

(Genesis) - Part 28

by Zac Poonen

God's sovereignty and timing are perfect, and we should trust in Him and wait for His plan to unfold in our lives.

Duration: 57:40

Scripture: Genesis 41:44, Genesis 42:29, Amos 8:11, Matthew 28:18-19

Topics: "Affliction"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of Pharaoh's dream in Genesis 41. Pharaoh had a dream about seven fat cows being eaten by seven thin cows, and then seven years of abundance followed by seven years of famine. The preacher emphasizes that God knows the appointed time to give dreams and that there is an exactness to the consequences of our actions. He also highlights the importance of being kind and good to others, as God is merciful to the merciful. The preacher concludes by urging listeners to learn from the ants and be wise with their resources, saving during times of abundance to prepare for times of need.

Transcript

Let's turn today to Genesis chapter 41. In our last study we considered how God in his sovereignty allowed Pharaoh's chief cupbearer to forget the request that Joseph had made to him to please speak to Pharaoh on his behalf. And these things are written for our instruction, as we considered.

People promise to do something for us and they forget. We shouldn't get upset. If we have learnt the lesson that the Holy Spirit wants us to learn from a passage of scripture like this, then we can believe in the sovereignty of God that all things indeed work together for good.

Very few really live believing that even when someone has forgotten to do something he has promised to do for me, that God in his sovereignty is in control even there. Think what rest can come to our lives, brothers and sisters, if we can just believe that God in his sovereignty has allowed him to forget. All complaining will be eliminated from our lives completely, if that were the case.

What can evil brothers who are jealous of us do, even if they sell us to the Ishmaelites? Only fulfill God's purpose. Evil women who accuse us falsely and get us put into jail, what can they do? Only fulfill God's purpose. Nothing else.

If the cupbearer had remembered as soon as he had got out of prison, if God had not allowed him to forget, what would have happened? Have you thought of that? Pharaoh would have probably released Joseph, and Joseph would have gone back to Canaan to his father's house. And that would have been completely against God's plan for him. God didn't want him in Canaan, God wanted him in Egypt.

You see there that it is all sitting into God's plan, even when someone forgets. Thus we come to chapter 41 and verse 1. It happened at the end of two full years that Pharaoh had a dream, and behold, he was standing by the Nile. This was the appointed time, and God knows when to give Pharaoh that dream.

God's got everything worked out. And from the Nile there came up seven cows, sleek and fat, and seven other cows came up which ate up these. The thin ones came up and ate up the fat ones.

Then he dreamed a second time, and seven years of grain came up, plump and good. And seven thin years came up and ate up the plump grain. And in the morning his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and told his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret it for Pharaoh.

Then the chief cupbearer spoke to Pharaoh, saying, I will make mention today of my offenses. You see, this is the time that God is appointed, and that is the time that God allows him to remember. It was not that he deliberately did not tell Pharaoh.

He had just plain forgotten. God had allowed him to forget, because God had something better for Joseph. Because God wanted Joseph to be two more years in jail.

Does that sound like something better? In God's perfect plan it is. Just like it says in the book of Job, chapter 23, verse 10, Job 23, 10, the living Bible says, He knows every detail of what is happening to me. Job lived before Joseph, and if those words were written before Joseph's time, it was certainly true in Joseph's case, that every detail of what he was going through in prison, God knew.

He hadn't forgotten it, and now God reminds the cupbearer. And then we see in chapter 41, verse 9 onwards, he explains how Joseph had interpreted the dream to him in prison, and in chapter 41, verse 14, we see Pharaoh sent and called for Joseph, and they hurriedly brought him out of the dungeon, and when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came to Pharaoh. And now we see the beginning of the unfolding of God's purposes for Joseph, perfectly according to God's timetable.

He was 17 years old in chapter 37. Here we read he was 30 years old, as we read later in the chapter. Thirteen years he had been through discipline.

God had disciplined him in 13 years. Many a time he may have wondered during those years whether God had forgotten him, but God hadn't. God had a plan for Joseph's life, which was made long before he was born.

And no evil brothers, no evil Mrs. Potiphar, no forgetful cupbearer could frustrate God's purpose for Joseph. Only one person could frustrate that. That was Joseph himself.

If he had gone and fooled around with Potiphar's wife, God's plan would have been frustrated. That's an encouragement to us, brothers and sisters. Other people, evil people, good people, nobody can frustrate God's plan for our lives, but we ourselves can.

And so we see 13 years of discipline, and finally he comes to the place where God had planned for him right from the beginning. In Ephesians 2.10, we read that God has a plan for our lives too. Just like he had for Joseph.

