

(Genesis) - Part 27

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon explores the moral failures of Judah in Genesis 38 and the significance of Jesus' genealogy, emphasizing humility and the importance of submission to authority.

Duration: 59:30

Scripture: Genesis 39:7-12, Genesis 40:12-14, Genesis 40:20-23, Matthew 1:6, Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 11:24-26

Topics: "Judah"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the story of Joseph from the Bible. He highlights Joseph's attitude of not dwelling on the evil done to him by his brothers and Potiphar's wife. The speaker emphasizes the importance of not constantly talking about the wrongs done to us by others. He also points out how God orchestrates circumstances to fulfill His purposes, even in difficult situations like being in jail. The sermon concludes by discussing the importance of submitting to authority, keeping oneself pure, and fleeing from temptation.

Transcript

Now to Genesis in chapter thirty-eight. In the end of chapter thirty-seven, we saw Joseph being sold in the house of Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's bodyguard. And chapter thirty-eight is really on a different topic.

One of Joseph's brothers. And the story of Joseph continues in chapter thirty-nine. But there are a few lessons that we can learn from chapter thirty-eight.

It's dealing with Judah and his seed. It came about at that time, Genesis thirty-eight and verse one, that Judah departed from his brothers and visited a certain Adullamite whose name was Hira. And Judah saw a daughter.

There was a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shuah. And we read how he married her and had children through her. And the thing I want you to notice here is that there was such a distinct difference between the different sons of Jacob.

And as we come into chapter thirty-nine, we'll see what a contrast. It's almost as though the Holy Spirit has put chapter thirty-eight and all the darkness there is in that chapter to highlight the light that shines in chapter thirty-nine. And Judah, of course, was not a slave like Joseph.

He was wealthy, rich. He was a sheep-owner, a very wealthy person. And we find that he goes and marries a Canaanite.

Think of that. And that was because he was friendly with this ungodly person called Hira. When we are frequently visiting with ungodly people, we expose ourselves to all types of temptations.

And that's the significant statement. He departed from his brothers, verse one, and visited a certain Adullamite, a heathen. And that's the sad thing when we find our closest fellowship not with the brothers and sisters in the church but with the Adullamites, good Adullamites, good qualities in these Adullamites.

That shows a certain attitude in Judah towards God. He despised Joseph, he despised his God-fearing brothers, and found his friendship with Adullamites, and his descendants are many today who walk in his footsteps. Yes, that's something, if we meditate on it, we can cleanse ourselves from.

I have decided in my life that I want to find my greatest and closest friendships with those who are in the church of the living God and who are wholeheartedly, not just in the church of the living God, but who are wholeheartedly seeking to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and the others I just want to have a casual friendship with. That's a... He who has ears to hear can hear that. And because of this friendship, he ended up marrying a Canaanite, and he had three children.

Two of them were killed by the Lord for some sin or the other. And then we read finally, Judah's wife died in verse 12. And he had his firstborn son, he got him married very young.

And then he died, and she married the second brother, and then he also died, and then the third brother was not old enough to marry her, so she was sent back to her father's house. Verse 11, Judah said to his daughter-in-law, remain a widow in your father's house until my third son, Shelah, grows up, otherwise he also may die. And so Tamar lived and lived in her father's house.

And Tamar, who was the daughter-in-law, he saw that Shelah had grown up and was not given to her as a husband. We read that in verse 14, the last part. She saw that Shelah had grown up and she had not been given to him as a wife.

And so she pretended to be a harlot sitting on the roadside. And we read here that Judah came by that way, and because her face was covered with a veil, he didn't know who she was. And thinking it was a harlot, he went into adultery, not realizing it was his own daughter-in-law.

And she was very clever. She said, you've got to give me a pledge, and give me your seal, verse 18, and your cord and your staff. And she took that pledge from her father-in-law, and he didn't know to whom he gave.

And after some time, he sent a kid to this woman, a lamb's kid, verse 20, by his friend, the Adulamite. It's amazing how much this Adulamite comes into Judah's life. He sends the harlot's wages through the Adulamite, and it's amazing, his friendship with the Adulamite, leading Judah astray.

And he didn't find her. And he asked the men of the place, where is the prostitute who was here? And he said, there wasn't anybody here. And then Judah didn't know who it was.

And later on, it says that Tamar was expecting a baby. And they told the father-in-law Judah, your daughter-in-law Tamar, verse 24, is claimed a harlot, and also a child by harlotry. And then Judah said,

bring her out, and let her be burned.

You see something there of the character of the flesh of Adam? That we can be so hard on others who have sinned. And if we were to judge ourselves, we would discover that we have committed the same sin ourselves. You must think that Judah could be so hard on his daughter-in-law, and what had he gone and done himself? He said, let her be burned, one who behaves like that.

