

Turn in your Bible to Genesis Chapter 40. Joseph has gone through a lot over these past few years. Joseph was the beloved son of Jacob and was shown favoritism that created jealousy and hatred from his brothers. Due to their jealousy and hatred of his brothers they devised a way to get rid of Joseph. First, the thought of murder came to their mind.

Reuben came to Joseph's rescue and said, "Let's not kill him but let's throw him down into this pit that was nearby where they were. Reuben thinking, as he left his brothers for a little while, he would come back and get Joseph out of the pit, but when he returned to his dismay, Joseph was gone. The rest of the brothers had sold Joseph to a caravan of Ishmaelites and Joseph was taken down to Egypt as a common slave.

Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, bought Joseph from the Ishmaelites and started Joseph out as just a common servant. But Potiphar notices, as Scripture tells us, that the Lord was with him and anything he did he prospered in. So Potiphar brings Joseph in to serve him in his house and made him overseer over his household.

For a slave that is a lot of responsibility and power and quite a bit of a life of luxury having that position.

As we learned last week though, Potiphar's wife sought to seduce him as she tempted him day after day. But remember what I said three weeks ago. Joseph had already prepared himself to be ready when trials, tribulations, hard times come to his life. Joseph had obviously prepared himself on how to battle against temptation as well and here we see sexual temptation as he says these words to Potiphar's wife.

Genesis 39:7-10

⁷ And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me." ⁸ But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. ⁹ He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" ¹⁰ And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.

This being rebuffed did not set well with Mrs. Potiphar so one day she grabbed Joseph, and he tore out of her arms in refusal again, but she was able to grab his garment. With that garment in hand was able to devise a lie that it was Joseph who was trying to seduce her and when she told Potiphar this lie, he believed her and had Joseph cast into the King's prison where the King's prisoners were held.

I was curious about this prison. What was it and what kind of criminal did it hold during this time in ancient Egypt. We get a description of it from verse 15 that we will be reading soon as Joseph calls it a pit.

Bore: pit, well, cistern, dungeon.

This was a place below some of the main government buildings that were dug out below these buildings and held prisoners that were waiting for their sentence.

There were three possibilities:

1. They were not ever getting out. A life sentence.
2. They would be executed.
3. They would be restored back to the life in which they were living in some capacity.

Two of those three we will see shortly.

While Joseph is in this prison once again, we see because of God's favor he is placed in a position of authority where the keeper of the prison puts Joseph in charge of all the prisoners. There is nothing that goes on in that prison without Joseph leading out in it or having full knowledge of everything going on.

I am sure that Joseph would prefer his freedom than a high position within a prison. Even with that position, he was still a prisoner waiting on his own sentence. Would he be there the rest of his life, would he be executed or would he be released.

Beloved son, to pit. Pit to slavery. Though a slave, he has a high position over a high-ranking officer's household, but still a slave. Over a household to prison because of a lie. Overseer of the prison, but a slave and no information on his fate.

What kept Joseph going? What kept him strengthened? As we learned last week from verse 21, the Lord is with Joseph and was showing steadfast love to Joseph through all these circumstances.

Maybe there were thoughts of stories that his Dad, Jacob, told Joseph and his brothers as he would sit them all down to talk about God's faithfulness.

Maybe Jacob told his sons of the time the Lord told him to go build an altar at Bethel. The family came together and destroyed their idols to false gods and purified themselves and the Lord showed his favor towards them because of their repentance.

During that time, we saw how God was changing Jacob because he said these words to his family.

Genesis 35:3

³ Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.

Jacob had times of distress and there were many, but I picked one specifically of when Jacob had just fled from Laban and on their travels back to eventually Bethel. Jacob knew he was going to have to face Esau. In Genesis 32 we read the account where Jacob sent messengers ahead to tell Esau that he had a lot of livestock, male and female servants, hoping with this knowledge that this might appease Esau.

The messengers came back with the news that Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men. Scripture details that Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed! Jacob didn't know if this meant war or not! Was he and his family going to live or die?