It says in Ephesians 2.10, we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Therefore remember, and he goes on, beforehand, when did God make a blueprint for your life? Before you and I were born, he made a plan for our lives. Before our parents were born, before Adam was created, before the worlds were created, he made a plan.

There's a blueprint, a perfect one. You couldn't better that. There's no better plan that you can make than the one God's already made for you.

And there are good works that he has planned in that plan, like he did for Joseph. Those good works include, be good to your jealous evil brothers, be good to those who accuse you falsely and put you in jail, be good to forgetful cupbearers, because they are all fulfilling God's plan for your life. Good works.

It's only for such people, that, it's only through such people that God can fulfill his plan and purpose. I want you to turn to Psalm 105 and see something there. In verse 16 and 19, we saw this earlier too.

It says here he called for a famine upon the land, and he broke the whole stuff of bread. He sent a man before them. Joseph was sold as a slave.

The thing I want you to notice here is that before the famine came, God had already prepared a man who was going to be the solution to that problem. One man. God sent a man, it says.

Now keeping that in mind, we can look at Amos chapter 8 and verses 11 and 12 and see what it says there about the days coming, says the Lord God, when I will send a famine on the land. Not a famine for bread or thirst for water, but rather for hearing the words of the Lord. And people will stagger from sea to sea, from the north even to the east.

They will go to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, but they will not find it. You see what it says? That there will be a famine of the words of the Lord. Not a famine of the word of God, for the Bible will be distributed freely and in abundance.

Millions of copies are given out all over the world every year. But of the words of the Lord, and the words of the Lord refer to the prophetic word, not just to an academic knowledge of scripture. The prophetic word is that word which God speaks through his servants to a particular people at a particular time, according to their need.

There will be a famine of that, just like there was in the days of Eli, when it says in 1 Samuel 3, 1, the word of the Lord was rare and scarce. Eli knew what was written in the law, he knew God's word, but he didn't have the prophetic word of the Lord, and that's what it says here. There will be a famine of the words of the Lord, and people will travel from one church to another, from one conference to another, and they will not hear the prophetic word of the Lord.

So there's going to be a famine, and those days are already begun, I believe, as we have approached the end of time. What's God's solution to this? Men. In Eli's day, God sent Samuel, and he spoke forth the prophetic word of the Lord.

And in our day, God wants to send forth men. That is the function of the church, to have men who have the prophetic word, men who are educated in the school of discipline and affliction, who've encountered evil, jealous brothers, and being falsely accused, and being forgotten about by good, kind cupbearers, and who've loved all of them, been good to all of them, and who've gotten education through it all. Many are unwilling to go this way, and that's why they can't have the prophetic word of God.

I believe that the importance that we offer ourselves to God, to be men like Joseph, whom he can send into such a needy situation as we're going to face in the days to come. Let's turn back now to Psalm 105. It says here that God sent a man, verse 17.

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

That's how he became the man God wanted him to be. We're not talking here about dried-up old sermons and the ramblings of preachers who get up who don't know God. Not people who've just gone and studied the scriptures in some Bible school academically, but those who've had their feet in fetters, those who've had their mobility restricted, those who've been unjustly treated, and those who've kept their mouth shut in injustice.

Like Joseph, he didn't complain about his brothers or about Potiphar's wife. That is an education. If we can get that education, then it says here, until verse 19, the time that his word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him.

See, before we can give the word of the Lord to others, it's the word of the Lord here, not God's word. It's the word of the Lord, the same thing we saw in Amos. Before we can give the prophetic word to others, and I don't mean just publicly.

Even the sons and daughters, it says, can prophesy. Women can prophesy in the New Covenant. In ordinary sharing in our homes, God can give us a prophetic word to others, brothers and sisters.

But the word of the Lord has to first test us. Then we can have it to give it to others. And it says here in verse 18, in the margin of my Bible, it says, his soul came into iron, or put another way, iron came into his soul.

This is the whole purpose of affliction, that iron may come into our soul. The people could only put irons on Joseph's legs and tie him up in jail. But God used it to bring iron into his soul.

You see, it is impossible to give the prophetic word of God if, first of all, iron has not come into our soul. Our soul is initially like clay, easily impressed by worldly people and by worldly influences. But God has to make us strong to resist these worldly influences.

Strong for him. Iron has to enter into our soul. The same experience that Joseph had, and it comes only through affliction, false accusation, misunderstanding, injustice, being forgotten about, and years going by.

It doesn't happen overnight. It didn't happen to any man whom God trained in the scriptures overnight. It took time.

It took time for Joseph. It took time for David. It took time for Jesus Christ himself.

