

Joseph's story -- Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28

Proper 14 (19), Tenth Sunday after Pentecost, Year A

Characters

Narrator

Joseph -- to side, out of sight

Jacob/Israel -- centre stage on chair

The Shechem Man

Rueben -- to side, out of sight

Judah -- to side, out of sight

Brothers 1 -- to side, out of sight

Brothers 2 -- to side, out of sight

Brothers 3 -- to side, out of sight

Non-speaking:

Brother 4 -- to side, out of sight

Narrator: Jacob, also known as Israel, settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan. This is the story of the family of Jacob, the family of Israel, the intrigue between his many sons by his many wives.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers.

He was a helper to the sons of Bil-hah and Zilpah, his father's wives.

And Joseph brought a **bad** report of them to their father.

Joseph: *Walk over to Jacob.*

Father, I have some things to tell you...

Joseph & Jacob: *Carry on miming conversation/gossip.*

Narrator: Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age.

And Jacob had made for Joseph a long robe with sleeves.

Jacob/Israel: *Pleased with yourself, put robe on Joseph.*

Narrator: But when Joseph's brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him. Now Joseph's brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph,

Jacob/Israel: Joseph, are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them.

Joseph: Here I am, Father.

Jacob/Israel: Son, go now. See if it is well with your brothers, and with the flock. And bring word back to me.

Narrator: So Israel sent Joseph from the valley of Hebron.

Jacob/Israel: *Send off Joseph, and exit.*

Joseph: *Wander around & up and down.*

The Shechem Man: *Enter from side.*

Narrator: Joseph came to Shechem.

The Shechem Man: I have seen you wandering in the fields. What are you seeking?

Joseph: I am seeking my brothers. Tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock.

The Shechem Man: They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'

Joseph & The Man: *Walk off, down side aisle Man exits. Joseph walks up other side, slowly.*

Narrator: So Joseph went after his brothers,
and found them at Dothan.

Brothers: *Enter from side.*

Narrator: The brothers saw Joseph from a distance,
and before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him.

Brother 1: Here comes this dreamer!

Brother 2: Come now!
Let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits!
Then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him!

Brother 3: Then we shall see what will become of his dreams!

Narrator: But when Reuben heard it,
he delivered Joseph out of their hands, saying,

Reuben: Let us not take his life. Shed no blood.
Throw him into this pit here in the wilderness,
but lay no hand on him.
(*aside*): I will rescue Joseph out of their hand
and restore him to our father.

Narrator: So when Joseph came to his brothers,
they stripped him of his robe,
the long robe with sleeves that he wore.
They took him and threw him into a pit.
The pit was empty. There was no water in it.
Then they sat down to eat.

Brothers: *Sit in front of Joseph and pretend to eat.*

Narrator: Looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites
coming from Gilead,
with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin,
on their way to carry it down to Egypt.

Brothers: *Look toward back and STAND UP.*

Brother 3: Brother Judah, what do you have to say?

Judah: What profit is there if we kill our brother,
and conceal his blood?
Come! Let us sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites,
and not lay our hands on him.
For he is our brother. Our own flesh.

Brothers: *Nod head.* Yes. I agree.

Narrator: When some Midianite traders passed by,
the brothers drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit.

Brothers & Joseph: *Lead Joseph down side aisle
Exit through back.*

Narrator: They sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites
for twenty pieces of silver.
And the Ishmaelites took Joseph to Egypt.
Here ends the reading, a story of intrigue,
a story of parenting and family,
of gossip, favouritism and sibling rivalry.
May God bless our hearing and seeing with understanding.