

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

07.28.2043 | The Prison Before the Palace | Genesis 40 | Clark Fobes, Associate Pastor

You can all be seated. And we are continuing in our series in the book of Joseph, in Genesis, chapter 40. Just looking at the life of Joseph, we spent about three weeks now, and now come into this chapter here where we, it's kind of a transitional chapter, as we'll see and we'll read, where we, as we just sang about, learn more about Joseph's waiting on the Lord and what that means for us. So if you have a Bible, you can open up there, Genesis, chapter 40, if you need one. There's one in the pew in front of you. Genesis, really early on in the book, the first book of the Bible, and you can turn to chapter 40. And we're going to read the whole chapter together.

As we hear more from God's word on this idea of Joseph waiting on the Lord. So Genesis, chapter 40, we'll start in verse 1. "Sometime after this, the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and his baker committed an offense against their lord, the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker. And he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where Joseph was confined. The captain of the guard appointed Joseph to be with them, and he attended them. They continued for some time in custody. 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. When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were troubled. So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in custody in his master's house, "Why are your faces downcast today?" And he said to him, "We've had dreams, and there's no one to interpret them." Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell him to me." So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph and said to him, "In my dream there was a vine before me, and on the vine there were three branches. As soon as it budded, its blossoms shot forth and the clusters ripened into grapes. 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." Then Joseph said to him, "This is its interpretation. The three branches are three days. 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. 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. 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." 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, 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." Joseph answered and said, "This is its interpretation. The three baskets are three days. 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." On the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast for all his servants and lifted up the head of the cheap cupbearer and the head of the cheap baker among his servants. He restored the cheap cupbearer to his position, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hands. But he hanged the cheap baker as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet the cheap cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

This chapter is really interesting because it's, to be honest, quite straightforward. You could probably tell from the reading you don't really need much explanation. There's not really much to preach from just going through the passage, and so I'll be preaching a little bit more thematically on just a few of the verses. But it's also an interesting chapter because nothing really happens for Joseph here. He's still in prison. The story doesn't really unfold anymore. Joseph's events don't really advance. We're actually told in the very next verse that two whole years pass before Joseph is remembered and Pharaoh lifts up his head. Everything that's happening to Joseph in the story, actually everything happening in the story itself is not happening to Joseph, but other people. And so really this is a kind of transitional chapter that leads into chapter 41 where we'll see finally the fulfillment of Joseph's dream starts to come about. And so even as I was preparing to preach on this, I came to find that most people either skipped chapter 40 or just attached it to chapter 41 altogether. There's not much to be said here by itself, and yet I do think there's some interesting things that are good for us to learn here because this is a transitional chapter. It really is a chapter of Joseph's waiting on the Lord. He's in this prison before he gets to the palace of Pharaoh's And so much of what we'll look at is what do we do when it seems like we're waiting in the prison? Because Joseph finds himself here even revealing a little bit of his humanity as we heard him plea out. Finally, for the first time, we get the sense that Joseph is actually wondering what's happening. We get the sense that he is waiting, and in his waiting there's a sense of confusion. You know, waiting is not something we're really all that good at in our modern day society and culture.

We've often talked about how it's really hard to wait for things from getting things immediately when we need them like Amazon Prime, from being able to get something ordered straight to your door. We don't even have to wait for Netflix anymore. You just stream it. I remember back in the day when you had to go to a red box or put in your order. For those of us old enough to remember, you had to put an order online for Netflix and wait sometimes a week or two for them to ship you the DVD before you could watch the movie you wanted. Now everything's on demand. I love the Olympics, and it's the Olympic times right now. I was watching some of the Olympics last night, and it reminded me how easy it is to record everything I want and watch it on demand. Gone are the days that if I miss the prime time, I'll have to read about it in the paper the next morning of what actually happens. We're not very good at waiting. In fact, I think sometimes we even equate waiting to suffering because when we have to wait, it feels like a huge injustice because we shouldn't have to wait in our day and age. Just this past week, my family and I, it was a warmer day, we decided to go get some ice cream and our kids were excited. They told us exactly what ice creams they wanted. Right. We only got in the store. My youngest daughter always orders strawberry ice cream. She never changes her order. So we got to the ice cream store, all excited to get their ice cream, but there was a line. There was only one worker working. And on top of that, it seemed like everyone in front of us was ordering the most complicated order you could get at an ice cream shop because while you could just get a scoop of ice cream, which takes about two seconds, they were ordering ice cream Sundays with, "Can I try three different ice creams before I decide?" And, "Well, I want some toppings, but I don't know which ones. What do you have?" And they have 20 different toppings. And then the next person said, "Well, I want a banana split." First said, "Well, I got to go to the back and peel the banana and cut it and prepare it for you." And so, you know, this whole time, it's ice creams. We're fine. We're waiting, but our kids are getting really impatient. My youngest daughter is just saying, "Daddy, I want strawberry ice cream." She said, "I know you said that 20 times, but we have to wait. It's not our turn yet." Anyone who has young kids know that waiting is not a concept kids really understand. I found myself saying to my kids, "Just wait," are often the two worst herds that they want to hear and result in some massive injustice in their lives that they have to just wait for something they want