Thirty years in the carpenter shop before he went forth into his ministry. That's really something for us to think about, dear brothers and sisters. None of us have suffered perhaps even ten percent of what Joseph

went through.

Think of ten brothers turning against you. All your ten older brothers. Not one of the elder brothers is for you.

And selling you off, jealous of you, and God uses it for his glory. Or somebody falsely accuses you, unjustly, tells a lie about you, and you're locked up in jail for years. And you have no influence.

And all of it unjustly. And he never opened his mouth, as far as he knows. Scripture doesn't say that he complained.

And iron came into his soul. If you want iron to come into your soul, you've got to keep your mouth shut. When your mouth is open, iron never comes into your soul.

We go through afflictions, and all that affliction is wasted because I opened my mouth and justified myself. Because I opened my mouth and sought human sympathy and self-pity. Because I opened my mouth and accused the others who hurt me.

Instead of keeping my mouth shut and let iron enter into my soul. Think how much iron would have got into our soul through all the years and experiences we've gone through if we had kept our mouth shut a little more. If we had humbled ourselves a little more.

And stopped looking at Judah and Reuben and Simeon and Levi and Mrs. Potiphar and Pharaoh's cupbearer. Instead of looking at all of them, look at God and say, Lord, this is your perfect will. If we had done that, there would have been some iron in our soul today.

There would have been some backbone in our spiritual life. That we could have stood up because we'd have known God in the school of affliction. And there would have been the word of the Lord in our mouth.

Instead of the husks that usually come forth from most believers. Dear brothers and sisters, take it seriously. If you haven't taken it seriously till now, take it at least now seriously.

That we shall really learn in God's school of affliction and keep our mouth shut and get iron into our souls. And then, there is a time limit. God doesn't allow it to go on forever and ever and ever.

And when the time was completed, God's timetable, He's working according to a timetable. He's got a graduation day for Joseph to come out of prison. And at the age of 30, Joseph graduates.

That's a tremendous challenge. As I mentioned before, David was ready at the age of 30. Jesus was ready at the age of 30.

But we know that all of them went through a period of affliction. But the thing that stands out to me and encourages me and should encourage all of us is that God chose a young man to rule Egypt. He chose a young man, David, to rule Israel.

Called when they were about 17 or 18. Trained for 13 years in all types of difficult situations and submission. Unjustly treated.

And then raised up at the young age of 30. Think of some 30 year old brother. And you know what, when Joseph and David and Jesus were ready.

30 years, they were ready to enter into their ministry. They didn't just drift along. So many people drift.

They are 40, 50, 60. They are just drifting. They haven't taken seriously the word of God.

If God called you when you are young. If God called you when you were 16 or 17, my brother, I just want to tell you this. The chances are that God probably wanted to give you a ministry by the time you are 30.

Or certainly 35. These people, when they were 30, they came into a ministry. It's interesting to see that.

But it was the result of iron entering into their soul. There we can see what trials and afflictions there are in God's people. Things that could have made them rich have left them poor.

They are 60 years old and they are poverty stricken. Instead of being wealthy. So, let's learn a lesson from these examples.

Iron entered into his soul and one day in God's appointed time he is brought. We can think of influence. What influence can you have to get the job that Joseph got in Egypt? It's not influence.

It's contact with God. It's a question of being humble. It's not influence that gets us a ministry in the church.

That's for Babylon and for Babylonians. In Jerusalem, it's God's anointing. That's all.

And you can't keep a good man down if God is on his side. Impossible. God will open doors that no man can shut.

God opened doors for Joseph. Nobody could stand in his way. He didn't have any influence.

He didn't have any secretary to Pharaoh who would speak to him. In fact, the one who said he would speak to him completely forgot. It was God who had a plan for that man and fulfilled it.

This is a tremendous encouragement to us that you can be in the deepest dungeons thinking that everybody has forgotten about you and if you're hopeful there in the deepest dungeons at the appointed time it will bring you into a particular ministry. But if you sit there and you complain and grumble and criticize you'll probably sit there forever. And that dungeon need not be a physical dungeon.

It's a dungeon that we make for ourselves of complaining and criticism and self-justification and sympathy and self-pity that makes this dark dungeon in which we live and we never come forth to fulfill that ministry in the body of Christ that God wants us to have. Take it seriously. So finally he stands before Pharaoh and I mention this and I want to repeat it that those who come into a ministry easily like Solomon, Rehoboam, King Saul without any affliction and difficulty usually have ended up as failures.

