

GENESIS 40

JOSEPH: INTERPRETING DREAMS WHILE HAVING SOME OF HIS OWN

At some time or another in each of our lives we have all wanted to be somewhere else and probably doing something else. After being called to the ministry, completing my schooling, and going through ordination I was ready to be in full time ministry. That didn't happen for another 15 years. That means that for 15 years, though I had good jobs that paid well I wanted to be somewhere else doing ministry. However I knew that I couldn't get mad about it. I knew that God was in control and that in His time I would eventually be doing what He called me to do. I didn't understand why He was waiting, but at the same time I knew He was in control. He blessed with me good jobs while I was in the "bullpen" so to speak and I was able to learn a lot of valuable lessons.

That is where we find Joseph. If you remember he was his father's favorite. He had a coat of many colors and dreamed dreams. Eventually his jealous brothers contemplated his murder but decided to sell him into slavery. There he was bought by a general and climbed to the top of the general's staff. He had been entrusted with all of the general's business until the general's wife falsely accused him of attempted rape. At that point the general had him thrown into prison. So if you will please turn in your Bibles to Genesis 39:20. We will start there and roll straight into chapter 40.

Gen 39:20 *Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison.*

Gen 39:21 *But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.*

Gen 39:22 *And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing.*

Gen 39:23 *The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper.*

Gen 40:1 *It came to pass after these things that the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their lord, the king of Egypt.*

Gen 40:2 *And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief butler and the chief baker.*

Gen 40:3 *So he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison, the place where Joseph was confined.*

Gen 40:4 *And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them; so they were in custody for a while.*

Verse 23 of chapter 39 tells us that God was with Joseph no matter where he was or what he was doing. Joseph had to know this. He knew God had a mission for him but he probably didn't know exactly what it was. He knew God was with him in all that he did but he probably didn't understand why he was in prison and I'm certain that he didn't understand why God allowed him to be falsely accused of rape.

We have the luxury of looking at his story after the fact. As they say, "hindsight is 20/20." We can see that it worked out in the end, but couldn't God have done it another way? Couldn't He have allowed Joseph to be seen by Pharaoh while he was in good standing at the general's house and get promoted from there? Sure He could have. We have to realize though that it isn't always about our comfort and our rising up the ladder. In the end it is about God moving people and circumstances in order that His will gets done. It is also about us learning lessons along the way. **The road from the time we are called to ministry or from the time we are born again until we get to the point that God can use us the most is hardly ever a straight line.**

I remember when I was first ordained and had completed my schooling. I thought I was ready to pastor a church right then. I just knew that any day I was going to get a call from a church that was in need of a pastor. It didn't happen that way. In fact, as I said earlier it was close to 15 years before that happened. For 15 years I would occasionally ask why. Now, looking backwards I know why. I wasn't ready. I had lots of lessons to learn. I'm still learning. However, if things had not happened the way they did, I probably wouldn't have found Calvary Chapel. **If we say we trust God as our savior, then we ought to be able to trust Him with our lives, and by that I mean our daily lives as well as our careers in the long term.**

Joseph is learning the same lesson I had to learn. I would also bet that there are some here today that also need to learn that lesson.

We also see in verse 4 that the butler and the baker were put into Joseph's care. To many that would look like coincidence. **If you are a Christian however there is no such thing as coincidence.** If God is in control of your life then nothing "just happens." These men came into Joseph's life because God wanted them to be ministered to by Joseph.

We also need to keep this in mind. God puts people in our lives both for us to minister to them and sometimes for them to minister to us. This is why we shouldn't overlook people that are in our circle of influence. They are there for a reason. We should look for opportunities to minister to them. The Bible says that we are to know them that labor among us. That means that we get to know them. They may have been put there to help us. They may have been put there in order for us to help them, maybe both.

In verse 5 we see why they were placed in Joseph's care.

Gen 40:5 Then the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison, had a dream, both of them, each man's

dream in one night and each man's dream with its own interpretation.

Gen 40:6 *And Joseph came in to them in the morning and looked at them, and saw that they were sad.*

Gen 40:7 *So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in the custody of his lord's house, saying, "Why do you look so sad today?"*

Gen 40:8 *And they said to him, "We each have had a dream, and there is no interpreter of it." So Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me, please."*

Now I just told you that we are to know them that labor among us. That came from 1 Thess. 5:12. If you go back up to verse 4 it says that they were in custody for awhile. That means that Joseph had time to get to know them. This didn't happen in a day or two. Joseph had been in custody for a while. They had also been in custody for a while though not as long as Joseph.