Because of his fear, Jacob divides his family into two camps, so if Esau attacks one the other may get away. Jacob did pause and prayed to God and in the prayer we begin to see the change taking place in Jacob's life as he says, ***"I am not worthy of the least of your steadfast love and faithfulness you have shown to me, your servant!"*** Jacob asks God to please deliver him from his brother and in the prayers, he chooses to remind God, you said, ***"I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude."***

Jacob sent his servants ahead in 3 different droves of livestock to present gifts to Esau to hopefully appease him. Jacob sends his Rachael, Leah, Bilhah, Zilpah, and his 11 children across the Jabbok River that empties into the Jordan river from the east, but Jacob stays on the other side and now he is all alone.

While Jacob is alone, he is visited by God and Jacob wrestled with God and he would not let go because he finally came to a point in his life that no matter what happens all he needs is God. God changed his name from Jacob, meaning heel grabber, supplanter to Israel, meaning – God Prevails!

Sometimes it is those times of being alone or feeling alone that drives us in one direction or the other. It can drive us to look inward and we do what we learned a couple of weeks ago about Judah and we go down, we turn aside from God, and we spiral down into deeper sin or deeper sense of loneliness because of us separating ourselves from God and others.

It's like that example many of us have heard used many times. Let me start by way of a picture. What kind of seat is this in this car?



The story goes that there is a couple that are newlyweds, and she would sit beside the husband everywhere they went for years. But as the years went by, she began moving over towards the passenger door side. One day the wife, said, “Oh honey, I sure wish we would sit together like we used to when we were younger.” Everyone that knows this story. What did the husband say? I’m not the one who moved!

Maybe there was a time that Joseph asked his Dad, “Tell me more about Mom!” Son, we weren’t sure that your mom was ever going to have children! But she prayed and prayed, and God heard her cries and here you are. That is why we called your name Joseph, it means, Jehovah has added!

There were probably other stories of God’s faithfulness shared with Joseph and his brothers that could have come to Joseph’s mind.

Don’t take for granted those times in your life that God has shown himself faithful whether he delivered you from a trial, brought you through a trial as he provided the comfort, peace, and strength, as his constant presence was evident in your life. Use those as a point of witness to your family and to others to again point to God’s faithfulness, mercy, and grace and how it grew your faith and obedience in the Lord.

There were probably times in Joseph's life he could point to God's faithfulness and knew that God again was going to be faithful in his situation now. Remember it was God who gave Joseph the dreams of his family one day bowing before him. I am sure Joseph was thinking, Lord, I sure wouldn't have picked this path to fulfill those dreams. I sure wouldn't have picked being thrown into a pit, sold into slavery, and now put into prison.

But Lord you are sovereign! I commit all this to you! There may have been a time or times in your life where you were in a desert place or a place where you might say, "God I wouldn't have done it this way!"

Psalm 73:25-26

²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. ²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

I said this before, and it is what I have learned in my life. As trials come my way, I ask the Lord two questions. What are you trying to teach me Lord? Who am I getting ready to witness to?

There were several people put in Joseph's path that he was able to give witness to about God Jehovah. We see this in our Scripture tonight. How's that for an introduction? Genesis 40!

Genesis 40:1-4

¹ Some time after this, the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and his baker committed an offense against their lord the king of Egypt. ² And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, ³ and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where Joseph was confined. ⁴ The captain of the guard appointed Joseph to be with them, and he attended them. They continued for some time in custody.

Sometime after this! After what? After Joseph was put in to prison. Once again, we see the sovereign hand of God in Joseph's life. You may go, "Wait he is in prison!" Yes, but what prison and who put Joseph in this prison?

Genesis 39:20

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

It says, Joseph's master put him there. Who was Joseph's master at that time he was put into prison? Potiphar! Now, these two men, the baker and the cupbearer make the Pharaoh angry, and he puts in them in the custody of the captain of the guard in the prison where Joseph is, and the king's prisoners are put. Don't miss that! The captain of the guard appoints Joseph to attend these two men.

Who is this captain of the guard? Let's go back to Chapter 39 again and see how a particular person is described.

Genesis 39:1

¹ Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had brought him down.