And you see how his daughter-in-law made a fool of him. And then she said, whose are these, this ring and the cords and the staff? And then Judah felt ashamed of himself. You know, the word of God says, you who judge another, don't you judge yourself.

And finally, it says here, when she was going to give birth, there were twins in her womb, verse 27. And the name of one was Perez, verse 29, and the name of the other was Zerah. Now, I just want to say something about this.

Here was a Canaanite, a Canaanite girl called Tamar, who committed adultery with her father-in-law, Judah. And she had a son, two sons, Zerah and Zerah. And the interesting thing, if you turn to Matthew, chapter 1, is this.

Matthew, chapter 1, and verse 1. We read here the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. To Abraham was born Isaac, to Isaac, Jacob, and to Jacob, Judah, and his brothers. And to Judah were born Perez and Zerah by Tamar, his daughter-in-law.

And to Perez was born Hesron, and to Hesron, Ram, and all the way down to, verse 6, David. And from David came both Mary and Joseph. And though Jesus did not have the physical seed of Joseph, because Joseph was not His father, He had no father, but He certainly had the physical part of Mary, who fulfilled the mother's part, so that the seed of David came all the way down through Mary to Jesus, and that is why He had our flesh.

But remember, the seed of David was from Judah and Tamar. There was a Canaanite in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Amazing.

You see the humility of Jesus in choosing a line so tainted by sin. It's really a lesson for all people who are proud of their families. Proud that I belong to such and such a heredity.

My family, my father was this, and my grandfather was this, and my great-grandfather was something else. Amazing. Pharisee of the Pharisees.

What did Jesus have? In my line was a Canaanite woman who committed adultery with her father-in-law. That's the line of Mary. Here's a second one.

Matthew 1, verse 5. So Salmon was born Boaz by Rahab. Rahab was the town prostitute in Jericho, another Canaanite. You notice that? Canaanites, one after the other, in the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

The curse of Canaanites. Rahab, the town prostitute. That is in my... One of my people in my line was a town prostitute.

Think if you have to say that. Yeah, I grew up in Bangalore, and some years ago my great-grandmother was one of the town prostitutes around here. That is the line Jesus took.

We need to see that to understand what humility is and what identification with sinners is, which self-righteous Pharisees can never understand. Purity has got nothing to do with our grandmother or great-grandmother. It's got to do with our own personal life.

The purest man that walked on the earth had a genealogy like this, and let's learn something from it. Here's the third one, verse 5. So Salmon was born Boaz by Rahab, and so Boaz was born Obed by Ruth. Ruth, Moabite.

She was also not an Israeli. A Moabite. And you know how Ruth's ancestor, that means she descended from Moab.

And if you remember, when we studied Genesis chapter 19, do you know how Moab was born? That is even more shameful. Moab was born through lot, committing adultery with his own daughters. Moab.

Think that Jesus deliberately chose this line. I've thought of this, that none of us had a choice about the family we were to be born into. No human being that's ever born into the world had a choice as to the family he is to be born into.

We were all born into a particular family. Nobody consulted us. We were just born, whether we liked it or not.

There was only one person who came to this earth, who could choose and plan the family line into which he was going to be born, and that was Jesus Christ. From heaven he could have planned it from the time of Adam. He could have planned a pure genealogy so that one day he would be born through that.

He planned it. And think of the line he planned. Canaanites, Moabites, all types of evil things that their mothers and fathers did, fathers-in-law, and all types of... And Jesus says, that's the line for me.

That's the line for me. We speak about wanting to become like Jesus. It's so easy to be self-righteous Pharisees in this area and not understand what identification with sinners means.

To glory, for example, this wretched Hindu caste system that even so-called Christians think about when it comes to marriage. People have not been cleansed from that. What is the use? They're saying they want to become like Jesus.

They're just plain, downright, hypocritical, self-righteous Pharisees. They haven't understood. It's all theory, wanting to become like Jesus.

Here's what it really is. On the first page of the New Testament, before we get to so many other things, this is the first page of the New Covenant. What do I read on the first page of the New Covenant? Identification with sinners of the most sinful possible line.

Here's the... What have we seen so far? Tamar, Rahab, Ruth. Have we seen the heredity of all of them? And here's the fourth one. Verse... The only four women mentioned in Matthew 1. And verse 6, into David was born Solomon, by somebody who was not even his wife, who was the wife of somebody else, Bathsheba, born through adultery, killing off the husband.

