



The Builder

First Christian Church
Midland

January 26, 2025 Volume 70 Issue 2

Characters of *Genesis* Part II



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SCOUT SUNDAY
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EVENING PROGRAM

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Rev. David Chisham
Senior Minister

JOSEPH, PRINCE OF EGYPT, MAN OF GOD

Just when you think all the world is full of fools, charlatans and scoundrels, someone emerges who restores hope. That's who Joseph, in the book of Genesis, is for me.

To this point the book of Genesis has highlighted the significant flaws of most major characters. Adam and Eve ate the fruit. Noah exited the Ark but fell into a dysfunctional family explosion. Abraham struggled with doubts about whether or not God could do what was promised. Isaac had his moment of weakness, fearing for his life rather than protecting his precious relationship with his wife. And Jacob...well, it's difficult to find anything redeeming about Jacob until late in his life.

But from the beginning Joseph is different from his ancestors. Certainly, he is haughty at moments, especially when he boasts to his brothers and parents about the lofty dreams of power he's been having, but we see a lot of humility and an uncanny ability to tolerate difficult and unjust circumstances with patience.

Importantly, when Joseph could take righteous retribution upon his brothers...instead he forgives them and protects them, like a brother and powerful leader should do.

The interesting thing about the book of Genesis, from chapter 37 to the end of the book, God disappears as an active character. With Abraham and Sarah and Hagar, and Isaac and Jacob, God speaks and interacts and “shows-up” in a tangible way in their lives. With Joseph, however, we never hear God speak directly to Joseph or make a visitation to Joseph. It's inferred that God helps Joseph discern the meaning of dreams, but there is no direct attestation that “God spoke to Joseph saying...”. Yet of all these characters, Joseph seems to rely upon God's hidden presence more than any other.

In our own lives, I think we sometimes feel that ebb and flow of God's presence. I've had moments when I can really feel God at work in my life. In 2016, with all the tumult and uproar of civil unrest and targeted shootings followed by a disastrous flood, I had a sense of God's presence and power at work through me. But I will say as well, I was left exhausted and emotionally spent—that intensity wasn't sustainable for long stretches of time. Maybe it's just me, but there is also something deeply satisfying in knowing God as a helping presence even in the mundane seasons of life.

Joseph shows God's presence most clearly in his character and the decisions he makes. When sent into slavery, he doesn't sulk and languish over his downfall, but puts his priority on trying to elevate his situation. When tempted to take advantage of the advances of Potipher's wife, he flees her room. Importantly, when he could take righteous retribution upon his brothers for their lapse of character in sending him off in slavery, instead he forgives them and protects them, like a brother and powerful leader should do.

Indeed, from the first brotherly relationship that ended with Abel's murder, up to the indiscretion of Joseph's brothers, we get the impression that brothers are always and only at each other's throats. Joseph is the first example of a brother who extends unconditional love to his siblings as brothers should do for one another. Joseph is the first example of someone who really lives out his faith over a lifetime.

Let's pray that Joseph's character will be seen in our world!

See you at the Table,



Rev. Tom Jones
Associate Minister

When I was growing up, I had a lot of challenges. I had seizures and side effects from the medicine I took which slowed me down.

We moved every 2-3 years, and my parents separated 7 times. There was a lot to overcome. When I struggled in school, my dad understood and always said, "Do your best. As long as you are doing your best, I'm proud of you."

As I read the story of Joseph, I am struck by how many difficult situations he encountered- left to die by his brothers, sold as a slave, imprisoned for something he didn't do.

Through all of his struggles, Joseph did his best for God and others. He maintained his integrity. Joseph remembered God and who he was despite the difficult circumstances. God worked in Joseph's life wherever he was. Joseph's example is a reminder that God is with us throughout the ups and downs that we experience in life. There is so much that we can't control or change, but we can always do our best for God and others. Let God work in your life.

**"Do your best.
As long as you are doing your
best, I'm proud of you."**





Rev. Remy Tercero
Associate Minister

CHARACTER IN GENESIS

"Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have produced a man with the help of the Lord." Next she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground. In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel for his part brought of the firstlings of his flock, their fat portions.

And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it." Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let us go out to the field." And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him.

The truth is that God isn't concerned with what we view as fair. We are one piece in a magnificent puzzle crafted by God. We can only see the pieces next to us. God is working in ways we won't understand until one day when we are at God's right hand looking over the entire puzzle.

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" And the Lord said, "What have you done? Listen; your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground! And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand." -Genesis 4:1-11

The biblical passage above is a story with three main characters which are God, Cain and Abel. I broke up the passage into three parts to easier explain what is going on. The first section is about both Cain and Abel bringing their offerings to the Lord. Abel brought God an offering of fruit while Cain brought the fat portions of the first born of the flock. This was considered a significant offering at the time.

In the second section it is written that the Lord "regarded" Abel's fruit but not Cain's offering. I am unsure what God "regarding" an offering looks like, but the point is that Cain felt offended that God was providing more attention to Abel than him, although in his mind he did more for God. Then Cain goes out into a field and murders Abel out of pure jealousy.

