Plot Twist **- Not So Average Joe – wk1 (The Pit)**

**Life is like making brownies: You have your ingredients: eggs, milk, oil, lots of nuts, (the mix = flour, sugar, baking soda) mix well- turn up heat**

**We love the brownies, but may not like the ingredients alone - but when they are processed together, they create something good - We may not like the process or the ingredients, but the outcome is… If it all goes well = brownies.**

**Gen 1:1 – “In the beginning God created…” – the heart of God - the start of a process that has purpose and opportunities – God began a work**

**1987: year heart moved to a ministry calling. 4 yrs of a dry desert - God was moving me forward. 1992: I got married and began full time ministry - turned into a hurricane. 1994: new ministry brought frustration. 1996: new ministry led to heartache. Led me to 2003: Livingway followed by 3 D’s. 2006: reboot seemed hopeful, then 2009: Cancer… then family cancers. 2017: The Vive, yay!! Then a pandemic! But all along the way what God placed in my heart was still there**

**Looking back there was a mixture of ingredients and a process that made me who I am today… full of egg heads and nuts…**

**Today we begin a series about a guy named Joe – The events of his life were not necessarily tasteful – but they shaped his life and outcome.**

**Gen 37 starts 13 detailed chap (top 6 characters in Bible - 25% of Gen.) Why so much? In Joe we see our dreams, trials, faithfulness, and the sovereignty of God – and more importantly - Jesus.**

**Joe was one of eleven brother’s son of Jacob (Israel) Gen 37:2 This is the account of Jacob’s family line. Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers… (Here begins the story of a greatness – that changed the world… he was simply tending his flock.)**

**\*\*\* Greatness begins on average days**

**We think it begins with the right the lotto ticket – the right seminar – conference – right job – right relationship…**

**Joe’s story begins with a simple picture of faithfulness to the place God had put him at that time - in obedience to his authority. A young man tending to his father’s sheep.**

**He was not chasing a dream – he was chasing God and being faithful - and He found favor and a dream from God.**

**It is tempting to chase the bigger, better things - but God is well aware of where you are, He is looking for faithfulness on the average days. But most can’t stay still!**

**The trouble with tending the average days:**

**-We start to think the pastures over the hill are better (job, $, car, church)**

**-We start to think our flocks are the problem (spouse, kids, family, friends)**

**We can miss our journey if we are envious of another’s journey.**

**Joe’s greatness began on an average day, faithful where God had him.**

**Gen 37:3 Now Israel *(Jacob)* loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; (Joe was the favorite for a specific reason… second youngest to the love of his life Rachel.)**

**Summers blanket: dirty, holes, torn. Why her favorite? It was an avg blanket - would do whatever it took to protect her fav. Can I buy this blanket from you? No, why? It was her fav.**

**Gen 37:3b …and he made a richly ornamented robe for him. (Jacob signified his love for Joe by making a lavish covering – expensive covering) 4 When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.**

* **Strike one: The Coat – who does he think he is wearing that thing**

**Brothers are older (30’s) murderers, thieves, and committed incest – they are not nice… He joe guys want to hear a dream?**

**5 Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. 6 He said to them, “Listen to this dream I had: 7 We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it.” 8 His brothers said to him, “Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?” And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.**

* **Strike two: Dream 1 – Your sheaves of grain bowed down to mine**

**(The family will bow down to me)**

**9 Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. “Listen,” he said, “I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” 10 When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, “What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?”**

* **Strike three: Dream 2 – Sun, moon, & 11 stars bowed down to me**

**(BTW sun, moon, stars mean - the nations will bow to me)**

**11 His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.**

**10 older brothers jealous and filled with hate. Dad wondered He knew a thing about dreams – God was up to something.**

**\*\*\* There will always be those who despise the dreamers**

**Friends, family, pastors, peers... “It’s not possible - Never done that.”**

**Was Joseph wrong in talking about his dreams? I don’t think so. What God puts in our life is something to be shared! God never instructed Joseph to keep it to himself. \* Joe is 1 of only 3 characters in the bible where nothing negative is said of him.**

**The stage is set. Joseph’s dreams seemed big and exciting… almost unattainable… After all he is just an average Joe.**

**Jacob sends Joe to check on his brothers in Shechem. From Hebron a 2 ½ day walk. (Place they committed murder, robbery, abduction ch34). Not there, he hears they went to Dothan. So, he walks another 9hr walk.**

**BTW - we will see this again later - Joseph never complains and gets negative about doing extra.**

**Gen 37:17 - …So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. 18 But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him. 19 "Here comes that dreamer!" they said to each other. 20 "Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams."**

**Rueben (oldest bro, “I gotta do something – I am the oldest”) Says - he is our brother… we can’t kill him… let’s just throw him in a well (hoping to help Joe escape later)**

**23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing— 24 and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it. (They rip his coat off, assault him, and toss him in. Crying for help – no one will help.)**

**While Rueben steps out – they sit down to eat - see a caravan and Judah says, “let’s not kill him – let’s sell him and make some money.” So, they did. Ruben returns and is devastated.**

**\*\*\* Worrying about what the crowd thinks leads to terrible decisions**

**Rubens good intentions still lead to a bad decision.**

**He did not go all the way with what was right. He never stood up to them, he did not defend Joe. Right motives don’t matter if you don’t do the right thing.**