And those who've gone through trial and submission to God's hand over them like Joseph and David and Jesus those who've been through the mill they are the ones we see in Scripture who really have, who've had iron in their soul. So it's good like the book of Lamentations says, when we are young instead of trying to be a law unto ourselves, to humble ourselves and put our neck under the yoke and wait for God to bring us into a place. The world is full of people who are trying to push themselves into a place.

And the church is full of people who are trying to push themselves into a ministry. They want to push themselves here and push themselves there. Get everybody to accept them.

What folly! What folly! Why not humble ourselves and say, Lord, I don't want to push myself anywhere. Let God push you. Don't push yourself.

Let God push you somewhere instead of pushing yourself forward. There's a tremendous lust in the flesh to push ourselves forward. Let God push you forward.

Meanwhile, keep small thoughts about yourself. Tremendous lessons we can learn from these examples in Scripture of how to be faithful so that in God's appointed time, He can do something for us, in us and through us for other people. Just like it was written about Joseph, He sent a man.

It can be said about you and me. God sent a man because He knew there was a famine coming. And that is where we find the word of the Lord fulfilled that I sought for a man and I could not find one.

They were all full of complaints and criticisms and wouldn't take that seriously and they sought their own gain and their own profit. We can't send such people. Finally, Joseph stood before Pharaoh and Pharaoh told a dream.

And Joseph verse 16 of Genesis 41 says, It is not in me. God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer. Think of that.

Think of that attitude of humility. He could have said, Oh yeah, sure, I have a lot of experience in this area. From last 13 years I have been interpreting dreams, my own and other people's.

Think if he had come with that attitude like we find sometimes in some people. They don't say it because if you say it you look proud and then you lose your honor. But it's an attitude.

It's an attitude. I remember one brother who came here, wrote to me and said, that I know all about the problems that young churches have. I said, thank you brother.

We don't want any specialists here who know all the problems about young churches and how they can set them straight. We want brothers. You can know the theory and think that Joseph had an attitude which said, It is not in me.

It's not what we say, my brothers. It's an attitude. I'm not a specialist in anything.

He's been interpreting dreams for 13 years I know, but he's got a humility about him. That's the mark of a man of God. He's got low thoughts about himself.

God will give Pharaoh an answer. He gives the glory to God. That's the type of man whom God sends.

Not specialists and experts who know how to, like Uzzah, to stop the ark from falling. And people come to you for advice. And maybe you have given advice.

Not for 13 years, maybe once or twice. And it's turned out well. What is your attitude when you give advice now? It's not what you say, my brother, sister.

It's the attitude. You feel, I'm quite a spiritual man. That I can give advice.

There's a certain lust in our flesh that is satisfied when somebody comes and says, brother, I want your advice. And though we act very humble, there's a certain lust that is being fed there if you're not careful at that time. Oh, yeah.

Maybe he was blessed the last time I gave him advice. Garbage. Garbage that we accumulate.

Thoughts about ourselves. That's why God can't send a man. If God sends a man, it'll be someone like Joseph whose attitude is, it is not in need.

So what if I said something to you last time that helped you? Doesn't mean that what I said this time will help you. It's running in me. Keep that attitude, my brothers, till the end of your days.

Never become a specialist. Never become an expert in anything. Bringing up children.

Any experts here? Or some other area? Or any other area? Perfect husband? No. Be careful that you don't become a self-appointed expert and specialist to younger people. There's a lust for brothers to be specialists and experts who advise the younger ones and sisters to be specialists and advisors to the younger ones.

Those are not the people whom God will send. And you need to if you are young, you need to discern that you don't go to such people for advice or help. Because God will not give wisdom to such people.

God doesn't send such people. He sends people who got a really well-rooted and grounded in low thoughts about themselves. It is not in me.

God will give an answer. And that's the type of person to whom God gives wisdom. And you remember, we saw how Daniel said similar words to Nebuchadnezzar.

God will give. No doubt, he had learned from Joseph. And we can learn from Joseph and Daniel.

And so Pharaoh explained his dream to Joseph. And Joseph said to Pharaoh in Genesis 41.25 Pharaoh's dreams are one and the same. God has told Pharaoh what he is about to do.

But all the magicians in Egypt could not explain. Here is a man. The magicians didn't go through false accusations and through being locked up in jail.

They didn't go through the school of affliction. The magicians came out of the Bible school. They couldn't explain anything.

But this man who had gone through affliction, he was the man who could interpret the word of God. And Pharaoh says, I told these magicians, but they couldn't explain it. Verse 24.

Joseph says, alright. Pharaoh's dreams. God has told Pharaoh what to do.

Both the dreams have the same message. He says, God, there is going to be seven years, verse 29, of great abundance in the land of Egypt and seven years of famine. Famine will ravage the land and the abundance will be unknown.