Then God asked Cain where Abel was, and Cain responded sarcastically and then God knew that Abel's blood had been shed. God was furious.

There are times where we feel like Cain in this story. We do so much more to further God's Kingdom, or to serve God than someone else, yet we feel that God is blessing them more than God is blessing us. We tell ourselves, God I am doing so much more for you, where are my blessings?

Cain acted upon what he felt was right and didn't trust God's perspective. I doubt he even stopped to think that God may be working in ways that he

couldn't understand. God had plans for Abel's life and that is evident in the way that God responded to a hateful Cain.

Cain allowed his jealousy and judgement to fully engulf him. He then acted based upon his emotions and the fairness system that he had created in his head.

The truth is that God isn't concerned with what we view as fair. We are one piece in a magnificent puzzle crafted by God. We can only see the pieces next to us. God is working in ways we won't understand until one day when we are at God's

right hand looking over the entire puzzle. That day we will be amazed and in awe at how our incredible God works. Until then, trust that as long as you fully press towards what God is putting on your heart then everything will be okay. Let go and let God.

Children's Learning Center

CLERGY CHAPEL





Stewardship of First Fruits 2025

In the ancient Israelite tradition, before the full grain harvest had begun in earnest, God's people would bring their "first fruits", the first gleanings from the field, to the Temple in thanks to God and with trust that God would provide a plentiful harvest (Leviticus 23:9-14).

As we ended 2024, we are so thankful for the harvest that you shared with First Christian Church over this past year through your tithes, offerings and gifts. We share the good news that our General Fund finished the year to the positive of about \$100,000! Thank you for your generosity!

Looking forward to 2025, we wish to give you the opportunity to plan your "first fruits", your estimate of giving, for the coming year. The Lord commands the Israelites not to give from whatever is leftover, but to give faithfully, and give from the top. We invite you to prayerfully reflect on your giving plan for 2025. These estimates of giving are important as we plan our budget cycle.

Follow the QR code on this page for a link to submit your information online, or contact our bookkeeper Anieta McNabb in the church office (ph. 432-682-2541, email amcnabb@fccmidland.org). Hard copies of an estimate of giving form will be distributed during worship services on January 19 & 26 .

Thank you, and may God bless you and your family throughout 2025 with grace, peace and abundance!



Prayer List

Those in need of prayer:

- Abraham Ortega
- Virgie Lewis
- Tere Valero
- Dave Burgard
- Nancy Stanley
- Patsy Hill
- Fred Yates
- Vincent Cooper
- Pat Marshall
- Ginny Estes
- Joshua Harrison
- Mary Beth Corbett
- Linda Taylor
- Lisa Craven
- Mark Cranford
- Cricket Harrison
- Betty Odom
- Fred Schwiening
- Nicky Rodriguez
- Lana Cooley
- C.C. Petteway
- Pat Chambers
- Kathy Landrum
- Sheila Crudgington
- Robert Crudgington
- Gary Thompson

Military:

- Lee Anna Crudgington
- Tyler Brown- *grandson of Lyn Brown*

Families, Friends Beyond

FCC

- Cindy Garcia- *CLC Teacher*
- Barrett Wood- *cousin of Ginny Estes*
- Jay Warren - *friend of Pat Marshall*
- Kairos Conde-

nephew of Olivia Espino

- Grayson Pickett-
- friend of Jeweli Flores*
- Al Schorre-*friend of Sharon Boyd*
- Robin Diegan & Jason Diegan-
- cousins of Ginny Estes*
- Amanda Bryant-*friend of Dave & Kathy Cromwell*
- Freda Benton
- Amanda Lee-*friend of Janice Ford*
- Reymondo Garcia-*brother of Maria Vinson*
- Gary Kennedy *friends of Lauren & Justin Disney*
- Lee Stone-*brother of Jean Jones*
- Fred Copeland—*father of Lauren Disney*
- Ed Keah *friend of Joy Singleton*
- J.M. Moore - *father of Kathy Landrum*
- Kairos Conde - *nephew of Olivia Espino*
- Oscar Garcia - *brother of Amparo Olguin*

Birthdays

- 01/04 Mary Beth Corbett
- 01/06 Joy Singleton
- 01/06 LeeAnna Crudgington
- 01/10 Ray Berry
- 01/10 J.R. Bourland
- 01/12 **Rowen Hattenbach**
- 01/13 Virgie Lewis
- 01/14 Ed Hall
- 01/17 **Cora James**
- 01/20 Charla Espino
- 01/25 Donna Campbell
- 01/28 **Paul Junior Kosanke**
- 01/29 Blake Woods
- 01/31 Pat Howard
- 01/31 Margy House
- 01/31 Beth Crawford

Anniversaries

- 01/25 Justin & Lauren Disney
- Youth and Children are in Red



**February 2nd
Scout Sunday 2024**

**We invite all Scouts
Scouting America & Girl Scouts
to wear their uniform and join
us in the flag Ceremony
Sunday, February 4th.**



1301 W. Louisiana Ave.

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www.fccmidland.org



The Story

my story

A Year Reading
through the Bible

Scan this QR
code to find the
suggested reading
plan for 2025!

