wife. The first thing he says is that the reason that he does not want to commit this sin, first of all, is because he does not want to betray Potiphar's trust. He shows at the beginning of his response, "Potiphar has put the whole of his house into my care, and he doesn't know what I do with it. There's one thing he hasn't given to me," we'll look at that in a moment, that's a word of truth as well, but his point is here, first of all, Potiphar. Even though Potiphar himself gives no

indication, or the Bible gives no indication that he was a godly man, still, Joseph is concerned about him. Joseph here is motivated by loving his neighbor. So he's fighting this lie, the lie of giving into this sin and that it's all okay, with truth and the truth is, "I love my neighbor because God has called me to do that. I'm concerned about Potiphar. I will be faithful to Potiphar, my master."

Secondly, the truth that he speaks is shown in verse 9 then where he says, "because thou art his wife." So he says, "There's none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife." The truth that Joseph is talking about there is the truth of God's sovereignty, and the truth of God's sovereignty applies to marriage. It applies to Potiphar's marriage, that God had given this woman to Potiphar to be his wife and therefore Joseph may not take her to be his wife or his girlfriend, or anything like that. So he's focused there on that, the sovereignty of God. God's the one who gives a wife to a certain man, and that's the will of God, and therefore he must not, then, steal or take that wife from another man.

The third truth that Joseph speaks is at the end of verse 3, "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" He calls this what it is. He calls a spade a spade here. He says that what this is, is wickedness and sin. It's fornication in the eyes of God. He's looking at it from the perspective of the word of God and so he fights the lie of Satan and the lie of Potiphar's wife with the truth. This is what it. It's not fun. It's not a good time. It's sin. It's wickedness. That's what it is.

So first, Joseph's immediate response is, "No." Secondly, he fights the lie of temptation with the truth of God's word. Third, Joseph avoids the sin and does not willingly put himself in the path of this sin. That's what read in verse 10, "And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her." That tells us that Joseph was avoiding Potiphar's wife. He may not have been very successful in that but it tells us that he was avoiding her. Not only did Joseph not listen to her advances, but he was avoiding her. He doesn't place himself in that temptation day by day if he doesn't need to be in that. Maybe if he sees her alone in a room and he had to go in there, he looks first and he sees her in there and he he leaves. "I can do that later. I'll go do something else." He's avoiding her there in the home. He's doing exactly what Jesus calls us to do, to watch and pray that we enter not into temptation. Joseph doesn't trust himself to keep on resisting these advances of Potiphar's wife. He knows his own weakness. He knows his own sinfulness. He knows his own desires. And so he avoids as much as possible Potiphar's wife.

So that's the third thing he uses to fight against this temptation and sin, and then, finally, the fourth thing is when she tries to force him into this sin by touching him and drawing close to him and saying, "No one else is around. Here's our opportunity." What does he do? He runs. He flees. Without hesitation he flees fornication. Joseph doesn't stick around at this point and try to reason with her and argue with her. He doesn't engage in hand-to-hand combat against this enemy, as it were, because God says that part of the way in which we fight against some sins is that we have to run from those sins. And that's

exactly what Joseph does here. He runs from this particular sin, and it's the right thing to do because God in his word says in 1 Corinthians 6:18 flee this sin, flee fornication.

Beloved, we learn from the text here how we are to fight against sin in general but specifically how we are to fight against this particular sin, sexual sin. That's important today, important today at many different levels. It's important in our battle against temptation that's found on the Internet and even magazines. When you're on the computer and not even looking for something but something pops up and curiosity might get the best of you and you click on that. Or this has been a temptation, a struggle in the past. We see here a battle plan and tools that God gives to fight against this sin. But also this is something important for you, young people, young adults, those who are dating or are thinking of dating and would like to be in a dating relationship moving toward marriage. There's something important for you to hear in this passage as well in your dating relationships. It would be important for you and necessary for you in those dating relationships to talk with the person you date from the outset about boundaries.

Now we as parents are talking to our young people and our children about boundaries as well, what touching is acceptable and what is not, and we ought to place ourselves on the side of great caution in that regard. What I'm talking about here is talking to our children even about the sensual kissing and the touching that can go on as well by which the other person is aroused by that closeness and by that touching and by that kissing. More and more we ought to be aware of that, that that's a great temptation that our young people place themselves in by going even to a certain distance physically in the relationship, and understand that what God says is that the sexual relationship is reserved for marriage. That ought not be the focus, then, in dating, but instead because the relationship is built on love, that that's what ought to be focused on, real love, self-giving love, love that also denies self and what we want.