Waiting's hard, but I think it's hard for other reasons too, because not only does waiting mean we have to wait before we get what we want, but often we can wait for other reasons that are difficult to wait under. Like Joseph, he is waiting for deliverance in the midst of suffering, real suffering, that came as a result of injustice. So there's waiting for justice to be had or vindication. We can wait with anxiety if we're waiting some results or some outcome of a diagnosis. I can think about even just our high schoolers that were recently waiting, our recent graduates, waiting for college acceptance letters, and the sense of anxiety that can come with that and waiting to figure out what is going to happen in my life. Or if you've been waiting on a diagnosis of what does that mean for my future. There's great heaviness and anxiety in that type of waiting. See, waiting is not just hard because we can't wait well today, but because of all the other emotions that can come with waiting. Confusion, despair, depression, even anger. And so I have to imagine Joseph's waiting as we get a glimpse of his humanity, we finally get the sense that he is maybe starting to question or have confusion about the dreams that God had given him earlier on in his life and whether or not they were going to come to fruition. I think in our waiting, as the narrative tells us, we can often be confronted with this question, has God forgotten us? Is God still with us?

And so in this morning's passage, we're just going to look at two questions. Why does God make us wait? And how do we wait faithfully on the Lord? As we wait on God for whatever reason we're waiting, why does he make us wait and how do we wait faithfully? So let's first look, why does God make us wait? You ever wondered that? Like, why? Why does God take so long sometimes? Often there's a purpose that God has in our waiting, even when we can't see it. There's a purpose that God has, and we may not always know it, but God will sometimes bring us through periods of waiting, even under suffering and injustice for some reason unbeknownst to us. You know, Joseph, you think about his story up until now, he's had a lot of bad things happen to him. Earlier on, he was betrayed twice, first by his brothers and then by Potiphar's wife. He was falsely accused. Joseph loses two cloaks, as we saw. He loses the many-colored jacket from his father and he loses his cloak at the hand of Potiphar's wife. And now here we find him that he's now thrown into a pit twice. He's thrown into a pit when his brother sold him into slavery. And now the narrative tells us he was thrown into the pit of a further prison in the house of the chief of the guard.

Now, when things happen to you once, maybe that's a coincidence, but twice, the exact same things, exact same injustices, that's when we start to think, well, maybe the world's out to get me. The same injustices don't often happen more than just once. And on top of that, Joseph has been bearing this for many years. I don't know if you remember this

or realize this, but because the narrative, it moves very quickly. So we kind of forget the pacing of all this, the timing of it all, because we think it's just happening one after another. But all the way back in chapter 37, verse 2, we're told that Joseph was 17 years old when he received these dreams. And then later on in chapter 41, we're told that he was 30 years old when Pharaoh finally lifts up his head. Now, we don't know how these events play out, but what that does mean is from the moment he gets his dream to the moment it's fulfilled, it's been 13 years. And it's possible, it's very likely that Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers soon after he had those dreams. We're told later in chapter 41, as we said, that two whole years passed from the moment that he was interpreting the dreams in the prison to when he's finally remembered. We're also reminded at the beginning of the story that there was some time after this, meaning sometime after he was placed in the prison that the chief officials were brought in, and even in verse 4, they continued for some time in custody. Again, we don't know how long has passed, but Joseph has definitely been in some form of slavery, whether as a servant in Potiphar's house or in the jail in the chief of the guard for probably 11 to 13 years.