That's the line. And I wonder if this brings us down in our faces to see the wretched conceit we have about family trees in our family life. Up to David, from all the way from Adam, the line was the same for both Joseph and Mary.

For both Joseph and Mary were descendants of David, but through two different children of David. Joseph was descended through... I just want to point out something interesting here, before we continue our study in Genesis, since we have come here. That David... To David was born Solomon, verse 6. And that was the kingly line.

And there you have all the kings of Judah after that. Rehoboam, verse 7, Abijah, Asah, Jehoshaphat, Joram, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Ammon, Josiah, verse 11, Josiah, Jeconiah. And then after the deportation to Babylon, there were no kings after that.

But if they're working in Judah, after they came back from Babylon, you know who would have been the kings after they came back from Babylon? The kings would have been Zerubbabel, Abiud, Eliakim, Azor, Zedok, Akim, Eliud, Eleazar, Mephan, Jacob and Joseph. He would have been the legal heir to the throne of David if there was a king in Judah in those days. And his legal firstborn son, not his actual son, but his legal firstborn, legal elder son, Jesus, would be heir to the throne of David.

But--and therefore he had a right to the throne of David. That's why this genealogy is brought up. But I want you to see about something that God said about one person in this genealogy.

And that is, in verse 11, we read of a man called Jeconiah, verse 11, that Josiah was born Jeconiah. Jeconiah is another name of Coniah. And he had a son, verse 12, called Shealtiel.

But after he had a son called Shealtiel, he lived an evil life. And I want you to see this verse in Jeremiah 22, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. The Lord says concerning Jeconiah, Jeremiah 22, He says to him, even though Coniah and so on--verse 25, Jeremiah 22, 25, I'll give you into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon--and then He goes on to say in verse 28, "Is this man Coniah a despised, shattered jar?" Thus says the Lord," verse 30, "Write this man down childless, a man who will not prosper in his days." And listen to this, "For no man of his descendants will prosper sitting on the throne of David or ruling again in Judah." So from Coniah onwards, God said, nobody of His descendants will ever prosper sitting on the throne of David.

Now we can turn back to Matthew and see in verse 20, verse 11 onwards, how Jeconiah, verse 12, up from Jeconiah onwards, here is the curse of God. Nobody being a king of his seed can prosper, and his seed consists of Shealtiel, Zerubbabel. It doesn't say they were all cursed, but they would not prosper as kings sitting on the throne of David.

Eliakim, Hazor, Zedok, Achim, Eliud, Eleazar, Mathan, Jacob, Joseph--none of them could prosper sitting on the throne of David because they were all the seed, the actual seed of Jeconiah. But Joseph's heir, Jesus, was not the physical seed of Joseph, and therefore he could prosper. It's very interesting to see that.

And yet, Jesus was of the seed of David, as we see in Luke 3, where we read the genealogy of Mary, genealogy of Mary in Luke 3, where we read Jesus Himself at about 30 years of age, Luke 3.23, being supposedly the son of Joseph. He wasn't really. And then notice what it says, the--and when you find those words in italics, it means there was nothing in the original Greek.

It was filled in by the translators. They filled in whatever they felt should be filled in. And what should have been filled in there was the words, the son-in-law of Eli.

Joseph, the son-in-law of Eli. And then we have the genealogy of Eli, that was Mary's father, Mathat, Levi, Melchi, and so on, all the way down up to verse 31, where we read he was the son of Meliah, Menah, Matathah, and the son of Nathan, the son of David, not the son of Solomon. This is another line in the family tree.

And then it goes on all the way up to Adam, in verse 38. So up to David the line, of course, was the same, but at David the line branches into two lines, one through Solomon, of which Joseph was finally born, and another through another son of David called Nathan, through which Mary was born. So Mary and Jesus were the actual physical seed of David, but not of that cursed line of Coniah.

But yet, because he was the legal heir for Joseph, he had the right to sit on the throne of David. That's just something interesting to see. But the point I wanted to make is that in Jesus' line were these Canaanites and Moabites.

That's the interesting thing that we see from Genesis chapter 38, that what we see there in those closing chapters of that shameful chapter, a chapter that we would never like to have in our family history, Jesus said, that's part of My family history. His identification with sinners. He came down to the lowest of the lot.

He came down to save sinners, and He was determined to have nothing. It says He made Himself of no reputation. That's how it's in the King James Version.

And certainly it was true in His life that He had no reputation. His family tree had no reputation. And Nazareth He grew up in had no reputation.

Can any good thing come out of Nazareth, people said. And that should really humble anybody who glories in anything of this earth other than true godliness and a holy life. That's the only thing of value.