So these are the things that we ought to be considering in talking about, young people ought to be considering as well when we're talking about dating because you don't know you're going to marry that person you date. You don't know that. One day you may be a member of the church with them and you're married to different people, and if you've done certain things, how awkward that will be. You ought to think about those things as well, and then this has something to say about us in our marriages, that we ought not to put ourselves in harm's way either in our marriages by getting too close to people of the opposite sex.

So we see here the plan that God gives to us, tools that God gives to us to fight against this sin. The first one, remember, immediately say, "No." Don't reason. Don't hesitate. Say, "No." You have to think about that, what's going to be my first response if I'm put in this type of situation, if I see something on the computer and all the rest? It must be, "No. I'm going to say no to this." Secondly, fight fornication with truth, the truth of God's word. What does God say about it? What does God say about pornography? He said that's fornication, it's sin, it's wickedness. This is the way God sees it therefore this is the way that I must see it as well. In a dating relationship, we have to fight this with truth. What does God say about this? What does God think on this type of activity, this kind of



touching, and so on. We have to fight fornication with the truth of God's word. What does God say are the limits that I ought to set.

Now remember, the word of God doesn't say exactly what those limits ought to be but we can figure those out from the principles of the word of God and how close we ought to get even physically in a dating relationship. Fight fornication with the truth of God's word. You've been lusting and looking, to remember God's the one who's given me a certain life. He's given me a certain husband. He's given the other person a certain wife and a certain husband, so I don't lust after another man's wife. I don't lust after another woman's husband. We fight fornication with truth.

Third, we avoid the sin. Avoiding. When it comes to the Internet, the way to avoid that is working so that we have filters and things on our computers so that those things do not easily or regularly pop up. They may not be able to stop everything, but I'm going to avoid that sin. Now the struggle is, is that our our young people, they have all kinds of devices and even us as adults, and it may be hard to find a software to do that for a smartphone, for an iPod, for an iPad, and so on. But are we giving this to our kids, giving them free rein on the Internet and expecting that they're not going to walk in that sin? Well, we're not following what the word of God says, avoiding this. That's what Joseph did in his life. He avoided the situation. That's important for a dating relationship. It's important for you couples then, that you don't put yourself that you're always alone and with one another and then you're tempted to walk in that sin. That's why one of the things that you ought to agree on, parents ought to talk about with their children is, "No, you're not always going to be alone. You're not going to be down in a basement room. You're not going to be in your bedroom just you and him." That puts you in a position for great temptation. That's part of the limits that ought to be set in those relationships. And then finally, flee fornication. This is a sin that we must run from. When it's there and right in front of us, God says don't stay there, run from it. Get as far away from it as you can. Set right boundaries, and when those boundaries appear to be crossed, run away from that scene. That's what Joseph did, he fled. That's what we're called to do, flee fornication.

Now when Joseph did this, it really is amazing. It really is amazing. Any man here, I believe certainly, certainly understands that, how amazing it is that Joseph as a young man in his 20s, no supervision, no accountability, living in an ungodly land and culture, he says, "No." It's remarkable because of what we read in Proverbs 7:26 which says strong men have been slain by her. There are many examples in history and scripture of strong men being slain by this sin of fornication. David is one of them. But think about it, men, if we were in such a position. How would we behave? What would we do?

But Joseph resists. He says, "No." He flees this fornication. Even after all of her advances, all of her touching, all of her flirting, he flees from fornication. That's amazing really from two perspectives. The first perspective is this is remarkable because of Joseph's background. Go back to his family a minute, the home in which he grew up. He had a father who married two wives, Leah and Rachel, and then in addition to that he took a mate from each of them to be his concubines. So essentially Jacob had four wives. This was the home in which Joseph grew up. In addition to that, he had a brother,

Reuben, who slept with one of his father's concubines, and another brother, Judah, who sought out the services of a prostitute who, in the end, was his daughter-in-law. This is the kind of home that Joseph grew up in that was rampant with sexual sin. And in addition to that, his own mother, Rachel, who was beautiful and had an attractive personality, she was an idol worshiper and in many ways showed herself to be ungodly.

So it's remarkable from that perspective, growing up in that kind of a family, that Joseph says, "No." In addition, Joseph has no accountability here in Egypt. Remember, he's separated from family and friends. That's exactly where Satan wants him to attack him. But he's separated from family, he's separated from his father, he's separated from the church, he's separated from all accountability among men and he's a young man with a powerful position where pride could go to his head, and in addition, he has changing hormones, and he's tempted by an older, beautiful, attractive woman and he resists. He flees fornication, and the only explanation, then, when you understand all of that, is that this was the Lord's work. The Lord was with Joseph. That's the prominent idea in Genesis 39, the Lord was with Joseph. And here's how the Lord was with Joseph. We want to be specific in that always. And what does it mean that the Lord is with his people? What does it mean that the Lord was with Joseph? We looked at particulars in the past. Let's look at the particular here. This is it: God provided the way of escape when you face temptation. That's God's promise in 1 Corinthians 10:13. And he does what he promises to do here in the life of Joseph. He provides the way of escape when he was tempted.