And I got to wonder, and Joseph's probably wondering right now, why is God making him wait so long? There's a sense of this even in Joseph's own question. In verse 15, he says, "I was stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I've done nothing wrong that they should put me into the pit." There's a sense where Joseph is wondering, how long does this have to continue? I didn't deserve this, and yet it's taking so long. You know, I found myself wondering as I was reading this, why did God take 13 years before he fulfilled the dream to Joseph? Why couldn't it have been two years? Or better yet, two days? That's what I often think when I'm in periods of waiting. Why does God have his timing? Because I so often can't see that. Oftentimes I may even wonder if I know why I'm waiting, if I know the reason in my waiting, then I'd actually be able to endure it with a sense of expectancy or anticipation.

See, it's the lack of knowing, people say, that often makes it so hard to wait. Why does God do that? There's some potential purposes that God has for us in waiting. Some common ones that people will say that are not here in the text, but other people I've been told by others and have heard. Some people might say that waiting is God's means of forming us into the people he wants us to be, or the person he wants you to be. So that in our waiting, God wants to do a work in us, to form us into that person. Now it's possible that God was making Joseph wait to form him into a diligent man that waited on the Lord, that trusted in the Lord, so that when he was finally called up by Pharaoh, he was ready for the task at hand. But also, I mean, Joseph doesn't seem to be someone that needs more formation. He seems to be someone that is trusting God through all this. We're told that God was with him, and he was faithful. He resisted temptation. Even if he was waiting, even if there was a sense of forming him in Potiphar's house, why the extra years in prison? I do think there's some merit to that. Maybe when we're in times of waiting to question and wonder, what does God want me to learn, or what does he want me to grow in in those times? I can certainly say that some of my most formative years were times of waiting, especially under suffering, where God had a work to do in me.

But I don't know if we could actually look at Joseph and say, "Well, Joseph, what's God trying to teach you in prison?" Can you imagine saying that to Joseph when we get to heaven? I think God was just trying to teach you something, Joseph, and you just couldn't see it when you were in jail for those two, five, ten years, however long it was. It doesn't seem to be the reason why Joseph is waiting on the Lord here. Others may say that in waiting, God has a better purpose for us. I think that's often true for us because we don't know God's purpose. So sometimes we will be waiting on something, some outcome that we want, and yet God will bring us through points of waiting to show us he does have a better plan for us, to show us that maybe we need to let go of what we dreamed for ourselves and see that God had a better way. But was that the case for Joseph? It seems like God revealed to Joseph exactly what was supposed to happen. He was to be lifted up over his brothers and family. Maybe the events of how that came about were different in Joseph's mind, but it doesn't really seem to be that God had a better plan for Joseph, rather that this was the exact means of carrying out the plan for Joseph. And so really the only answer is we don't know.

We don't know why Joseph had to wait 11 years up to this point and two more years after that. The narrative doesn't tell us, the writer doesn't tell us why. What we do know though is God had some timing and God had a purpose in orchestrating all of the events in Joseph's life and all the events surrounding him. See, God has a purpose in our waiting and he will orchestrate things according to his plan. Joseph is by and large a passive actor all up until now, Joseph has not really done anything without being told or directed what to do, whether by his father, go and find your brothers, by the unnamed man, well your brothers were over here in this field. Whether by his brothers he was sold into slavery or by Potiphar when he was thrown into the jail. Things are kind of just happening to Joseph. You also notice Joseph hasn't

really said much of anything up until now. He said just a few words, you know, dad says Joseph where are you? He says here I am. And then he doesn't speak again until he sees the unnamed man. He doesn't speak again from there until here in chapter 40. Chapter 40 is the first time we get any sense of Joseph's actually a character in the story because he's actually doing something and interpreting the dreams. God has been orchestrating events around Joseph to bring him to this point.