In those days of famine, it will be very severe. And as for the repeating of the dream to Pharaoh twice, it means that the matter is determined by God, verse 32, and God will quickly bring it about. And now let Pharaoh look for a man discerning and wise and set him over the land of Egypt.

And let Pharaoh take action to appoint overseers in charge of the land. Let him exact twenty percent of the produce of the land in seven years of abundance and let him gather all the food in the good years. Stir up the grain for the food in the cities and let them guard it.

And the food will become a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which occur in the land of Egypt. So the land may not perish during the famine. There we see Joseph not only having contact with God concerning interpreting God's word, but also having wisdom concerning the practical application of what shall we do if this is the word of God.

So we see he not only interprets the dream, he says, Pharaoh, now you should appoint a man to save up when you get plenty so that in the time of famine you can fall back on that reserve that you have. And we can apply that in two ways, spiritually and physically, for we are spiritual beings and physical beings also. We are not angels, only spirits.

We have got a body too, so we must apply it spiritually and physically. First of all, spiritually. What shall we do in times of great abundance? Store up.

Because the time will come when there will not be abundance. That's why I always tell young people, before you're married, you have an abundance of free time. After marriage and after you have children, you'll have a famine of spare time.

Go and ask any married person with a few children if that's not true. What should you do then, in the times of abundance? Most young believers have no time to seriously study the word of God and store up so that in the time of famine they can take out of that reserve that they have stored up in the days of abundance. They are poverty stricken in the time of famine.

If you were saved as a single person and God gave you seven years before you were married, my dear brothers and sisters, if you did not use those seven years, those seven years of abundance here in Egypt, to store up God's word, you should just feel ashamed of yourself. Really, you should feel ashamed of yourself. Then you can look out for days of tremendous scarcity and struggle and difficulty.

You won't have a reserve. Those who have already gone past the seven years of abundance and who are living in years of famine, you've just got to make the best of it now. But I can speak to those who are still in the years of abundance, who still have plenty of spare time.

What do you do with that spare time? Do you get to know the word in a way that will make you rich spiritually? That has an application. Jesus said, the night comes when no man can work. Work when it is day, for the night comes when no man can work.

And so we need to take that seriously. It has a secondary application also. Here we read in the book of Proverbs chapter 6, Proverbs 6 and verses 6 to 9 Go to the aunt, O sluggard, O lazy man.

Observe her ways and be wise. Who does not have any chief, that means he doesn't have an elder brother or anyone to exhort him, exhort her, but prepares her food in the summer when there is abundance, knowing that the winter will come when there will be a famine of food. Gathers the provision in the harvest.

But what do you do? You lie down and you sleep, a little more sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest and your poverty will come like a vagabond. And your need like an armed man that will overpower you. There it says spiritually we need to make use of the days of abundance to store up spiritual wealth.

Physically too, materially, I have always advised people who when I say, learn to save a little money every month instead of spending everything that you get. Here is where this word is really applicable. Go to the aunt.

Not only you lazy man, but you stupid man. You say, Oh, I will trust God. God will provide my needs.

And what happens to such brothers who say they trust God when their hour of need comes? They have to go and beg and borrow. It's not trust in God. It's trust in good and kind brothers who will help me out of a tight spot.

Now, we can take a lesson for the future. When you get an abundance, suddenly you get some extra money that you didn't anticipate. What is your attitude? Oh, let's enjoy ourselves now.

Ten years of abundance Let's eat, drink and enjoy ourselves. The word of God is, go to the aunt, you foolish man. Go to the aunt.

I find a lot of brothers. And I say brothers because they are responsible for family finances who need to go to the aunt. Sit down at home and watch the aunt for a little while.

Learn something. That's what God's saying. And learn not to waste when you have an abundance.

And you say, oh, I can now spend it all. And then end up begging and borrowing later on. No, my brothers.

Learn to save a little. Be disciplined in your finances so that when a time of need comes. Seven years of famine will always follow the seven years of abundance.

There will be times of abundance and there will be times of pressure. That's the time when you need to have, when you discover whether you've been really wise in your times of abundance. It's very difficult to be wise in our times of abundance.

Very few have wisdom there. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. And we read further.

The proposal seemed good to Pharaoh, verse 37, and to all his servants. And Pharaoh said to his servants, Can we find a man like this in whom there is a divine spirit or a spirit of God? What a testimony! It's amazing, this man Joseph. Though people hated him, falsely accused him, did all types of things.

Like we say, you can't keep a good man down. You press cork or wood under the water, it keeps coming up. And his brothers and Potiphar's wife all tried to get rid of him.

