

Genesis 39 picks up the account of Joseph where it was left at the end of chapter 37. Joseph finds himself in difficult circumstances but enjoys success given by God. His response challenges us to live godly even in a foreign country. The consequences to Joseph's godly stand are not necessarily those we would like on the surface, but in the long run are very positive.

**I. *The circumstances which Joseph observed***

1. *He was a slave.* He was bought, sold and owned by a master (vv 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 19, 20).
2. *He was a foreigner.* This is repeatedly mentioned (vv 1-2, 5, 14, 17) and alluded to by the exclusion of providing food to his master (v 6, cf. 43:32).
3. *He was successful and handsome.* Also frequently mentioned (vv 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9), Joseph had to interpret his success whether of his own abilities or of God.

***Our dangers:***

- Being a slave (or treated as one) can lead to ungodly thoughts and actions such as theft, laziness, etc.
- Being a foreigner and treated as one can lead to resentment and bitterness. It can lead to working harder to prove oneself, but then thinking that one's success was due entirely to human effort.
- Prosperity and success can lead to self-inflation. It leads some to the idea that they can get away with anything. We may not share Joseph's circumstances, but we share the dangers of those circumstances. It is wise to pay attention to Joseph's response to the challenge he faced.

**II. *The challenge which Joseph faced***

**1. *The situation: a trial from God***

The nature of the difficulties: he was tempted by Potiphar's wife and then was unjustly accused and wrongly thrown into jail.

The source of the difficulties: according to Psalm 105:19 (ESV, NASB, or AV) God was testing Joseph during those first 13 years in Egypt to prove his character. God does not tempt to sin, but does send trials to make His people stronger and to demonstrate their character.

**2. *The response: godliness over evil***

Joseph chose to have a humble, respectful attitude toward his earthly master. Joseph chose to be faithful toward His heavenly Master. He would not sin against God.

Joseph chose this path because he saw that his attitude and actions are ultimately directed toward God. His response to his circumstances was his response to God.

***Our resolve:***

- Resolve to see God's hand in all our circumstances, in all our situations, and to see our response to those things as our response to God.
- Resolve to seek God's righteousness. Like Joseph, choose righteousness, no matter what.

**III. *The consequences***

1. *The obvious consequence:* God put Joseph in prison and continued to prosper him there.

2. *The less obvious consequence:* God demonstrated His faithfulness in keeping His promises.

- a. God had promised to bless Israel and bless others through Israel, of which Joseph is an example.
- b. God had also spoken concerning Abraham that He had "chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just" (Gen 18:19 NIV). We see in Joseph an imperfect pattern of what God will yet accomplish in the future in the New Covenant.
- c. God had promised to protect Israel, to make a great nation of Abraham's descendants. Joseph would be the tool to do that.

***Our expectations:***

- God will not leave His children.
- God will accomplish His greater purposes. We see the small pieces of the puzzle, but God is working on the greater picture, proving and developing our character, placing us where we need to be, etc.

Our situation in Switzerland is probably better than most in the world, but better or worse it does not really matter. What matters for us, is that we have the same resolve as Joseph, the same perspective as Joseph, the same godly response as Joseph. In temptation we should choose the path of righteousness. In persecution, we should do what is right whatever it costs. In success we should acknowledge the work and grace of God.

In all we need the "double cure" of salvation from the guilt and power of sin.