And I think sometimes when we view God in that way, we can sometimes think well if God is sovereign, he's orchestrating events and I'm here in a pit of suffering and waiting, then maybe I'm just a victim of God's sovereignty. You feel that way sometimes? Sometimes I can look at my life and say I am just a victim of God orchestrating my life. My life doesn't really matter because I'm a victim in God's hands. I think that's something that we can feel like in God's orchestration. Genesis commentator John Walton, he says this in his commentary, he says we can at times feel caught in the current of the events that surround us, not understanding how we can be winning when it feels so much like losing. That's so true. We can feel like we're losing. So how can we be winning? But here's the thing. If God is in control, he has a purpose and he's orchestrating events in our lives and around us, then as much as it may feel like we are victims, God actually sees us as vehicles of his purpose. We're not victims at the hands of an angry God. We are vehicles of a good sovereign God, as we just saying. And sometimes he will bring about some purpose through us, even unbeknownst to us that we can't see, but things are not just happening to us. God is bringing things about to happen through us and even for us.

God is clearly using Joseph and the things around him to bring about his own purposes. In the story, we're told that Pharaoh had this offense against his chief officials. There was a chief cupbearer and a chief baker. What were they responsible for? It kind of sounds like these are just maybe cooks in Pharaoh's We're told very clearly what the cupbearer does. He puts the cup of wine in Pharaoh's hands. Now that can mean a couple of things. Often the common one is thought that these two individuals were the ones that tasted Pharaoh's wine and Pharaoh's baked goods for any traces of poison. So that if there was any scare that Pharaoh might, and attempts might be made on Pharaoh's life, these were the men that risked their lives for Pharaoh. It could also be though that they were the ones that provided Pharaoh with his wine and with his baked goods. Whatever the case is, these were men that were some of Pharaoh's most close trusted advisors in his courts. They were some of the few ones that were trusted probably with Pharaoh's life because they cooked and pressed wine for him daily or at least tried it. They were ones that Pharaoh, the Pharaoh would likely rely on as advisors. It's interesting even the captain of the guard, Potiphar, who we're told about earlier, the title for him is captain of the guard, but you know the words in Hebrew could literally be translated there. Chief butcher or chief cook probably had something else to do with being close to Pharaoh. And so Pharaoh has around him a bearer, a baker and a butcher. His closest advisors. That's what I'd want around me if I had people that buy me cups of coffee, baked goods and meat.

We're not told why Pharaoh has an offense at these men either, which is kind of fascinating because if these were his most trusted officials, they were closest to Pharaoh, something quite extraordinary would have had to happen for Pharaoh to throw them in prison. We don't really know why. It could have been that maybe there was an attempt on Pharaoh's life and he suspected them to. Something happened though. We're not really told. It's left ambiguous. And I think that's intentional because the writers trying to show us that whatever happens, God is actually the one behind the scenes orchestrating those events. It's not happening by accident that Joseph was put in prison and waiting for some time before this other event to happen that caused Pharaoh's chief officials to be put in prison so that they would be with Joseph. It's not by accident that Joseph is there right at the very moment even that these officials had two different dreams. Joseph later he says to God belongs interpretations. But just kind of think about that, that these guys also had dreams of significance the very same night while they're in prison. I think we could say that not only to God belongs interpretations, but to God belongs the dreams God is doing everything in this story to bring about things eventually for Joseph's deliverance. But even in this moment, Joseph is not the recipients of God's deliverance. As I said, nothing's really happening for Joseph. In fact, the things that happen here are for the officials, the cup bearer and the And while even though the baker things don't turn out very well for him, Joseph is a vehicle of bringing out God's purposes even for the sake of others.

And there may be times where God brings us through waiting and suffering, not for us, but for some vehicle of blessing for others. It's something we're going to see more clearly next week as well with Pharaoh. But I think it's important that

in the midst of all this waiting where it feels like the world is against us, we have to remember God is the one who's for us. As much as we may be led to question God's purpose or we don't know what that purpose is, the important thing is we don't stop waiting on God even as we're waiting in the midst of suffering. So I think despite all that Joseph went through, one of the reasons his story is so compelling is because he doesn't emerge out of the pit two years after this bitter and angry He doesn't emerge scorn in God. He's ready when he's called upon and he attributes everything to God. He was someone who was able to faithfully wait on God for 13 years for the fulfillment of his dreams.