They couldn't get rid of him. Because God was with him. And he's in Potiphar's house.

Potiphar recognizes God is with this man. They put him in jail. The jailer recognizes God is with this man.

He stands before Pharaoh. Pharaoh recognizes that God is with this man. What a testimony! What a testimony! It's a tremendous challenge at the age of 30, at the age of 20, at the age of 25, that heathen people could recognize that God is with this young man.

That is the challenge that comes to us in your place of work. What is the use of people in your place of work thinking that you're a very humorous chap who can crack jokes and make them laugh? You might as well join the circus. No.

Is that our testimony? Or that people around us can recognize that God is with this young man? Most of us are much older than 30. That God is with this man. That they see there's something which is, cannot be explained humanly speaking.

People try to oppose Him, but they don't succeed. That's always the case. If God is with you, the whole world can oppose you.

You come out triumphant. There was a man way back in the 2nd or 3rd century, who was a God-fearing man, who stood up for some particular truth of Scripture, Christian. And it wasn't a very popular doctrine, and he stood up for the truth.

A lot of other half-hearted, lukewarm Christians around him came and told him, Do you know? I think his name was Athanasius. Do you know, brother Athanasius, that the whole world of Christians are against you? He said, That's fine. Well, I'm against the whole world then.

Didn't make a difference. He stood for the truth. The whole world's on the other side.

We're welcome to be on the other side. I stand for the truth. And God was with him.

That's the type of man and woman God's looking for. Not these wishy-washy people, who will just go with whichever is popular. No.

Those who will stand for the truth. And who others will gradually recognize, God is with this man. You can't oppose him.

No matter how much you oppose him, he just seems to come through. That's how our testimony must be. And we don't seek anybody's honor or approval or any such thing.

And so Pharaoh said to Joseph, Since God has informed you all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you are. See how God can move says the king's heart. It's in the hand of the Lord.

He can turn it whichever way he likes. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, I set you over all the land of Egypt. And he took off his ring and put it on Joseph's hand and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold necklace round his neck.

Made him ride in the second chariot and they proclaimed before him, Bow the knee. And he set him over all the land of Egypt. It's a very beautiful picture of how you know, the life of Joseph is a picture of Jesus Christ.

Rejected by his brothers, the Jews. Sold for 30 pieces of silver. Falsely accused.

Crucified. And it's like Joseph being put in prison. Raised up from the dead.

Brought out of prison. Exalted to be, Pharaoh was the second ruler in Egypt. Exalted to be second to the father over all the universe.

And that if, at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, it says here. Bow the knee. Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

It's a very beautiful picture of Jesus Christ. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, it's in this connection I want you to see this beautiful verse. Though I am Pharaoh, yet without your permission, no one shall raise his hand

or foot in all the land of Egypt.

I'll give a little testimony here. Way back in 1963, I had a very big problem. And that was to stand out in the street and preach.

Because I thought with all my dignity and my position, it's so humiliating to stand in the street and preach the gospel. To stand there like a vegetable vendor shouting out gospel verses. I used to go 10 miles away from the naval base, where nobody knew me, and I'd stand there and preach in the street.

I used to come back home to my room and say, Lord, I'm a coward. I don't have the guts to stand outside the naval base and preach where all these people know me. I'm ashamed of Jesus.

I talk about Jesus in the meeting hall with great loudness and sing the choruses and all. But out in the street, I'm ashamed to confess Jesus where it's not popular. I want to confess Jesus in the meeting hall where it's popular to share the word and to sing a chorus.

I remember once in a meeting way back at that time when I was about to start a chorus in the brethren assembly I used to go to. And suddenly the Lord said to me, Are you willing to sing that chorus out in the street? Or only here, where it's popular? And I really saw my need. I saw how my all this so-called confession of Jesus is like Peter before the disciples.

He'd say, Oh, even if all deny you, I won't deny you. But before the maidservant, he's a different person. And I was afraid of people mocking me on the street or laughing at me or perhaps throwing stones at me if I stood there and preached the gospel.

And then God opened my eyes to the sovereignty and the authority of Jesus Christ. And this was the verse through which God spoke to me at that time. That Jesus said in Matthew 28 verse 18.

Then only I saw the connection. I never saw it before. The connection between Matthew 28 verse 18 and 19.

Matthew 28 verse 18, Jesus said, All authority in heaven and on earth is given to me. Just like Pharaoh put the ring on Joseph's finger and said, Nobody can now lift up his hand or foot without your permission. Jesus said, All authority in heaven and earth is given to me.

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations. Then I understood that that's why I had to go and stand in the street and preach the gospel. Because Jesus Christ had all authority.