Not our town, caste, country, and all these things are just fit for the garbage bin. It's important for us to see that. If we can get that one lesson out of Genesis 38, we've got some profit out of that chapter.

In Genesis 39 now, we come to see Joseph, who had been taken down to Egypt in 44, the Egyptian officer, and he was a servant. And we see that God had a tremendous purpose for Joseph, and the training that He gave to Joseph to fulfill that purpose was first of all to be a slave. Just like Jesus, Joseph had to learn to be a servant.

He could not exercise authority until he had learned submission. As we have often said, there are many young people growing up who will never be able to exercise spiritual authority in their life because they have never, never in their life, learned spiritual submission. From their earliest youthful days, they've been a law unto themselves, and therefore they grow up.

And because they've never learned submission in their younger days, God can never give them spiritual authority. But remember this, my dear young brothers, you will never have spiritual authority in all your life if you have not learned submission to spiritual authority at some time in your life. You can grow up like a lot of believers have grown up as a law unto themselves, and they have never, never, they've been, particularly if you're clever and educated, I've seen many cases like that, even among those who believe the new and living ways, they miss what God has for them because they have not known what it is to submit to spiritual authority.

And therefore they lose out later on in life. See the training that Jesus had for thirty years to submit to authority. See the training that Joseph had as a slave, to submit.

Later on, He elevated him to rulership. Joseph, by the time he was thirty, had learned that lesson. Jesus, by the time he was thirty, had learned that lesson.

David, by the time he was thirty, had learned that lesson. The tragedy is today many people are forty, forty-five, and they still haven't learned it. And the chances are they'll never learn it.

Because God places such tremendous importance on that training that comes through submission to authority in our younger days. Most, most important. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

And in that training, it says here in verse two, the Lord was with Joseph. And I believe this should be our testimony even if we are slaves. None of us are slaves.

A slave's lot was terrible. He had no salary, no rights, no trade union to protect him, nothing. He had absolutely no rights.

Our lot is much better than his. But it says the Lord was with Joseph, and so he became a successful man. And his master saw, verse three, that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord caused all that he did to prosper in his hands.

If we honor God, God will honor us in such a way that the people we work for will see that God is with us. Nobody can stop God from being with you even if you're a slave. That doesn't depend on what your boss is like.

Nobody can stop God from being with you in the church. No elder brother can suppress you if God is with you. Potiphar couldn't suppress Joseph.

If a man honors God, God will honor him. But he's got to humble himself and submit to authority. And God was with him.

And people saw that God was with him because whatever he did prospered. What a tremendous testimony. That should be our testimony, brothers, in our place of work.

A wife who does not know how to submit to the authority of her husband. I can tell you this. When your children grow up, you'll never have authority over them.

The same principle. Because in the days when your children were not grown up, you never took it seriously to humble yourself under your husband's authority. Then you are alone to themselves and grow up and never have spiritual authority in their lives.

Remember that. We all like to have authority over others, but we can't have it until we first learn to submit to the authority that God places over us. And so we see here that the Lord was with Joseph because he submitted to the authority that God placed over him, which was Potiphar.

He was an unconverted man. And God was with him and blessed him. We read here in verse six, and verse five, verse four, sorry, Joseph found favor in his master's sight, and he was given more responsibility.

And it came about that from the time he made him overseer in his house and over all that he owned, the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house on account of Joseph. And thus the Lord's blessing was on all that he owned. It's amazing how the Lord blesses others.

Where we go, if we honor him, the whole household is blessed. Verse six, he didn't concern himself about anything, but left everything in Joseph's charge. Now Joseph was handsome, the last part of verse six, in physique, in form, and in appearance.

That means he had a good physique, and he was good looking, and he was a spiritual man. We've often said that our physical features and our face has no spiritual value. That doesn't mean that you have to be ugly in order to be spiritual, and doesn't mean you've got to be fat and sloppy in order to be spiritual.

Joseph was a spiritual man, and he had a good physique, and he was good looking, but he wasn't proud of his good looks. It's exactly the same thing we read in 1 Samuel 16 about David, that David had a good physique, and he was good looking, but it didn't go to his head. It says that about Esther in the book of Esther and chapter one or two, wherever it comes, that she was good looking, and she had a good figure, but they didn't go to her head.

That's the point. So there were spiritual men and women in the scriptures who were good looking, and physically attractive, and with good physique, but it didn't go to their head, and that's an example for us to follow. Joseph was handsome, and it didn't go to his head.

He didn't spend his time admiring himself in the mirror. Verse seven, And he came about after these events, that his master's wife looked with desire at Joseph, and she said, Lie with me. Here is a test.

Joseph was tested as a servant, and then he was tested in the area of purity. God allowed him in his sovereignty. Remember, God is sovereign.

