

February 22 & 23, 2025

---

## **A New Way | *Jealousy***

**Genesis 37:18-28**

**Pastor Paul Dean**

---

Jealousy can make you do all kinds of things. Somewhere around the fall of 1980, I was in the 8th grade began to care what I looked like. I hadn't cared before that. I didn't care what my hair was like and didn't care about the clothes I wore. Somewhere around that time period I started to notice what other people were wearing, and I began to notice what I was wearing. A lot of people in my small Texas town, they had Wrangler jeans or Levi's. I wore Husky jeans from Sears Roebuck that were hammy downs, and I began to get jealous of other people and what they were wearing. And I didn't have any way to do anything about it, because I didn't have any money. But my older brother Peter, he had a job as he was number of years older than I. As a result, he was able to buy his own clothes. I remember that day when my brother came home wearing Lee jeans. So, you remember Lee jeans? They looked so cool. They had the cool design on the pockets and the whole deal. Because my brother had Lee jeans, I became very jealous of him.

That jealousy led me to become somewhat creative in my thinking and I became obsessed with getting these jeans. I would come up with a plan that I would go into his room before he was awake. I would get his Lee jeans, and I would put them in my backpack. When I got to school, I'd go right to the bathroom, and I would change into the Lee Jeans, and I looked cool. I looked amazing – at least I think I did. Until Peter found out. And after a nice punch to the gut from my older brother to tell me that I'm the older brother, I'm laying in the hallway, and I'm covered with guilt and shame. What I didn't realize as a 12-year-old was that jealousy led me to act differently than I would normally have. It led me to be a thief and a liar. That's what jealousy does. We begin to become obsessed or jealous about what other people are doing, and it changes us. I was perfectly fine in Husky jeans.

But I thought I had to have something else. I became a thief and a liar.

The same thing is true in the bible verse that was read today about Joseph and his brothers. The story makes it seem like Joseph is completely innocent, but Joseph is a little bit of a brat. He's a little bit of a braggart. And the jealousy that takes over his brothers turns his them into something that they never thought they would be possible. Their jealousy turns them into premeditated murderers, then kidnappers, and then slavers. That's what jealousy did to these brothers.

One of the reasons we spent so much time in the Fall talking through and walking through Genesis 1-11 is because in that whole entire time period, God is trying to grow a group of people and tell them over and over and over again - trust the story. I have created all things, and I have called it good. And guess what? I have created you in my image. When we let jealousy take over, jealousy tells us to not trust the story and that we haven't been created in God's image. And Joseph and his brothers, they lost the plot of the story. They no longer trusted the story. They no longer saw themselves as being made in God's image, and they no longer saw Joseph as being made in God's image. And in that jealous moment that overtook all of them, they caused great damage to their family for years and years.

When Ruben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes. He returned to his brothers and said the boy is gone. Where can I turn? Ruben asks. Reubens is the oldest. And even though Reuben let them throw Joseph into the pit, he was going to come back. He was going to rescue Joseph, and he was going to bring Joseph back to his father. Not only that, but he was also going to do his older brother duty as the next patriarch of the family, he was going to get a favor from his father. And he says, well, where can I turn now? That jealousy that overtook Joseph's brothers took away Rubens birth right. Now he was complicit in throwing him into the pit, for sure. So, he gave away that as well. Rubin began to think things about himself that God would never have him

think. And also think things about Joseph. Reuben lost the plot.

Then they took Joseph's robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in blood. Now they have to create a story. Not only did jealousy make these brothers premeditated murderers and kidnappers, then slavers, and coconspirators, they had to come up with a story which then made them liars. And then they had to keep this story. They had to make sure that the story never got out. Next, they took this robe with the sleeves dipped in blood to their father and they lied. They say, this is what we have found see now whether it is your son's robe or not. They know what they're doing - they're lying to their father's face. He recognized it and said it is my son's robe a wild animal has devoured him Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces.

Let's put the humanity in the story. Any parent who's ever lost a child, especially not ever being able to see that child's body again, it is brutal. It is hard. And Joseph's brother's jealousy did all of this. Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. All of his sons and all of his daughters sought to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. Can you imagine that? You're one of the sons who just threw Joseph in the pit, sold him into slavery, convinced your father that he's been devoured by a wild animal, and then you sit there trying to console him. That's what jealousy has done. That's how far off the plot and off the script these brothers were.

That's what jealousy does. Jealousy makes us be something that we're not. Jealousy takes us off the script, where we no longer trust the story, and we do not believe that we've been created in the image of God. Whether it's just as simple as stealing your brother's jeans to wear because you're jealous of what other people are wearing, or whether or not that jealousy becomes so deep seated that you lose friends, that you lose families. It can even break up marriages. One of the things I try to impart on newly married couples is to be a cheerleader for the other. It's easy to tear somebody down but be the greatest

cheerleader in your partner's life that they've ever had before. Because jealousy can happen and fester even in marriages and even break them apart.

Some friends in your group may have a better house, or a bigger car, or they get to the newest, latest, greatest, whatever. And you're thinking, man, I just don't have those things. Don't lose the plot, rather trust the story. Trust that you've been created in the image of God. No matter where you live, no matter what you drive, no matter what clothes you wear, trust the story that you are created in the image of God, no matter what people put on social media, no matter what you watch on television. We are awash in celebrity and what we see in celebrity, it's not real. They have big parties and red-carpet stuff and everybody dresses up, but it's not real life. What we see on social media is not real life. Just little snapshots of stuff. It doesn't get us down and deep into people's insecurities.

We are raising the most anxious generation in American history right now because of a simple electronic device that lie to us over and over and over again. You can filter your photos - you don't look like that. You can make your life seem amazing - life is not like that. We see these things and we become anxious, and we become jealous, and we do things out of that jealousy that we think we would never be capable of doing. Trust the story God says over and over again. Trust the story - God loves you just as you are. You have been created in the image of God and the whole book of Genesis is trying to get people to believe it. These stories repeat themselves for a reason, because God is calling us to live in a different way. God knows this about us - he knows that jealousy can enter into our lives.

A couple things I want to ask you to consider. The first is to recognize when you're jealous. You can even welcome jealousy. I know that you're here. I see what jealousy is doing to me. And by the way, I'm not alone. Every single human being at some point in their life has been jealous of another human being.

Somebody at the 8:45 worship service said, "it wasn't Lee jeans for me, it was JC Penney jeans." Every single one of us has been jealous, and we all know what it feels like, and we all know what it does to us. So don't beat yourself up for it. Recognize that it's there and when you recognize that it's there, then you can deal with it. I want to encourage you to talk to someone about it. To share your jealousy. I know they're going to understand because they've been jealous too, and they might be jealous about the exact same thing you are. You're not alone. The next thing I want to encourage you to consider might seem a little bit cheesy - I have a mantra that I say every single day to say to myself. I say these words: "trust the story, I am created in the image of God." No matter where I am, no matter what I'm doing, no matter what I'm looking at, no matter what people are telling me, no matter the highs or the lows - trust the story, you have been created in the image of God. I want to encourage you all to say that mantra as much as you possibly can. Write it on a note to yourself, put it on your rearview mirror. Put it in your pocket so that you can take it out each and every day to read to yourself. Trust the story - I am created in the image of God. Trust the story - I am created in the image of God. The world is trying to tell you something different. They're trying to tell you don't trust the story. You haven't been created in the image of God. But you have - Trust the story, you have been created in the image of God!