

Joseph: Defining Character

(Genesis 40:1-15, 23, 41:1)

Introduction.

A) Winston Churchill served as Prime Minister in two different terms. His first was during World War II. The Nazis had turned their sights on Britain. Chamberlain, though suffering from an often severe speech impediment, delivered many moving speeches to inspire the embattled nation.

His first speech as prime minister was the famous, *"I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat"* speech. It electrified Parliament. His critics were now listening and cheering.

Just before the Battle of Britain, Chamberlain delivered two other famous speeches that included the words :

... we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.

The other:

Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves, that if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, 'This was their finest hour.'

B) Those were defining moments in the career of Winston Churchill. In fact, the delivery of the words *"This was their finest hour" speech* may have been the defining moment of his career.

C) Introduce Sermon Series: Defining Moments

Defining moments are life altering, crucial moments in life that God uses to demonstrate Himself in an obvious way resulting in you never being the same again. Those moments define you from that point forward. Those moments reveal who you are at your core. Those moments give you direction and purpose.

Some defining moments are good and some are not so good. Some defining moments are successes and some are failures. Some are experiences and some are events. Yet, they all

impact us for a lifetime.

In this series titled *Defining Moments*, we will examine five different Bible personalities that experienced pivotal moments that changed their lives forever.

The goal is for you to recognize the defining moments in your life and to see the hand of God in them.

D) Contextualize this Sermon.

Today, we start with the Bible personality of Joseph. We will notice the defining moment in his life that set the stage for God to use him mightily for the Kingdom. His was defining moment had to do with CHARACTER.

I. The Building of Joseph's Character

A) Promised Position (Genesis 37:3-8)

B) Sold Into Slavery (Genesis 37:18-27)

C) Falsely Accused (Genesis 39:1-4, 6b-8, 10-12, 16-20)

D) Forgotten Friend (Genesis 39:21-23, 40:1-5, 8, 13-14, 21-23)

E) Remembered Colleague (Genesis 41:1a, 8, 9-14)

F) Successful Leader (Genesis 41:37-41)

G) Fulfilled Promise (Genesis 47:5-6)

What was the defining moment in Joseph's life? I believe it was the two years he served after being forgotten by the cupbearer.

After surrendering to God's will again, his SUBMISSION TO GOD was solidified. He was ready to lead Egypt with integrity and to RULE OVER HIS FAMILY humbly.

God laces together events in your life to bring you to the place you are today. His will continue that task until he building in you the character necessary to be effective for the Kingdom of God.

A defining moment for me in regards to character was the purchase of my first camper from Mr. Adams in Texarkana, Arkansas.

II. The Construction Of Your Character

A) Proverbs 17:3

It is the Lord's purpose to develop character within us. Godly character is the result of the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification.

B) Matthew 12:35

C) Romans 5:3-4

(Rick Warren writes, "Character is never built in a classroom. Character is built in the circumstances of life. The classroom Bible study is simply the place to identify character qualities and teach how character is developed. When we understand how God uses circumstances to develop character, we are able to respond correctly when God places us in character-building opportunities.

God builds character in our lives by allowing us to experience situations where we are tempted to do the exact opposite of the character quality. Character development always involves a choice. When we make the right choice, our character grows more like Christ.

Conclusion

A) Often we do not recognize those defining moments in our life until they have passed. It's more of a rearview-mirror type realization.

Therefore, live each day knowing God is building character in you. He is building Godly character in you. He is building Jesus in you.

B) Character is what defines you. It's what people see in you. It's what people will say about you after you pass away. Character is one of the most important things you have. How are you investing in yours? Do people see your faith in what you do? Is your character reflected in how you serve the Kingdom?