Now if you go back to verse 6 you will see that Joseph came in one morning and saw that they were sad. Most folks in prison look sad, but Joseph knew them well. He was able not only to tell something was wrong but because of their relationship he was able to ask what it was, and they told him.

Why would they tell their dreams to Joseph unless they respected him? Joseph said that the interpretation of dreams belonged to God. This is important because the Egyptians worshipped a whole pantheon of gods. However Joseph used the word Elohim. Keep in mind that, the God of the Bible wasn't known that well except to the descendants of Abraham. The point being that not only did Joseph have credibility in their sight but his God did also. The two went hand in hand.

The same is true for us today. If we are not credible Christians, that is we are not believable, then our God is probably not seen as credible either. People are to see Jesus in us. The word Christians literally means "Little Christs" or "Christ ones."

They were given this name because the Christians at Antioch emulated Jesus in every way. They lived their lives like Jesus did. Today people say, "Don't see me, see Jesus." If we are living right they will see Jesus.

The butler and the baker could see Joseph's God in him. Can that be said of us?

Gen 40:9 *Then the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, "Behold, in my dream a vine was before me,*

Gen 40:10 *and in the vine were three branches; it was as though it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and its clusters brought forth ripe grapes.*

Gen 40:11 *Then Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand."*

Gen 40:12 *And Joseph said to him, "This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days.*

Gen 40:13 *Now within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner, when you were his butler.*

- Joseph interpreted the dream, a gift from God not a system or formula.
- Butler would be restored to his previous position in 3 days

Gen 40:14 *But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house.*

Gen 40:15 *For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon."*

- Is Joseph not content in his place?
- Is he losing faith?

- Isn't he just like the rest of us?
- He wants to state his case to clear his name and he wants out of prison

Gen 40:16 *When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, "I also was in my dream, and there were three white baskets on my head.*

Gen 40:17 *In the uppermost basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, and the birds ate them out of the basket on my head."*

Gen 40:18 *So Joseph answered and said, "This is the interpretation of it: The three baskets are three days.*

Gen 40:19 *Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat your flesh from you."*

Gen 40:20 *Now it came to pass on the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants.*

Gen 40:21 *Then he restored the chief butler to his butlership again, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand.*

Gen 40:22 *But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them.*

Gen 40:23 *Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.*

- Baker has a dream and Joseph interprets it
- Not what the baker wanted to hear
- The outcome of the dreams, Joseph is seen to be legitimate, are we?
- Although the chief butler forgot Joseph, God didn't. Are we aware of that?
- This means that the timing isn't right, but a seed has been planted.
- God will get Joseph to the right place at the right time, as He will do with us.

I believe there are three basic lessons we can take from the life of Joseph and his being forgotten by the butler thus far.

1. “Stop trusting in man!” [Isa 2:22](#) Cease ye from man, whose breath *is* in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?
- 2.

In other words, why trust I a being that can be gone by missing one breath?

[Jer 17:5](#) Thus saith the LORD; Cursed *be* the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

[Jer 17:6](#) For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, *in* a salt land and not inhabited.

[Jer 17:7](#) Blessed *is* the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

[Jer 17:8](#) For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and *that* spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

All men (humans) will let you down at some point.

Joseph probably leapt each time the door opened in the jail, for a while at least. Then he just looked, walked slowly as the realization that he had been forgotten began to take root. Bitterness at man and God could have grown in that environment, but it didn't.

Think of what had to be running through Potiphar's mind when Joseph eventually ascended to his position. “What will Joseph do to us now?” The Cupbearer was probably thinking the same thing. But we don't read of any retaliation. Why? Because Joseph had learned, while in prison, not to trust in man.

2. We should allow the disillusionment with man to turn us to the love and faithfulness of God.

2Ti 2:13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

Pro 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

Pro 3:6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Think of how Jesus took His time going to heal Lazarus. He may be taking His time getting to you in order that you or someone else can learn an even greater lesson.

3. WAIT FOR GOD! God doesn't work or move according to our timetable. Joseph must have been excited when the Cupbearer was released in just three days as he had predicted. He probably thought he would be released any day. But while God foretold that the Cupbearer would be released, He didn't say anything the timing of Joseph's release.

Joseph learned all this while waiting in prison. "Prison can be a very good tool for some folks."

Php 4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* **to be content.**

Relax! God is in control. Are we learning while we wait?