You mean, No way! Potiphar? Yes! Potiphar is still giving Joseph a leadership role. Potiphar still recognized the character that following and obeying God had developed in the life of Joseph. God is still orchestrating the circumstances in Joseph's life. God has Joseph in the right place to where God put two men that are close to the Pharaoh, the ruler of all Egypt into Joseph's life.

Now, did God immediately put the next step into action because these guys showed up? No! We saw in verse 1 first of all that Joseph had been in prison for some time already, where the verse says, it was some time before the cupbearer and baker were put into prison. Now we see at the end of verse 4 that it says, “They continued for some time in custody.

There is always a time of preparation before the Lord shows us the next step in our lives. Once we are saved full knowledge and full maturity isn’t automatically dropped upon us. God may have a call or a task in our life he is orchestrating for us to do but, again, there is a time of preparation for us to be able to handle those times in our lives.

It is in those times of preparation, trials, or persecution that God shows his faithfulness and grows our faith to another level of strength because we see God work and continue to work in the path, he has set forth for us.

Let’s read what is next in Joseph’s life.

Genesis 40:5-8

⁵ And one night they both dreamed—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison—each his own dream, and each dream with its own interpretation. ⁶ When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were troubled. ⁷ So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in custody in his master's house, “Why are your faces downcast today?” ⁸ They said to him, “We have had dreams, and there is no one to interpret them.” And Joseph said to them, “Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell them to me.”

I need you to do something. Forget Chapters 41 to 50. Help me out here and pretend you do not know what happens to Joseph. Because right now, Joseph does not know what his future looks like it. This is what he knows.

Joseph had two dreams from God, that showed his family bowing down in worship and service to him. Since then, look at what his life has been like. Joseph has had authority but first as a slave and now in prison not knowing what the outcome of his life is going to be.

This is where Philippians 4:13 comes into effect. But to do get the real context of Philippians 4:13 you have to add at least verse 12 but may need to use verse 10 and 11 as well. Look at the screens and read with me.

Philippians 4:10-13

¹⁰ I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. ¹¹ Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. ¹² I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ¹³ I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Joseph is in charge over the baker and cupbearer. He could have mistreated these men. Joseph could have been bitter and taken out all his heartache and frustration out on them. They were just prisoners anyway! Who says they were going to get out of here! That is not what we see.

We see Joseph still living for the Lord. First, he shows them compassion. Joseph has developed a relationship with these men to where when he saw them this particular day, he could tell by their expressions that there was something troubling them.

They explained they each had dreams, but no one could interpret them. Here again we see Joseph witnessing about the Lord not just with his life but in word as well. Joseph gives witness to these men that only God can truly interpret a dream. Tell them to me and the one true God that I serve will show me.

Genesis 40:9-15

⁹ So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph and said to him, “In my dream there was a vine before me, ¹⁰ and on the vine there were three branches. As soon as it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and the clusters ripened into grapes. ¹¹ Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand.” ¹² Then Joseph said to him, “This is its interpretation: the three branches are three days. ¹³ In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office, and you shall place Pharaoh's cup in his hand as formerly, when you were his cupbearer. ¹⁴ Only remember me, when it is well with you, and please do me the kindness to mention me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house. ¹⁵ For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the pit.”

Woah! That was wonderful news for the cupbearer. He is going to be restored back to his former position. Joseph only asks one thing. Remember me when you go back to the Pharaoh. I am innocent of all that I have been accused of. My brothers should not have done what they did to me, selling me into slavery.

Remember me, my friend, help me get out of here. Do you think there was little prayer in that as well? Lord, please use this man to help me get out of here. I know you have a plan, but I am still having a hard time seeing it. Nevertheless, I will follow you!

Well, the cupbearer received a wonderful interpretation of his dream. Now it's the bakers turn. I am sure he was feeling a little encouraged. He may have strutted up to Joseph, and said, here is my dream.