**Rueben thought I’ll wait till the crowd leaves to help him.**

**Doing the right thing – often means standing up to the crowd and not being silent - even if that crowd is your family.**

**(What will we tell dad?) Genesis 37:31 Then they got Joseph's robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. (let’s make it look like an animal attack or murder – teen out here alone…) 32 They took the ornamented robe back to their father and said, "We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son's robe." (Horrible deception) 33 He recognized it and said, "It is my son's robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces." 34 Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days. (The 10 bros know what they did – we must never talk about it again – bit knowingly they try to comfort dad) 35 All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. "No," he said, "in mourning will I go down to the grave to my son." So, his father wept for him.**

**\*\*\* When dealing with sin you only have two options; you either confess it and deal with it or you cover it up and more lies follow.**

**Usually hurting the those you love the most. That’s what sin does.**

**Day after day they come in to comfort him with more lies. “Anything we can do?” Why don’t you tell him his sons alive!!! We do the same, we continue the façade - the lie, the mask. Anything but deal with our sin. “Anything else we can do?” Why don’t you deal with your sin!**

**It would’ve been a hard conversation (imagine) but it would have brought life to the family. Is it really that easy to live a lie for some of you?**

**For Joe this was a devastating start to a great dream!**

**Ever felt like Joe - like your dreams were crushed? You know God his goodness & powerful and think God is able… until… you find yourself in the pit. And those closest toss us aside.**

**We have great dreams – until faced with a spouse leaving – until the doctor says it’s cancer – until we hear of layoffs – until another fight at home – until our child runs away…**

**Four Lessons from the PIT – When in the PIT**

1. **God’s dreams for you cannot be stopped**

**(I get a kick out of this…) Gen 37:19 "Here comes that dreamer!" 20 "Come now, let's kill him and throw him… Then we'll see what comes of his dreams."**

**Some dreams are not God dreams, they are your dreams and desires. They may or may not happen. But what God ordains cannot be stopped. \*\* Job 42:2 I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted *(stopped).***

1. **Sometimes you have to lose the coat, to get where God wants you**

**When we think of Joe we often think of that coat. He loved that coat – he did not need to wear it all the time – but he did – he loved it!**

**What you are holding onto – that thing you treasure – gift, car, person, job, relationship, instrument, goal…**

**That coat of many colors was not his and is not your identity. To get you to the next step, God might cause you to lose the coat.**

**We don’t hold onto the dream – we hold onto Jesus**

**With Joe we will find out… the dreams come when lest expected. And the dreams will be fulfilled in the least likely of ways.**

1. **This is an opportunity for you press into God**

**We will see - Joe never gets angry at God or others or vengeful and spiteful – he stays hopeful and leans on God… in the dark places.**

**What we find in Joe is a heart like the writer of Psalm 23 -**

**Psalm 23:1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. (I will not lack – or have want) 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. 3 He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (HE – HE – HE)**

**(Big transition happens) 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; (meaning I will eat with my enemies) you anoint my head with oil; (God’s blessing) my cup overflows. (more than enough) 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**

**\*\*\* The HE (out there) – Becomes a YOU (with me) in the valley.**

**Take a look at the last verst in Chap 37 - Gen 17:35b *(Jacob said)* "…in mourning will I go down to the grave to my son." So, his father wept for him. (I feel like part of me has died! I’m dying inside!)**

**36 Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh’s officials, the captain of the guard. (100’s of miles away – the story continues)**

**Jacob is devastated – Some of you online, some here feel like you’re in a pit – been hurt and abused by those you trusted – some of you are in the grave (mourning – dying inside).**

**4. Hear this, Those who walk with God always have a “meanwhile”**

**When it seems like God is absent, not working, forgotten you… *Meanwhile*… God is moving and working…**

**Don’t lose hope - there is a meanwhile… God’s hand of providence is working in those who are his favored!**

**Rom 8:28 We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.**

**Two levels to learn from Joseph – Two tracks.**

1. **How Joseph lived and trusted God in the face of trials & opposition**
2. **How Joseph mirrors the gospel story of Jesus.**

**The Story of Joseph is a mini gospel story – pointing to Jesus.**

**Joseph is a picture of Jesus**

* **Jacob ponders the dreams of Joseph, Like Mary, mother w/ Jesus,**
* **Jacob favored Joseph – as the Father favors those he saves**
* **Jacob showed this favor by giving him an expensive robe**

**God shows his favor to us by giving us Christ as our covering. Joseph’s robe was a gift of grace (showing unmerited favor).**

* **The covering (robe) was covered in blood – Christ or covering is covered in blood as our covering for sin.**
* **Joseph family and the nations will bow to Him. Like Jesus family.**

**Can God handle this? Does God really hear me? Will He really meet me? You might be average, but you do not serve an average God!**

**Maybe you can relate to Summer’s blanket –smelly, torn up, been through a lot – Jesus sees you and sees his favored one in Christ.**

**We will see a trend - this average Joe had an uncommon faith.**

**Joe knew: \*God is with me \*God is for me \*God is at work in me**

**Daniel – God judges**

**Joseph – God gives**

**Jesus – God saves**