So as comes to our next point, when it comes to us and our waiting and suffering, how can we wait faithfully on God? How does God want us to wait faithfully on him so that we are ready when called upon when finally he brings about his So here's just three short points here that I think we can draw from the text. First, we can recognize smaller kindness of the Lord. There are some smaller kindnesses of the Lord even in our waiting. Kindness is mentioned here by Joseph in his plea. He says, "Would you do me this kindness of remembering me?" That's something that's also mentioned earlier in chapter 31, verse 21, just before. We're told that the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. That word for steadfast love, it's actually the same word translated in chapter 40 for kindness. It's the Hebrew word "chesed," which if you're familiar with Hebrew and the biblical Old Testament, that's a very special word that often refers to God's compassionate, kind love. And so as much as Joseph is looking for some compassion from those around him, there is already some small evidences that God has not forgotten Joseph here in this pit. He's given Joseph favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison so that he is now entrusted over these things, which eventually leads to him being over the chief cupbearer and the baker to hear, to see their downcast faces and go on and interpret their

I think there's a few ways we can see God's kindness in this. One of them is quite literally the continued success and favor. As much as Joseph has not had the deliverance that he wanted, God's hand is still with him in small ways in the prison and bring about small successes and kindness. I think as much as this may sound trite at times, like, "Oh, just count your blessings," I do think it might be a helpful thing to remember that if in the midst of our waiting, if we're just waiting on that main thing to happen, we just have our eyes set forward on some big thing we want God to do, we can actually miss all the smaller little things that he's doing around us, the smaller kindnesses.

I'll admit this is hard for me because unlike Pastor David, I am not a cup half full type of person. I'm a cup half empty type of person, constantly always thinking, "Well, things could always be better." Even if everything went right, there's these two other things that went wrong. I'm such a cynic in my life. I remember my wife and I, we had our very first trip away from our kids for a 10-year anniversary. It was the first time we were going away on our own. I was really looking forward to relaxing time away, no kids, get to finally sleep in. We booked a trip up in Sonoma, get to enjoy some sun and warmth because we got married in May. And as we were waiting for our trip, I came to find in the forecast that for all the weeks leading up to our anniversary trip, it was beautiful and sunny and warm. For all the weeks after our trip, it was beautiful, sunny and warm. But the two days that we were there, it was going to be rainy and cold. And I remember saying, "Of course, of course, of course that happens to me, God. Yes, I can't ever really enjoy anything, thank you." So the whole time we're driving up, it's just pouring and raining. And I remember saying, "Oh, this is not worth it. Let's just cancel But as we're driving up, unbeknownst to us, there was supposed to be a road closure on the freeway. And if that closure had happened, it would have diverted us about probably two hours ago, up and around and all the way back down to Sonoma. But because it was pouring rain, they delayed the construction. And so we quickly got to a resort in about 45 minutes. Now still, me being the negative Nancy, I said, "Well, it doesn't matter. That's...if it was nice, just two hours in the nice car." But my wife said, "But that's the smaller blessing. It's the small little kindness that because of the rain, we get to enjoy more time, not in traffic, but at our hotel together."

See, there are small kindnesses we can miss. If we're always just fixating on what God is not doing, we'll miss out on what he actually is doing in small ways. And often those small things are the ones that will lead to bigger deliverance. There is actually a bigger thing that happens here in God's kindness that may seem a little bit derivative, but there is mercy in Joseph's punishments. Earlier we're told, last week we saw that Joseph was thrown into prison for this false accusation of rape against Potiphar's wife. The common punishment for adultery, especially rape, was punishable by death, was execution. But probably because Joseph was such a successful servant in Potiphar's house, he had some sort of compassion or kindness toward Joseph. To the point where he didn't kill him, but put him in a prison and spared his life. What's even more interesting, we don't really know if this is true or not, but the term, the captain of the guard that

chapter 40 starts off with, that he's there in prison in the house of the captain of the guard, that's the same title used of Potiphar in chapter 39. But it's used in reference to Potiphar with either his name or the description Joseph's master. And yet twice it's mentioned here in chapter 40 without either mentioning Potiphar or the master of Joseph. Which might be an indicator that Potiphar, by showing compassion on Joseph, lost either his job or even his own life for showing compassion over Joseph. Again, we don't know, it's only something we can speculate, but this is again a small kindness that God had done to spare Joseph's life to bring about his purposes.