Genesis 40:16-19

¹⁶ When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was favorable, he said to Joseph, “I also had a dream: there were three cake baskets on my head, ¹⁷ and in the uppermost basket there were all sorts of baked food for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating it out of the basket on my head.” ¹⁸ And Joseph answered and said, “This is its interpretation: the three baskets are three days. ¹⁹ In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head—from you! — and hang you on a tree. And the birds will eat the flesh from you.”

It is not going to end well for the baker. That was pretty gruesome! Joseph interpreted these two dreams that are diametrically opposite of each other. One man is going to live, the other die! Could Joseph be thinking, “Which one is me?” For Joseph the dreams that the Lord gave him had not happened yet. So, there was hope! The cupbearer was going back to the Pharaoh, and he is going to remember me and tell the Pharaoh about me and in three days I am going to get out of here.

Joseph also had the hope and comfort of what we kept reading through these previous Chapters. ***The Lord was with Joseph and whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed. The Lord was with Joseph, and he became a successful man! The Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.***

The Lord was with Joseph, The Lord was with Joseph, The Lord was with Joseph!

Ladies and Gentlemen, if you are saved tonight, the Lord is with you! Because when you repent of your sins and surrender your life in faith and obedience to the Lord Jesus the Holy Spirit indwells us and we are sealed with the promised Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14)

In Christ, no matter the circumstance we win! The Apostle Paul describes this so well in his letter to the Philippian church. Remember Paul is in prison, and he doesn't know what his outcome is going to be just like Joseph. In fact, let's read what Paul wrote.

Philippians 1:19-24

19 For I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, 20 as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. 24 But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.

That right there is surrender! That is saying Lord, come what may you are in control, and I will glorify you in all things. I can't see the end and I don't fully understand the way this is happening. But Lord I submit all into your sovereign and gracious hands.

Well, three days passed, and the interpretations God gave Joseph come to fruition.

Genesis 40:20-23

20 On the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast for all his servants and lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants. 21 He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. 22 But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. 23 Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

What was Joseph's day like? The cupbearer and baker are led out of the prison. News comes back to Joseph that the cupbearer was restored to his position and the baker was hung. Surely the cupbearer is going to tell the Pharaoh about me, and they are going to restore me and get me out of here.

Joseph waits and he waits. Day after day after day goes by and no one comes to say, "Joseph, you're out brother!" Spoiler alert! Joseph is in that prison for two more years.

He asked the baker to, Remember Me! The baker did not remember Joseph.

For that matter, Joseph could have asked God, "God, do you remember me? The cupbearer forgot me, I was sure this was it!"

In the sermon summary that goes out on the Weekly email on Thursday's and are also shared in the announcement video, I said these words.

As we go through trials in this life, there may be times that we feel so alone or overwhelmed and we ask the Lord, "Lord! Are you there? Do you remember me?" It could be that Jesus can ask the same thing to us, "Remember me?" And then he says, "I've never left, I've been here the whole time!"

In a broken, sin sick world, we know people are going to let us down. They are going to disappoint us. In trials and situations that we don't totally understand we may even feel God has let us down. But he hasn't! I truly believe in the fact that we have free will. We and other people may make decisions that we may say, "God why didn't you stop me, or stop them! Or "Why did you let this or that happen?"

Jesus as he told his disciples that he would be going away that the Holy Spirit would come and help them in their time of needs. ***John 16:33 – I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart, I have overcome the world.***

God is right there! To the lost he is crying out, ***“For the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the Gospel!”***

To those who are tired and weary he cries out, ***“Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30.***

God speaks of his faithfulness to do these things in Deuteronomy 7 verse 9. Though this is a promise to the nation of Israel it is a precept that we can also draw comfort from.

Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments.

In Deuteronomy again in Chapter 31, Moses is encouraging Joshua, as Joshua is going to take over leading the nation of Israel into the promised land, and Moses says these words in verse 9 of Chapter 31.

It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.