He sees where the Ishmaelites are going to sell Joseph, and he says, I must let that house where there is an evil woman. Think of that. Couldn't God have kept him from that house and allowed him to be sold in some other house where the wife was a better lady? No, he had to be tested, and you and I have to be tested in an office where there are evil women perhaps.

God is allowing it, to test us, to see. God allows those people with whom we have to deal. He has sovereignly ordered our circumstances so that we find ourselves in that situation where we have to deal with evil people, and then our morality and our purity is tested.

And it says here that she kept on calling him. She looked with desire. Sin in this area always begins with the eyes.

When you look, and you begin to look with desire, and the desire is not pure. That's why one of the most important things we need to warn young people about is, be careful how you look at the opposite sex. Very, very important.

The descendants of Potiphar's wife are many who look with desire. And there's something about the way she looked, and it finally led to her inviting Joseph, and he refused and said, verse nine, there is no one greater in this house than me. How can I do this evil and sin against God? He says it doesn't make a difference whether Potiphar is here or not.

It doesn't make a difference whether other people are here or not. He knew about the hidden life long before even the old covenant was established. How can I commit this sin against God? That's the point.

God is watching me. How can I do this sin against Him? And that's what made Joseph a successful man. He did not live before Potiphar's face.

He did not live before the face of men. His parents were not there. His brothers and sisters were not there.

He was all alone in a strange country. Think of a seventeen-year-old or eighteen-year-old handsome young man in a strange country, far away from his parents, far away from brothers and sisters, far away from believers, all alone in a heathen home, no meetings to attend, and living before the face of God. In the Old Testament, before the law was given.

Amazing. You really have to admire the way this man lived, Joseph. Long before the old covenant was established, he keeps himself in purity and in the fear of God.

No wonder he grew in wisdom. And it says here, and it came about, verse 10, as he spoke to Joseph day after day. Then, then, God allowed the temptation to be persistent.

Not just once. Again and again and again and again. And he did not listen.

God was testing this man. He did not listen. And he would not even be with her.

He avoided temptation and fled away. Now it happened, verse 11, one day that when he went into the house to do his work, and one of the men in the household was there inside. She caught him by his garment and said, Lie with me.

And he left his garment in her hand and fled. He did what Paul exhorted Timothy. Flee, youthful lust.

He just ran. It did not matter if he lost his garment. It is better to lose his garment than to lose a good conscience.

And he fled. It is a tremendous example for all young people. If you want to know why God honored Joseph, you see the example here.

He submitted to authority. He kept himself pure. And there is an example.

There is a type of Jesus who submitted to authority and kept himself pure. Because the only two things we know about Jesus' 30 years in Nazareth, two things. He submitted to authority and he kept himself pure.

That's the best training for all young people, to minister in the body of Christ, to submit to authority and to keep yourself pure. And he ran. He knew that there were passions in his body.

If he stayed around there, he'd be tempted beyond his ability, so he ran. And that's the right thing to do when we find ourselves in situations where we will be tempted beyond our ability to just leave whatever we have to leave and run and not expose ourselves. And then the training continues.

The next part of Joseph's training is tested as a servant, tested with brothers who were jealous. We saw that in the previous Chapter 37. Tested in the area of purity.

And now he has to be tested in another area, and that is the area of false accusations. When she saw, verse 13, that he had left his garment and fled, she called the men of her household and said, See, my husband has brought in a Hebrew to us and makes sport of us. He came to the library and I screamed.

And he heard that I raised my voice. He left his garment and went outside. So she left his garment beside her until his master came home.

She obviously didn't have a good relationship with her husband, and that's why she was after Joseph. And look at the way she talks about her husband here. Pathetic, if any wife ever talks like this about her husband to other people.

See the type of servant my husband has brought to work in my house. Verse 14. Pretty clear they had a poor relationship.

And when Potiphar came back, she told him the same words. Accused Joseph falsely. And I have a feeling that Potiphar didn't really believe it, because he knew Joseph.

He must have seen something in Joseph. But he had to do something to appease his wife. So he puts Joseph in jail.

If he really believed it, he would have killed him. It would have been the easiest thing in the world for Pharaoh's bodyguard captain to just finish off his slave. Nobody would have asked any questions.

But he didn't believe it. But to appease his wife, he put him in jail. And Joseph never says a word.

He just keeps quiet. He just humbles himself under that false accusation. And it says here, Joseph's master, verse 20, took him and put him in the jail.

I mentioned some time ago the story of a German saint who lived five, six centuries ago called Henry Susow. A very saintly, single man who lived in a little house down the street, and who prayed and said, Lord, make me like Jesus. And one day, he heard a knock on the door of his house.