And then I saw this verse. God opened my eyes to see this. Genesis 41 verse 44.

That without, this is the way I read it. That the Father said to Jesus, Without your permission, no one will be able to raise his hand. That is to pick up a stone to throw it at me.

Or move. The doctors say you got to move about number of muscles in your face before you can smile or frown. And the man cannot move those muscles on his face without God permitting him to smile or frown at me when I stand there preaching the gospel.

Amazing. I said praise God. And I was seeking for the baptism of the Holy Spirit also.

And then God really anointed me. And opened my eyes to see the authority of Jesus Christ. Then I could stand outside the naval base.

And all types of things. It didn't make any difference after that. Because I had seen that without the permission of Jesus, nobody could raise a hand.

Or a foot. Or move the muscles of his face to frown or smile or talk or curse or anything. Amazing.

Have you seen the authority of Jesus Christ? All authority in heaven and on earth is given to me. Nobody can lift a hand. Or a foot.

Or move his tongue. You know I read that verse in Exodus which says that when the children of Israel went out of Egypt. I think it's Exodus chapter 12.

It's an amazing verse. Exodus chapter 11 verse 7. Against the sons of Israel, even a dog shall not move its tongue. Amazing.

The authority of God that's working on behalf of his people. If we can see it in these days. Particularly living in a heathen country like ours.

If you're scared of difficult bosses. Of people who may make life difficult for us in our neighborhood or somewhere else. What we need to see is this verse.

Without your permission nobody can lift a hand or a foot. God has told Jesus that. I praise God that I can live under that authority.

Nobody can raise a hand or a foot. Or wag their tongue. At me.

Without God permitting him. He's permitting him. That's ok.

Wonderful verse. The authority of Christ. The picture of Christ's authority.

And so Joseph had all authority. Do you think he had authority over Potiphar also? Of course. But no revenge.

That is the type of man whom God sent. The man who gets authority over the people who have done him harm. And he will not take revenge but he will give them food in the time of famine.

I'm sure Joseph sent food too in the time of the famine. That is the type of man whom God sent. Not the man who withholds food from Potiphar's wife's house in the time of famine.

God will never send such a man. That is the education we need to get. To send food to Potiphar's wife also.

When we have an abundance and she doesn't have anything. Think about it. And we read then Pharaoh names Joseph 45, Zaphinath Penea.

Or God speaks. The man who speaks on God's behalf. And gave him Aphinath, the daughter of Potiphar, the wife, the priest of honour, his wife.

That's the picture of Christ again. Rejected by his brothers, the Jews. And finding a bride among the Gentiles.

The church. And Joseph was 46. Was 30 years old when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh. Was over all the land of Egypt. And they brought the food in abundantly in the time of abundance.

And they gathered the food like we said we are to do in the time of famine. And Joseph was like a wise man. Stored up grain in great abundance.

Verse 49. And he had two sons born to him. We read about their names.

Verse 51. Firstborn was Manasseh. He said God has made me to forget all my trouble and all my father's also.

And the second was Ephraim. For he said God has made me fruitful. Notice the order.

You have to first forget something before you can be fruitful. The first son is to forget and the second son is to be fruitful. What do we have to forget? You have to forget all the evil that all your 10 or 10,000 brothers have done against you.

That's number one. You have to forget all the evil that 45 wives or 10,000 other people's wives have done against you. You have to forget all the mistakes that Pharaoh's cupbearers and other people have done.

Then we can be fruitful also. Many never come to fruitfulness. They never come to that second son because they haven't got a first one.

They haven't come to fruitfulness because they haven't come to forgetting. God has made me forget all my trouble. Take that attitude.

That is the type of man whom God sends in the time of famine. One who has learned to forget and forgive and not to remember or hold against another person anything that he has done. And then the 7 years of plenty came after the 7 years of famine and then the 7 years of famine came and after the 7 years of plenty came to an end and then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, go to Joseph, verse 55.

And the people, verse 57, of all the earth came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph and Egypt became the center of the earth just like a day will come when Jesus will set up his throne in Jerusalem in the millennium and from all over the earth people will come to him whom they rejected. He became we can say the savior Joseph of the whole earth at that time. A picture of Jesus who has become the savior of the world.

And what we learn from Joseph's life is what God can do for millions through one man. In the world they say we must be large number they say we are only 2% Christians in India. That is the complaint you hear in so many evangelistic conferences only 2%.

What's God looking for? You see a verse in the Bible where it says God is looking for 90% and he says I'm looking for a man. Ezekiel 22-30. God I look for one man.