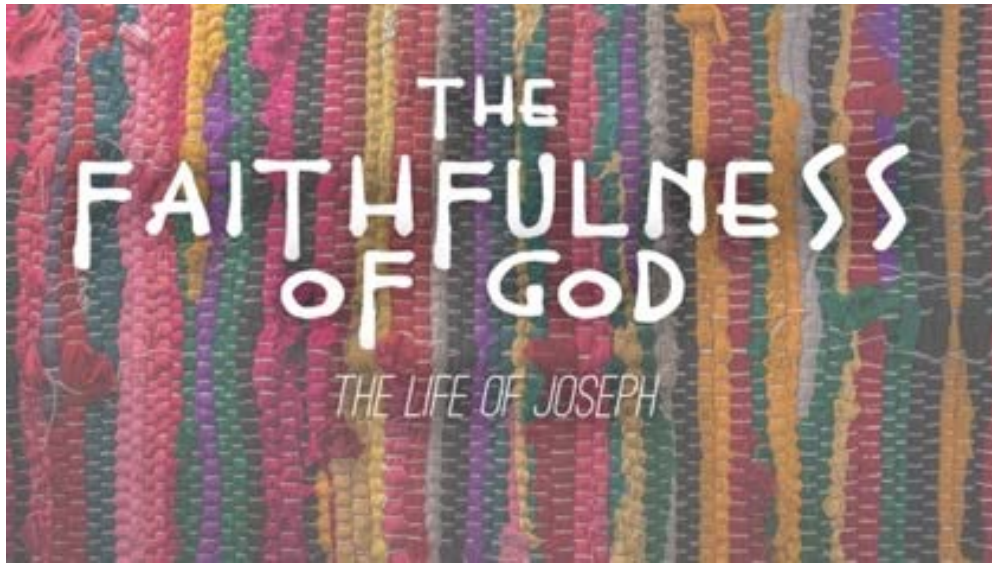
Joseph in that prison, that pit, he had no one else to lean on than the Lord! He knew of God’s promises and that was what he had to lean into and lean on in this time of trial and testing for that matter.

Romans 5:1-5

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

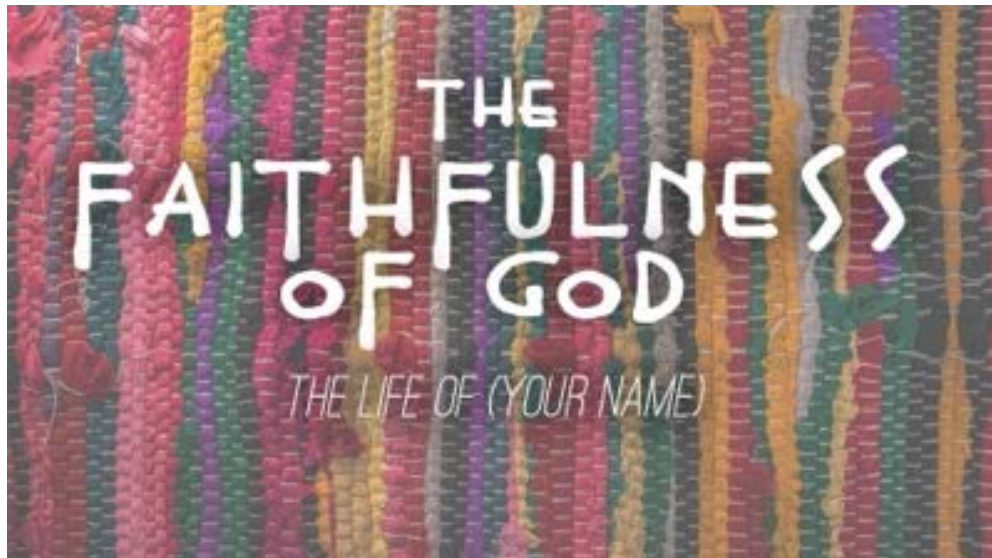
I find that so encouraging and uplifting this evening! That if ever I come before the Lord and say, Remember me, Lord? He says, “Yes, I have never forgotten you! Remember me? Just as we learned on Sunday from Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, he is right there in that fiery furnace with us!

Look at this image:



The Faithfulness of God, The Life of Joseph!

Now I want you to look at the image like this.



The Faithfulness of God, The Life of (Your Name)

God is faithful and he will be with us and bring us through all trials and tribulations in this life because you are always on God's mind, he remembers you!