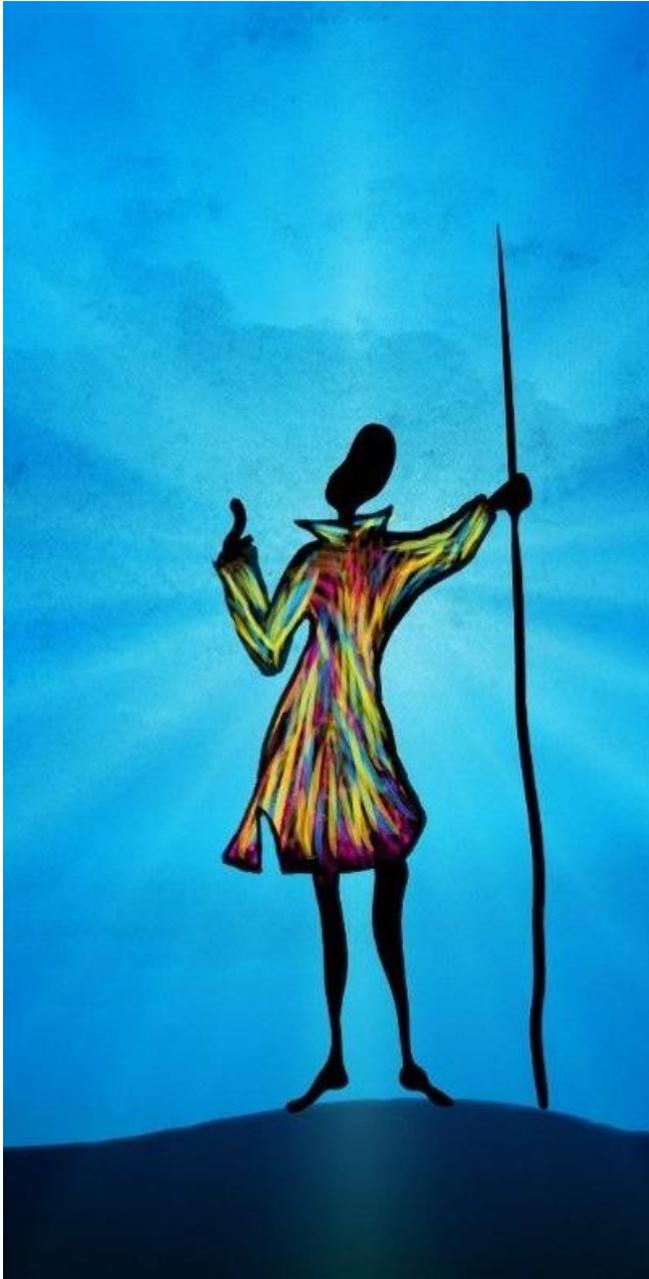


JOSEPH: sent ahead by God to preserve life



The story of Joseph in the Hebrew Scriptures is a narrative of self-revelation - of one being sent ahead by God to preserve life and restore and reconcile the family of Israel.

The story of Joseph, who was sold into slavery by his brothers, can resonate with some members of the LGBTQ community who have been rejected by family and faith community, as Joseph was. By “coming out” to his family in Egypt, Joseph restores broken relationships and renews bonds that can now be mutual and life-sustaining - but only because his heart has grown large enough to forgive.

GENESIS 45: 1-5

Then Joseph was no longer able to hold back his feelings in front of his attendants, and he cried out to them, “Leave me!” So no one was present when Joseph made himself known to his brothers - but he wept so loudly that all of his Egyptian attendants heard him, and the news of it reached the Pharaoh's palace.

Joseph said to his brothers, “It is I - Joseph! Is my father really still alive?” But his brothers could not answer him, so dumbfounded were they.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come closer to me.” And they came closer. He said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. Please do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, for having sold me here. God sent me here ahead of you so that I could save your lives.”

FOR REFLECTION

1. How would you describe your relationship with your family? In Genesis 37:3-4, Joseph is portrayed as being loved and doted-upon by his father, but his brothers have nothing but contempt for him. As an LGBTQ person or ally, do you experience conflicting emotions towards you in your family? How do you navigate between the love showed by some and hostility by others in your family?
2. *“For you have tested us, O God - you have refined us as silver is refined. You put us in prisons and laid burdens on our backs; you let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water - and you brought us to a place of abundance.”* Psalm 66 verses 10-12 reflects much Joseph's experience of being sold into slavery and imprisoned by the Pharaoh. As an LGBTQ person or ally, have you experienced “breaking” or “stretching” points that now makes you “God-strengthened” for a greater purpose?
3. When Joseph was first sold as a slave to Potiphar, an official of the Pharaoh, one of the trials he faced was sexual exploitation. The Bible records that Joseph was a “handsome youth and well-built.” When he rejects the advances of Potiphar's wife, she retaliates and accuses him of rape (Genesis 39:17-20). As an LGBTQ person or ally, have you ever been falsely accused or have had your words and actions been “twisted” for who you are or what you represent? How do you forgive or rise above any injustice towards you?
4. The similarities between Joseph and Jesus are remarkable: Joseph was hated by his brothers / Jesus was hated by His own (John 15:25); Joseph's brothers conspired against him / Jesus' followers conspired against him (Mark 11:18; John 7:1); Joseph was stripped of his coat / Jesus was stripped of His clothing (Matthew 27:28); Joseph was sold for 20 pieces of silver / Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14-15). How do the challenges you face as an LGBTQ person or ally compare or contrast with the experiences of Joseph and Jesus?
5. Should Joseph have kept God's revelation to himself (Genesis 37:7-10) for the sake of peace and humility or did he do well to declare it to his family, even though it brought on his brothers' animosity? As an LGBTQ person or ally, what does your answer say to you personally?

PRAYER



God of Dreamers and other misfits,
who rescued Joseph
- favorite son and awkward prophet –
when he was betrayed by kin,
who did not abandon him but sustained him through despair,
who led him from slavery and imprisonment to Pharaoh's court
so that he may preserve life and restore bonds,
rescue me -
for I have been abandoned, thrown out, thrown away...
infuse me once more with hope and with your patient, forgiving Spirit
so that I may continue to reveal my true self even to those who despise me,
speak grace to those who betray me
and make peace with those who call me enemy,
in the name of One who was revealed as your Beloved,
Amen.

Adapted from [Celebrating LGBT Visibility and Courage in Communities of Faith](#)