

April 23<sup>rd</sup>

## GOD'S MAN AND PHARAOH

*“And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.” Joseph answered Pharaoh, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.”* **GENESIS 41:15-16**

**“T**he Screwtape Letters.” It’s a classic book written by C.S. Lewis. The book is a scenario where one demon gives tips to another demon on how to succeed when tempting Christ’s followers. There are blatant attacks that are more personal and obvious. However, many men see those tactics and fight them off. I would point to one temptation that is highly successful with men. Instead of tempting us with our own sins, our tempters can have us look to someone else. Our neighbor or coworker begins to thrive. He receives a promotion. He adds on to his house. He gets a new truck or lawnmower. Now envy and pride starts to leak into our minds. In contrast, we have followed God but haven’t been successful. We still struggle with our bank accounts and still struggle with our children. This creates jealousy and a bitter spirit. It’s important for us to learn from God’s men in the Scriptures to help us with this battle. What does God teach us here with Joseph?

Joseph has been mistreated and forgotten. He has been alone in a pagan land. He has seen the false worship towards false gods. And in chapter 41, we get another time stamp that Moses gives us. It’s not just been two years that he has suffered. Genesis 41:46 states, “Joseph was thirty when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt.” He was seventeen when he was first introduced by Moses. Thirteen years have passed! Thirteen years of persecution, loneliness, and discouragement. If anyone had the excuse for bitterness, jealousy, and pride it would have been Joseph. But God. It was also thirteen years of God’s presence and success building. And Joseph looks away from his situation and reminds everyone that this is God’s world, and we are God’s people. God doesn’t owe us anything. Instead, we owe God everything.

Joseph’s response to Pharaoh is key. What does he say to the king? “Joseph answered Pharaoh, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.” Joseph, while still a prisoner, takes this opportunity to highlight his wisdom for dreams. Wait a second...that’s not what he does. Instead, he takes this moment to point to God. Another way to translate what is said to Pharaoh is “without God it’s impossible to give Pharaoh an answer...”. Joseph confesses to everyone who the true God is. He confesses that the success he was given with the dreams of the baker and butler was from God. He points everyone to the true God of this world.

Men, God is saying something to us here. God gives and God takes away. He must be blessed and praised. Sounds awfully like another man of trust. His name was Job. Job makes this statement after he has lost most everything: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” After he loses everything, Job does the unthinkable...he worships! Men, Joseph can’t look into his future and see his success. For all he knows, his life will remain in prison. There’s no guarantee that he receives Pharaoh’s pardon. But God. God has moved in Joseph’s life that Joseph doesn’t plead or beg or request to be freed. He only thinks of God’s glory. It’s not about getting success men. Or getting favor. Or getting more money. Or being more happy. It’s about God getting more credit. It’s always been about Him! Will you change your prayer today to this: God, whatever you do today in my life, use all of it to glorify you.

***Spend some time confessing times when you made life about you rather than God. Ask Him to forgive you and help you live today for Him.***

**For Further Reading: Job 1**