And there was a woman standing there with a little baby in her arm, dumped the baby into his hands, and said, Here is the fruit of your sins. Shouted it loud enough for people on the street to hear and ran away. He had never seen that woman before.

She was just trying to get rid of an unwanted baby and thought that this saintly man down at the end of the road is the best person to dump it on. And all the people down the street heard it. And they began to talk.

Oh, so this is what this so-called saintly man has been up to. And the woman disappeared. And Henry Susow took that little baby and closed the door and knelt down inside and said, Lord, nobody down the street will believe me, but you know I'm innocent.

What shall I do? And the Lord spoke to him and said, Do what I did. Suffer for the sins of others. This is somebody else's sin.

You are to suffer for it. You prayed some time ago, Make me like Jesus. Well, now you can learn a little bit of that.

And he accepted it. You say, Why doesn't God test us like that? Well, I'll tell you why. This is postgraduate stuff, brothers.

We are struggling in first standard and second standard. God can't give us such tests. Certainly not.

Small little mosquito bites and we complain. Where can God give us postgraduate examinations? God perhaps could have tested us at that level too if we hadn't complained about the little kindergarten tests that we get. But God could entrust.

God does not test us beyond our ability. He did not test Henry Susow beyond his ability. His ability was much more.

And he couldn't explain the new and living way like we can. I'll tell you that. But he walked it.

And there was a saintly man and he brought up that child just like his own, as if it were his own, and was scandalized in that town. People misunderstood him, told all types of stories about him, and he never opened his mouth. He had prayed that he wanted to be like Jesus, and God did a work of humbling himself, making him lose his reputation.

I'll tell you this, my brothers and sisters, to lose our reputation for spirituality is really a postgraduate test. I don't think many believers are capable of standing it. Many believers are willing to lose everything else but not their reputation for spirituality.

But Henry Susow was willing even for that. Jesus was willing. He had no reputation.

Many years later, the woman came back to the same street and proclaimed, convicted by her sin, proclaimed the innocence of Henry Susow. What a man. But by the time the woman proclaimed it, God had already done his work in the heart of Henry Susow, and he had passed the test.

Yes, these are some of the men we are going to meet in eternity. Men who gave up everything, who didn't live on a doctrine, but who really thought to follow the Lord. Joseph, Henry Susow, who knew how to keep quiet when falsely accused, and lived in purity.

That's a test. And they put him in jail, but he couldn't separate the Lord from Joseph. Whether you put him in 41st House or in jail, the Lord is with Joseph.

It says here in verse 21, the Lord was with Joseph. And the chief jailer began to see that the Lord was with him, because verse 23, the Lord was with him. The Lord made him to prosper.

He's an amazing man, Joseph. You put him in charge of the sheep, and his father's sheep, he prospers there. You put him as a slave in 41st House, he'll prosper there.

You put him in jail with a false accusation, and he'll prosper there. You can't push down. It's like a cork, you know, you can't push cork underwater.

It just keeps coming up. You push it down, it'll come up again. If you humble yourself, and you're pure, and you live with a good conscience before God, false accusation, all types of things, it can't suppress you.

The Lord will be with you, and He'll make you surface. However much people try to push you down, you'll surface. That is the answer.

What a testimony. Even in jail. And when we talk about jails, remember, those days, jails were not like today's nice jails, where food is served on time, and there were dungeons in those days, with rats and insects and vermin creeping all over, and filthy place.

And there, the Lord was with him. It was part of his education to be a man of God. This was the Bible school.

This is the Bible school which God gives His people. Submission to authority, false accusation, temptation. And you come through that Bible school, you have far more understanding of God and His words than all these wretched Bible schools that just cram people's heads with knowledge today.

Chapter 40, it came about after these things. The cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their lord. You see, now we must see the wonderful way God is working here.

God wanted Joseph to meet Pharaoh. And how does He arrange it? When Joseph is in jail, God allows Pharaoh to be angry with one of his, two of his workers, and sends them to the same jail, and they land up in the same dungeon where Joseph is. Do you see how God arranges introductions between people, even in a jail, to fulfill His purposes? It's amazing.

God has got a tremendous plan, even when He puts a man in jail. Do you remember when God saw from heaven that down there is a jailer who needs to be converted, who is hungering after salvation? How could He get the gospel to that jailer? He says, which servant of God, which servant of mine shall I look for, who is willing even to go to jail in order to bring a soul to Christ? Holy Paul. Yeah, let me get him.

He's willing. Demas and all, they like to preach in comfortable places, but Paul, he'd be willing to go to jail to bring a person to Christ. And so Paul gets that privilege, and Silas, to be beaten and thrashed, and bring a soul to Christ.