See, I think gratitude, it's not a reaction to circumstances happening around us, it's more of a decision of how we view the circumstances around. Whether or not we're going to view our waiting as a period to see God's kindness or to simply see that God is not doing what we want him to do or hope or wish him to do. So we can recognize the smaller kindnesses of the Lord. Second, we can wait on the Lord faithfully by clinging to the promises of the Lord, clinging to the promises of God. All throughout this story we mainly get a focus and emphasis on these two dreams of the baker and the cup bearer. And I think these two dreams are meant to be contrasts with Joseph's two dreams. You remember early on in chapter 37, Joseph himself had two dreams. One about all the stars bowing down to him and then another about all the sheaths of hay bowing down to him. Two dreams to reveal God's promise that he would lift him up over his family to save his nation and the nation of Egypt. And here we get two dreams of the cup bearer and the baker, one that is not very favorable but one that is. But what strikes me about this is that when these two Egyptian officials, non-believers in God, they have these two dreams, they immediately get some sort of fulfillment in their interpretation. They immediately get some relief in their circumstance. Joseph comes upon them and he says, "Well, why are your faces downcast?" And they were looking for some sort of interpretation of their dreams and they get that relief or peace in just three days' time. Both immediately in Joseph's interpretation and then just three days after that when the events are fulfilled.

Now, I don't know about you, but if I were Joseph and I had two dreams I had 11 years ago, I would probably be thinking, "Now, hold on. These Egyptians don't fear God. They don't trust him and God only made them wait three days. And now he made me wait 11 years. I've had these dreams for 11 years and he's still not fulfilling them the way I thought. What's going on there, God?" See, I think we can often think the same way that maybe God has forgotten us. I wonder if maybe Joseph was even thinking, "Did I misinterpret those dreams? Did I misread what was happening? Is God still going to fulfill them?" But when Joseph tells the baker and the cup-bearer that to God belongs the interpretation, I think there's a sense here too where he's reminding himself that to God belongs all the promises that he's made. That he can cling to what God has said. I think sometimes we can be in the same state of confusion where we wonder, "Is God still going to make good on his promises? Is God still going to do what we thought he was going to do?" Maybe that's just from some figurative dreams that we've had where we've thought something about our own lives and desires and yet God is not doing them for us. He's not fulfilling. Our lives are not turning out the way we had imagined for ourselves. Those are moments where we can be caused to question our wonder, "Is God still for our good?"

I especially think when sometimes when our lives are not going the way we imagined, but we can look around and see all these other non-believers around Our lives are going better than ours. Where they're getting the nice lives of success, of seemingly happiness and contentment, of wealth, of prosperity, of health. While we're here, those who trust God, we're not getting all those things. Those can be moments where we can start to question, "Is God still for our good?" But I think Joseph, he reveals to us that real faith doesn't just come when everything happens according to plan. Real faith is brought about and tested when nothing goes according to plan. When we're confronted with this question, "Will we still cling to God's promises because we believe him to be true and we're not just holding out on the blessings that we want from I think there's maybe a side point here too that I sometimes wonder, "Would it be nice if God just gave us dreams like Joseph and the chief officials?" Sometimes I look at Joseph and I think, "Well, yeah, he could wait. It was easy for him because he had dreams. He had specific dreams of what was going to happen to his life, but we don't have that." Maybe some of us do. I think God still can and maybe does work through dreams, but I think by and large the most of us, we're not given these amazing dreams from heaven that we're 17 years old, that we're certain are God's promises for our lives and we can just cling to them.

You ever wonder that? Wouldn't it be easier if God just gave us a dream, a vision of what he wanted to do in our life, then I could cling to his promises. But just kind of think about that for a little bit. If God actually gave us a dream, a vision of what he was going to do with our lives would that really alleviate our questioning, our waiting, our suffering?