You know in the time of Elijah there were 7000 people who had not bowed the knee to Baal. But what were they doing? But one man Elijah did lot more than all those 7000. What's God looking for today? One man.

You can be that. Why not? Why can't you be that? If we go through the school of affliction and humble ourselves and trust him and don't seek our own he can fulfill something even through you. If you are not ashamed of Jesus Christ not ashamed to confess him in your office on the street.

Don't confess Jesus only where you are popular in the church. Out to your unconverted friends. Confess him.

Be bold. And God will take note of that. And then Jacob saw now we come back to Jacob and his family while God raised up Joseph to fulfill his purpose.

The one who was rejected. These other 10 brothers we read here verse 1 they were just staring at one another. And that's what lot of believers are doing while God is doing a work in some other believers and they are just staring at one another.

And not letting God accomplish his purpose. And Jacob said why are you staring at one another? I heard there is grain in Egypt go down and buy some for us. And so the 10 brothers of Joseph went and they came before Joseph and we read in verse 6 Joseph was ruler of the land he was the one who sold to all the people in the land.

Joseph's brothers came and bowed down to him with their faces to the ground 13 years later the prophecy is fulfilled. The dream which Joseph had God is never slack to fulfill his promise. He may take time people may despise us and laugh at us they say you got the devil 13 years will go by and then if you can endure during those 13 years then don't fight with them and don't ruin yourself.

But the word of God will be fulfilled if you can be faithful. And Joseph saw them and he spoke harshly he wanted to see whether they had really repented of all the evil they had done. They did not recognize him.

He said where do you come from? They said from the land of Canaan. He said you are spies. He said no we are not spies.

And they tried to defend themselves and they tell their story we are 12 brothers one is no more Joseph said no you are spies. He said alright send one of your people and go and bring your one brother who is still at home. You say you got one more bring him.

Then we will find out whether you are spies.

He said do this for I fear God if you are honest men let one of your brothers be confined in your prison bring your youngest brother to me and then immediately after 13 years these 10 people their conscience begins to trouble them after 13 years verse 21 then they said to one another truly we are guilty concerning our brother Joseph they didn't know this was Joseph they said this is God after 13 years we are reaping what we have sown we treated 13 years ago I treated that fellow badly now it is coming back to me has conscience ever reminded you many years later when you have a rough time of the way you treated somebody else some years earlier then it is good to bow down and say Lord I deserve that I deserve it because I treated somebody else like that some years ago when I had power over

him today somebody else has power over me yeah conscience troubling him we saw the distress of his soul when he pleaded with us and we would not listen we hardened our hearts against Joseph at that time when he said please don't sell me to these Ishmaelites I don't know where they will take me and they said no they were hard and now they find somebody being hard towards them we reap what we sow there is an exactness to the same measure Jesus said the same size of spoon with which you give it to somebody it will come back to you one day it will come back more be careful how we give to others be careful when you have power over someone how you treat that person because one day somebody else will have power over you and then you will see what will happen then conscience will remind you after

13 years that is why it is good to keep ourselves in goodness and kindness to all people particularly over those over whom we have some power be good, be kind God is merciful to the merciful and Reuben said didn't I tell you, don't sin against the boy you wouldn't listen now comes the reckoning for his blood it is very easy to blame one another at that time, but they were all to blame Joseph heard all this and he wept and Joseph gave orders to fill their bags to see his goodness, verse 25 and to give back their money and they loaded their donkeys and went away and they discovered the money in their sack on the way back and they wondered how that came and they came to their father Jacob, verse 29 and said the man of the Lord spoke harshly and they described all the events to their father

meanwhile we read in verse 24 that Joseph had kept Simeon back bound in Egypt as a surety that he would bring in Benjamin and Jacob look at Jacob's negative attitude in verse 36 he says you bereaved me of my children Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more now you are going to take Benjamin all things work together for my good this is the opposite of Romans 8.28 all things are against me Jacob said I believe that all believers are either living in Genesis 42.36 or Romans 8.28 remember the opposite of Romans 8.28 Genesis 42.36 all things are against me oh poor me and gather all my friends around me and say all things are against me my friend and all ten of my friends oh poor you that's the negative attitude of Jacob not the triumphant attitude of one who is a king in Christ all things are for

my good not only for my good sorry my very best because I love God if only he could have seen into the future God was working everything for his very best and then Reuben spoke to his father and said you can put my two sons to death if I don't bring Benjamin back to you Jacob said no I will not send Benjamin there are a lot of lessons we can learn there the attitude of Joseph the attitude of his brothers if you can learn those lessons these things are written for our instruction it is the will of God that we live follow the example of these men like Joseph so God can fulfill a purpose through our lives as well

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