Intro: 22 By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

• So far in our grasping the concept of how faith works we have seen:

\* Abel - the worship of faith as a sacrifice offering to the Lord

\* Enoch - the walk of faith

\* Noah - the work of faith

\* Abraham - the trial and obedience of faith

\* Sarah - the strength of faith

\* Isaac - the vision of faith

\* Jacob - the worship of faith as a blessing to the Lord

But today we will look at the side of faith that has so much grit, determination, and heart, and it was shown in the life of Joseph, "the persistence of faith".

I. A Persistent Faith is not Shaken by Adversity – 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. Acts 14:22

a. His brothers sold him into slavery – 28 Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt. Genesis 37:28

b. He was wrongly sentenced to prison, twice – 20 And Joseph’s master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king’s prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison. 21 But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. Genesis 39:20, 21

c. He watched his Father Jacob die – 1 After this, Joseph was told, “Behold, your father is ill.” So he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. Genesis 48:1

• In Gen. 39:2 we read that ‘the Lord was with Joseph’. Instead of saying, ‘Everything is against me" like his father did in Gen. 42:36, he preferred to say – If God be for me who can be against me. Tears, homesickness, sorrow, distress yes – but God was with him! His faith in God was unshaken by these trials. He was in prison twice; the first time when he got to Egypt and was given to the captain of the guard (Gen. 37:36), and the second time was when he was falsely accused of rape (Gen. 39:20-23).

II. A Persistent Faith is not Spoiled by Success – 37 This proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants. 38 And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?” 39 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. 40 You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you.” Genesis 41:37-40

a. He went from prison to Prime Minister

b. He never let his popularity get in between him and God

c. Persistent faith will serve Christ in all stages of life

• Persistence (stubborn) and commitment (loyal) are identical twin cousin – they may look a lot alike but there are some differences. Persistence is not being committed to anything, but you are persistent in a cause more than you are committed to. Commitment is that there is nothing that will separate you from the cause of your believe. We are persistent in our praying, meaning that I may not pray every day (in which we should) but do a lot. I am committed to Christ daily and always, not just a lot, but forever I have made a commitment to serve him, always.

III. Persistent Faith can withstand the Most of Temptation – 7 And after a time his master’s wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, “Lie with me.” 8 But he refused and said to his master’s wife, “Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. 9 He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” 10 And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her. 11 But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house, 12 she caught him by his garment, saying, “Lie with me.” But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house. Genesis 39:7-12

a. Remember the Devil wants to see you fail

• When faith persists, the Devil is defeated and routed, even during the cruellest onslaughts. Let's look at what Joseph said in 39:9. The world is so full of evil, and the Devil has a strong hold on it. It is going to take our persistent and committed faith to get us through the rough times.

° 8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 1 Peter 5:8

b. When faith is persistent the Devil is defeated

• Remember that the Devil is always on the warpath seeking to trip up the child of God. When we resist, rebel, fight back against the devil the word says that he will flee. Joseph fight back by resist the advances of power hunger, sex addict, lying, woman – his master’s wife.

° 6 Then he said to me, “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts. Zechariah 4:6

IV. A Persistent Faith is not Moved by False Charges – 22 And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. 23 The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph’s charge, because the Lord was with him. And whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed. Genesis 39:22, 23

a. He didn’t blame God for the pain in his life

• In fact, he recognized who was the cause of his pain a suffering, his brothers, and knew that God used his suffering to bring healing a heathen country, Egypt.

° 20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. 21 So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.” Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. Genesis 50:20-21

b. He used his suffering to help others

• It was Joseph that helped a fellow prisoner, who in return told Pharoh of Joseph, in which Joseph helped Pharoh, who helped Joseph get out of prison, in which Joseph help lead a massive food drive to save a city that never helped him do anything.

° 11 “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Matthew 5:11-12

c. God awarded him in His time

• Joseph spent years going through living agony in order to get awarded his right do in his last’s days. Patience and longsuffering is something we all need to work on. We want our just do, but many of us will not get it until we have passed on. Moses did not get to cross into the promise land until after his death.

° 3 And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. Matthew 17:3

V. A persistent Faith is not Troubled by Broken Pledges – 14 Only remember me, when it is well with you, and please do me the kindness to mention me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house. 23 Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph but forgot him. Genesis 40:14, 23

• We make this point because today many have their faith tested in exactly this way. In Gen 40:1-23 we read of Joseph’s two fellow-prisoners, of Joseph’s interpretation of their dreams (and his words in Gen. 40:8 show his faith in God), and of the butler’s promise to remember Joseph. But the butler did not keep his promise!

a. Persistent faith is not affected when promises are broken

• So, what did Joseph do? Did he say, ‘God has let me down!’ No, and although it is true that ‘hope deferred makes the heart sick’ – look up Prov. 13:12 - Joseph’s faith persisted; he trusted in God to see him through.

b. Persistent faith will keep their promises

• True the butler forgot Joseph after promising not to, but when the time was right the Lord recalled to the memory of the butler and he remembered Joseph interpreting his dream like he said he would, and he interpreted it just like the dream said would happen. Keeping your promises is a big deal to most people. The business of stabbing each other in the back, will leave very little friends. The one who keeps his word will have more friends than he can handle.

° 33 “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, *‘You shall not swear falsely*, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ 34 But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 *or by the earth*, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. *37 Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil*. Matthew 5:33-37

VI. Persistent Faith is not Swayed by Human Reasoning – 19 But Joseph said to them, “Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? 20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. Genesis 50:19, 20

a. He was not swayed to sin with his master wife

b. He was not swayed to blame God while in prison

c. He was not swayed to get revenge on his brothers

VII. Persistent Faith is not Limited by time's Limits – 25 Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.” Genesis 50:25

a. Joseph made his sons promise to carry his bones home

b. This kind of faith looks beyond time into eternity

• That right Joseph prophesied the returning of Israel back to their homeland by God, and that they were given instructions to carry and bury these bones on home soil.