While Joseph's family was far away from him, God was not. The Lord is protecting Joseph here in Egypt from falling under this powerful sin. Just think how this had the possibility of changing Joseph's life if he would have given in. It wouldn't be the same. The Lord was protecting Joseph for the bigger picture of what God was going to do in Joseph's life. But it was the Lord who was working in Joseph's life. By the grace of God, Joseph lived to glorify God. You see, as we look at that the question is this: why? Why did Joseph say, "No"? Why did he constantly say, "No. No. No." Why in the end did he flee fornication and run away from Potiphar's wife? Why? What motivated him? It wasn't the danger of STD's. It wasn't the danger that she might get pregnant. It wasn't either so much that it was about Potiphar and his position there in Potiphar's home, and that maybe he could lose that position. No, Joseph's focus was on God. That's what we read in verse 9, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" In the end, it was about his relationship with God.

The strongest tool that Joseph had in this fight against sin was his relationship with God and the faith that God had given to him so that he lived out of what he is and was in Jesus Christ. What Joseph is thinking is this, "I'm a child of God. I'm saved by grace. Therefore how must I live in this moment and as I face this temptation and sin? And how could I do this, how could I walk in this sin and wickedness when God has so loved me that he's taken care of me, has given to me everything I've needed.?" And what's even more remarkable about that is all the suffering that Joseph has gone through in his life. It's not just everything's fine in his life, and then there's a sexual temptation setting before him. One thing after another has gone wrong from a human perspective, and if anybody we might think would be allowed to give in and would be understandable if he did, it was

Joseph. But he didn't and that was because he understood his identity, he understood who he was. He was a sinner saved by grace. He was loved by God. And so Joseph had a passion, a burning passion in his life for serving God. That in the end, is what's going to motivate us if we're going to fight against this sin in our own lives, a burning passion for the glory of God because we are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Beloved, this is really the only way for us to escape this sin and temptation in our own lives in a right way. Understand, it wasn't just Joseph sitting back and waiting for the power of God to come upon him. No, Joseph knew his dependence upon God, but he knew the tools that God had given him to use as well. Saying no right away, immediately, it's truth, the truth of God's word, running and fleeing from fornication and avoiding it altogether. He was using those tools in dependence upon God. He was fighting this sin in God's way and not his own way. That's what we must see as well, this morning. God provides the way of escape for us. That's how he's present with us. Young men, men of the church, but young women too, to whom this can be a great temptation, this is what the word of God says. This is how we fight it, remembering who we are in Jesus Christ and then fleeing from everything that is contrary to what God says.

This preserves us in purity because, you see, the cross of Jesus Christ is powerful. There may be many of us here today who know our own sexual sins and it hurts to think about them, but we have to remember and understand that there is forgiveness in the cross of Jesus Christ. There is. We have to remember how God sees us. We've sinned in this regard, young people, you've sinned in this regard, there's forgiveness, and the blood of Jesus Christ and the way of repenting of that, acknowledging it was sin and it was wrong and I ought not to do that or live in that way. But also there's power in that same cross. Romans 6 emphasizes that our old nature is crucified to the cross, that means there's strength and power in Jesus Christ to overcome this sin. That's what was true in Joseph's life. That is true in our lives as well. We fight in the power of the cross of Jesus Christ. What a comfort there is for us in this, then, as we battle against this sin and there is sin that is committed, there is victory in Jesus Christ.

There's also a striking outcome here. We've seen and understand that Joseph does the right thing. He does the right thing. He flees from Potiphar's wife. But the result is he ends up in prison. It's not just prison, it's so much more than that. He's lied about. He's slandered. He's irrationally judged without a hearing by Potiphar himself, who trusted him in so many things, although we can understand that from a certain perspective. He was racially profiled, it was about "that Hebrew," she said, "that Hebrew slave." He was racially profiled. He was fired from his job at high position in Potiphar's home and he was put in prison. And Joseph went through all of this because he was a faithful servant of God. He obeyed God. He obeyed the word of God. He was faithful and obedient. It would have been one thing, if he had actually have committed fornication with Potiphar's wife, and then he lost all of this and was thrown in prison. But he didn't. She lied about it and Potiphar believed in, and he's thrown in prison.