Tremendous. And later on, years later, God saw that there were jail wardens in Rome who needed to be converted. Whom does He send to the jail there? All again.

It's amazing. There is a purpose that God has in everything. I wonder how many of us would believe that if we were thrown into jail, that we could give thanks that that's also part of something good, that God is working together for us? Think of the mosquito bites we complain about.

Where are we going to give thanks when we are locked up in jail? This is a man who lived before the old covenant. I really believe we can learn something from him. I'll tell you one thing he teaches us.

All the Bible knowledge we have and all the doctrine we understand, if it doesn't teach us what Joseph has learned, is just empty, hollow, and useless. What a lot of Bible knowledge people have today, but they don't become like Joseph in the moment of temptation. What a lot of understanding of doctrine people have today, but they're not pure in the moment of temptation.

They don't know how to submit when falsely accused. They don't know how to submit to authority. They don't know how to believe that God sovereignly works everything for good, even if this means being thrown into jail.

There, dear brothers and sisters, we can really humble ourselves and say to ourselves, so it's drilled into our system, all my knowledge is useless if I don't know how to humble myself and obey God. All my

hearing sermons and accumulating knowledge of the scripture is useless if it does not lead me to humble myself and believe and have faith that God works all things for my good, even if I'm falsely accused and thrown into jail. And there, Pharaoh was furious with his two officials.

Chapter 40, verse 2, throws them into jail in the same place. Look at this beautiful phrase in the last part of verse 3. In the same place where Joseph was imprisoned. You see the sovereignty of God arranging an introduction? Wonderful.

When God has a purpose for our life, envious brothers and evil women and false accusations, and nothing can stop God's purpose for a man's life if that man will humble himself and trust God. In the same place, God will bring that person whom He's going to be His instrument to fulfill God's purpose in your life. And there in prison, we can read a verse in Psalm 105, which tells us what happened in prison.

Psalm 105, verse 17. He sent a man before them.

Joseph was sold as a slave. They afflicted his feet with fetters. He himself was laid in iron.

Until the time that God's word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him. Tested him in Potiphar's house. Tested him in the jail.

The word of the Lord tested him until the time. The time was when Joseph was 30 years old. From the age of 17 to the age of 30, the word of the Lord was testing him.

Testing him. Testing him. There are many people today who are very eager to jump out and go and be mighty servants of God without being tested.

But in the word of God, we see people who jumped out like that. King Saul and King Solomon and all ended up as miserable failures, just like many today. But if we allow God to test us and we pass those tests, then God can fulfill a purpose through our life.

And so there's tremendous value in being faithful. Just being utterly faithful year after year after year after year after year after year. So many young people think, when is God going to give me that ministry that he has planned for me? Think of Joseph thinking of all that when he was in Potiphar's house.

What shall we say to such a person? Be faithful where you are, and God, when the time comes, everything will fall into place. But if you are not faithful where you are, if you play the fool with Potiphar's wife, or you are rebellious against Potiphar, or you complain about the false accusations, then even when you're 60 years old, nothing's going to happen. You just drift along as a good brother in the church and miss out on God's best.

Dear brothers and sisters, think of that and take it seriously. Very important to be faithful wherever we are, in our place of work, in a jail. He wasn't having Bible studies.

He was just being faithful in whatever situation he was in. Think of you mothers with children and having to do so many things in the home just to learn to be faithful where you are. And there, from that, God can lead you on to be a blessing to other sisters.

And then we read here that the captain of the bodyguard put Joseph in charge of them, verse 4, and he took care of them. It's amazing, the sovereignty of God. And they were in confinement for some time.

For some days, Joseph took care of them. And then the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, they both had a dream, verse 5. And then when Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were dejected. First of all, we see the sovereignty of God in giving them dreams.

He had a purpose in that. A number of times in the Scriptures we see of dreams that God gives. And I want you to see a very wonderful characteristic of Joseph's life here in verse 6. When Joseph came in the morning and saw them, he saw that they were dejected.

And he asked them, Why are your faces so sad today? Think of that attitude. He had no tears for his own griefs, but a concern for the sorrows of Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker. Didn't he have enough griefs of his own? He should be the one sitting dejected in a corner.

My brothers have cheated me, Potiphar's wife has accused me, and the master whom I serve so faithfully wouldn't believe me. He was free from that. So free from his own sorrows that he could be concerned about the sadness he saw on somebody else's face.

That's really something. No wonder God chose such a man to shepherd the whole land of Egypt. He tested him first by seeing whether he would shepherd two people in a jail properly.

