



# DEVOTIONS FOR LIFE

Aldersgate Church ~ St. Louis Park, MN

## Week of September 25, 2022 (Genesis 39:1-23)

### Prayer for Groups & Personal Devotion:

We praise you, gracious God, for your grace that sustains us all our days. We offer our gratitude for your gifts that seem to hide from our view, yet empower us to live and serve in every place you call us, and for blessings we find it easy to count.

Today we remember those who are longing for a different or better life. We lift up those who have been betrayed by family or friends, abused by employers, misjudged by neighbors, or harassed because of their identity.

We call to mind the ongoing horror of human trafficking, people forced to labor to serve others' greed and to enable our consumption.

We pray for those still being harmed by historic wrongs, living with the consequences of racist systems and cycles we have not yet broken...

## Devotions for Life

### The Story: Genesis 39:1-23

**Context:** This week we take a big jump into an even bigger story. Last week we left off with Abram and Sarai headed to the land of Canaan where they were originally traveling to with Abram's father Terah before he died. God promises Abram to be the patriarch of a whole nation with offspring of his own. Despite Sarai being barren, eventually Sarai does bear a child of Abram's, whose name is Isaac (although it's important to note that they decided to take matters into their own hands at one point and have Abram have a child with his slave, Hagar. He does and that child is named Ishmael\*)

Isaac grows up, marries, and has twins named Esau and Jacob. Jacob is the younger but swindles Esau out of the birthright. Jacob marries and has 12 sons. This is where we get the *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat* musical, which is mostly pretty accurate from a pure plot standpoint. What's important about Jacob's 12 sons is that they will become the namesakes of what is known as the 12 Tribes of Israel; and not just in a metaphorical sense. You see, at one point in Jacob's history he wrestles with an angel of God, and is renamed "Israel" which is a word in Hebrew that sounds like the Hebrew word for "wrestle". So his name is also Israel. This becomes important much later in the broader narrative.

All of that leads us to the story of Joseph, his brothers, and that dang coat. Joseph was Jacob's favorite son, because he reminded Jacob of his favorite wife, Rachel. He has a beautiful coat made for Joseph, which represents his favoritism toward him. Joseph also has vivid dreams (he will not be the last Joseph to have

... May your justice transform our ways of being, that all people might know the blessing of equity, kindness, and freedom.

We thank you, O God, for you have promised to be with us. We pray you would change things so this world looks more like your kingdom, and we pray for hearts and wills open to recognize when you are changing us to be an answer to our prayers. We pray these and all things in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord, Amen.

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**Compassion & Justice:**  
**Community Outreach Focus:**  
**The SLP High School Bird Feeder** This month we're collecting food for the St. Louis Park High School Bird Feeder, a food shelf created by SLP High School students for SLP High School students. (see [aldersgatemn.com](http://aldersgatemn.com) for details)



dreams; stay tuned), wherein his brothers' crops are bowing down to his, representing them bowing to him. His brothers have (understandably) had enough. Suffice it to say for today's story, his brothers take their frustration a little too far to the degree where Joseph ends up a slave in Egypt, and Jacob believing Joseph has been killed by a wild animal.

Joseph proves to be a valuable and effective salve under the rule of Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh in Egypt. And that is what leads us to today's story.

As you read this story, pay attention to the power dynamics within the relationships in it. Also note that while this story is played comedically in the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, there is really nothing comedic about it.

### Questions for Reflection & Discussion:

1. What in this passage captivates your imagination?
2. Joseph's story is a big one. It spans Genesis 37-45, but also works itself through the end of Genesis. What about the Joseph story do you know? What parts do you like or speak to you?
3. Why do you think Joseph continually seems to find favor and success in general (Jacob's favorite son, Potiphar, Jailer, Pharaoh....), but also finds himself in negative circumstances?
4. At this point in the story, Joseph has already been thrown into a pit, sold to Ishmaelites, sold to Potiphar, and then thrown in an Egyptian jail. What do you think is going through his mind at this point?
5. What in Joseph's story is God's work and what isn't?
6. Have you ever felt like your life couldn't sink any lower? How did you respond? How do you move through such seasons?

*\*There is a lot more to today's story, which is worth reading if you don't know it. You can find Hagar and Ishmael's story in Genesis 16 & 21.*