You know, there's something for us to learn in this. What we learn in this is that we shouldn't expect that by doing the right thing everything is going to just turn out okay for

us. No. In fact, there are many times when we do the right thing that the outcome is not what we had expected it would be, and sometimes we might say, "Well, what was the use in that?" It also doesn't say that here. Obedience does not mean smooth sailing in our lives. Following the Lord Jesus Christ does not mean smooth sailing in our lives. Denying ourselves does not mean no suffering because Jesus says, remember, that a disciple not only denies himself, what comes next? Picks up his cross and follows Jesus. That cross represents suffering, and some of that suffering is the mocking, ridicule, persecution of the world for doing what's right. That's what Joseph endured here. He did what was right and from a human perspective, that immediate perspective, it turned out badly for him. And you might say, "The story of my life. I do the right thing. Where does it end me up? In a pit. Sold as a slave." And now when you don't think it can get any worse, now he's in prison in Egypt.

Beloved, we have to understand that, too. That can be true when it comes even to sexual sins of this world. I can't tell you how many couples when we've gone through peer marriage counseling, and I talk to them a bit about what the world thinks about marriage and so on, how many of them tell me that in the places of their employment or where they run into people of the world and they tell them that they're getting married, that people don't say to them, "You're not living together?" I remember one couple telling me that the advice that they got is that they ought to live together for five years before they think about getting married. Now the older generation probably wouldn't ever have heard that kind of advice, but this is the world in which our children and young people are growing up in. And then they're ridiculed and mocked for not doing those things that the world does. If you're not going to partake in the crude jokes and the sexual innuendo and all the rest, the world's going to mock at that and think it's ridiculous. If you in your dating relationship are going to set clear cut boundaries, boundaries that stick out even compared to other friends and other people that are around you, you may be ridiculed and mocked for that. You can expect that. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't do it because we're about serving God and being pure in our lives. There may be that hard outcome.

It would seem that this was a horrible outcome, but really it was not. We have to remember the bigger picture. The bigger picture is that God has a purpose for Joseph being in prison. You see the sovereignty of God again. God always uses suffering for a higher purpose. We see that in Joseph's life just as we see it in our Savior's life, and others of God's people's lives in in God's word. Think of Moses and the suffering he went through and God used that for good. God did the same as well in David's life as he is chased by Saul, but yet through that he was brought to be the King of Israel. Now Joseph in his life, thrown into a pit, sold as a slave in Egypt, then he comes to that high position in Potiphar's home, now he's in prison, but it's all working for a purpose and the purpose is for the salvation of Joseph, for the salvation of his brothers, for they're coming down to the land of Egypt so that Israel can be delivered and be brought into the land of Israel so God can show in that great and powerful victories. But all of that for the end goal of the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ who is coming to pay for our sins.

So we see that suffering works for salvation. What a comfort that is for our lives. God promises the same to us. He doesn't promise an easy life when you obey. He does

promise when we obey and there's hardship that follows, it works for our salvation and the salvation of church, and we'd be able to see that big picture, and we rest in those promises of God, and we rest in the sovereignty of God, and now we may go forward in our lives fighting, fighting sexual sin, fornication, with the truth of God's word, avoiding that sin and fleeing, fleeing fornication in our lives in the power of God's grace. Amen.

Let us pray.

*Father in heaven, we are thankful for this truth. We need truth because we live in a world that's filled with so many lies, especially when it comes to sex and fornication. We pray, O Lord, that we may hear this truth and live by this truth in our own lives, and that we would, by the power of thy grace, overcome fornication and sexual sin. We pray, Lord, that thou will keep us pure, keep our children and young people pure as well, as they face many temptations in this wicked world. And so, Father, may our motivation, all of this be the glory of thy name and the beauty of thy grace and salvation in Jesus Christ. Forgive, O Lord, our sins, and deliver us from sin. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

Introduction

- I. In this passage we find an amazing testimony of the power of God's grace.
- II. The beautiful truth about God we learn in this history is the presence of God in the life of Joseph.

**The Life of Joseph  
(3) Fleeing Fornication**

**I. The Powerful Seduction**

- A. Potiphar's wife seduced Joseph, deliberately enticing him to have sexual relations with her although she was a married woman.

B. This same powerful seduction is at work in our culture today.

**II. The Amazing Flight**

- A. The amazing response of Joseph to the constant propositions of Potiphar's wife is no! We notice four elements to Joseph's fight against this sin.

B. We learn how do fight against sin in general, but specifically how to fight against sexual sin.

C. This flight of Joseph is amazing because the only explanation is God's grace.

**III. The Striking Outcome**

- A. Joseph does the right thing, but He is imprisoned. He was lied about, slandered, rashly judged without a hearing, racially profiled, fired from his job, and imprisoned.

B. It would seem that this is a horrible outcome, but it is not. God has a purpose for Joseph being in prison.