He says he was put in charge of them, and he was to take care of them, verse 4. And God said, All right, let me see whether He'll take care of those two people properly. And if He takes care of them properly, I'll put Him over the whole land of Egypt and make Him shepherd all of them. Be faithful with the two people whom God puts you with in a jail, and then one day He'll give you the whole land, perhaps.

Yes? He is the same. It's all a question of faithfulness. It's all a question of being free from our own sorrows and griefs, having no tears for our own griefs and sorrows, so that we can be concerned about other people.

Those are the only people to whom God will ever commit a task or a ministry. God will never commit a task or a ministry to people who are just preoccupied with their own problems and sorrows and griefs all the time. They are bathed, perpetual bathed.

Think of this Old Testament man who puts us to shame, that he could be concerned about the sorrows of others, and then they told him this dream, and Joseph is humble. He said, don't interpretations belong to God? He gives the glory to God. He says, God can answer your dream.

But because he had a concern for them, that became the means through which Joseph was delivered. Think if he had just ignored them. Yeah, he says, they may be having problems.

I've got more problems than all of them. Think if he had thought like that. But because he was concerned enough to find out what was their problem, they began to explain their problem to him, and he interpreted the dream, and that was how he finally got an introduction to Pharaoh to interpret his dream.

The concern was what finally led to his deliverance. Think what Joseph would have missed if he didn't have that concern. Yeah, that's a lesson for us.

When we are concerned about other people and seek to help them, that will become the means by which God delivers us from the bondage we are in. When Job prayed for his friend, then we read in Job 42.10, the Lord delivered Job from his affliction as well. And when Joseph was concerned about these other

people in jail, then that became the means of Joseph's own deliverance.

And when people are selfishly preoccupied with their own sorrows and problems, they remain in their prison forever and ever and ever and ever. And so Joseph says interpretations belong to God. I have faith in God even though I'm in jail.

Tell me, obviously Joseph was in touch with God. He had dreams when he was 17, and now he's in jail, and he's not bitter. If he was bitter, he wouldn't have been in touch with God.

He's not bitter. He's in touch with God. And he says, I'll tell you the interpretation.

And the cupbearer told the dream saying there was a vine in front of me, and on the vine there were three branches and produced ripe grapes, and Pharaoh's cup was in my hand. So I took the grapes and squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I put the cup into Pharaoh's hand. Just in passing, let me tell you that this is the type of wine that the Bible speaks of.

Plain grape juice. He took the grapes and squeezed it into Pharaoh's cup. That is the type of wine that Jesus drank at Cana, and that was that he multiplied at Cana.

Plain grapes must be squeezed into a cup, not the fermented wine which Solomon forbids us from drinking in the book of Proverbs. I just mentioned that in passing. It's not right and proper for us to think that Jesus drank that type of wine.

He didn't. Then Joseph said to him, this is the interpretation of it. The three branches are three days.

Within three more days, Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office, and you will put Pharaoh's cup into his hand, and you will be his cupbearer again. Only keep me in mind. When it goes well with you, do me a kindness and tell Pharaoh about me and get me out of this house, for in fact I was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I've done nothing.

Notice Joseph's attitude. He doesn't say, I have a wicked bunch of ten brothers, and they did evil to me, and then there was this evil woman called Potiphar's wife. They had done evil to him, but he will not talk about them.

What a man. Not a word about all the evil that his brothers had done. Not a word about the evil that Potiphar's wife had said.

What an example. What a lust there is in our flesh to describe to others all the evil that so-and-so did to me, and so-and-so did to me, and the other person did to me, and the other person did to me. Learn from an Old Testament man.

What an example. He says, I was kidnapped, that's all. And the chief baker, when he saw that his interpretation was favorable, that Joseph had interpreted the other dream favorably, he told his dream that there were three baskets on his head, and that crows, birds, came and ate out of it, and Joseph said, in three days you'll be hung on a tree, and the birds will eat your flesh.

And on the third day, that was Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast. The only two people who celebrated birthdays in Scripture made a big feast. One was Pharaoh, the other was Herod.

And he lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer, and exactly as Joseph had said, he hung the chief baker, verse 22, and restored the chief cupbearer to his office. But the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, verse 23, but forgot him. Another part of the training, to be forgotten, that people promise to do something good for you, and they don't do it.

And you humble yourself and keep quiet. For how long? The next verse, chapter 41, verse 1, for two years. Joseph was only 28 years old.

It wasn't yet time for him to come to his ministry. And God made, God allowed that cupbearer to forget for two years, because the word of the Lord had to test Joseph for another two years. Don't complain against people who forget.

God is He is working all things for good.

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