Maybe in the beginning you would have this clear dream to say, "Well, God showed me this was going to happen. God told me this was going to be true, so I can cling to that." But over time, especially if you had to wait 11 years like Joseph, you may start to question, "Well, was that actually a dream from God? Was that actually true? Did I misread the signs? Did I misinterpret it?" Or maybe we may even question, "Is God even still there? Has he forgotten us?" Yeah, I don't know if a dream would actually solve our problems in our waiting. I don't know if having even a prophetic word over us would solve all the issues of waiting upon God. But I do think we do have something better than dreams and prophecies in our waiting. We have something that God has revealed about himself and In the Word of the Lord. Because in the Word, we're told that we can trust in God and we can trust our last points that God has not forgotten us. God has not forgotten us, even though it may feel like everyone around us has.

See the word, it reminds us that though our lives may not be going according to plan, though nothing's happening the way we desired, as much as there are smaller things that may be up for interpretation in God's word, the main things are not. There's no question whether or not God loves us and remembers us. There's no question in the Word of the Lord whether God is going to come back and restore all things according to his plan. There's no question of whether or not God is still in control or if he is still good. Now we have the assurance of that because of what he says in his word, but there's another certainty of that because all of God's promises have been secured in Christ. Beyond just seeing the Joseph story as some moral story about what we should do to be like Joseph, as we've seen all throughout, it's actually a story that points to the greater Joseph in Christ and how we can trust in him. See because Jesus, Jesus is the one who died to show us God's love, to pursue us and show kindness to us. In Jesus, he came once before as a man in humility to promise that he would come again in all his glory. There's no question about God's word and his promises because Jesus shows that even in injustice, even in his death, it's for the purpose of bringing about his ultimate good and he's still in control.

You know, Jesus is the assurance that God has not forgotten us in our waiting because even Jesus had to wait on God for deliverance and he didn't get it immediately. Jesus had to wait in the midst of his suffering and injustice when he was waiting on God, pleading in the garden three times for God to remove the cup from him. Jesus waited on the cross where he cried out to God, "Why have you forsaken Jesus even waited in death in the tomb when he was waiting on resurrection life. See, and Jesus himself didn't receive redemption until after his suffering and death. We may never know the specifics of why God brings us into times of waiting, why God calls us to suffer. But I think one thing is clear is that the road to God's purposes is through waiting and especially suffering. The road to glory and blessing is through a road of suffering. Something that Joseph reveals to us, I think the whole of the Joseph story is dealing with the question of the blessing of the Abrahamic covenants, where God has dealt with the land and the offspring, about the blessing for Israel and the nations. And it's one of immense suffering for Joseph, but eventually he gets there and we'll see that in the coming weeks.

I think also Jesus makes that abundantly clear that the road to blessing and glory is through death and suffering. I think that's a literal thing. We know that to be true. I remember when I was teaching my daughter for the very first time a couple years ago about heaven, we were talking about how heaven's a great place We'll love to be there. Everything that we're sad about won't be there anymore. All the hurts, all the boo-boos we have will be gone. And my daughter said, "Well, I want to go to heaven right now." I said, "Well, I do too, but I don't want you to go to heaven right now because the only way to get there is when we die." And she started to get really scared. "Well, I don't want to die." I said, "A lot of people don't want to die, but the way to get there is through And we know that's the road to eternity. That's true literally. That's something that's very clear in scripture. But I also wonder if that's true in a figurative sense too. That the way to enjoy the blessings of God of eternity is dying to the temporary. The road to enjoying God's eternal blessings is death to the temporary and earthly blessings. So could it be that God's purpose in our waiting and suffering is to cause us to die to the things we want in this world and cause our hearts to ache and yearn for another world? Could it be that in our long suffering God is trying to reveal to us that he does have a greater purpose and plan for us and it's not going to be found in things going our way on If we never had to wait and we got everything we wanted immediately, we might never ache for another world, a greater blessing in heaven.

Sometimes I think being a parent, I just want God to be a bulldozer parent for me or lawnmower parent. You ever hear that The bulldozer or the lawnmower parents. It's a form of parenting where you just bulldoze everything in your child's path that may hurt them or cause them to suffer. Because if I'm a good parent and I love my kids, I don't want them to

suffer. So anything in their path that may get in the way, I'm just going to bulldoze it down so they have a clear path to thriving and success. Sounds like a great thing. Sometimes I think to God, well, if you were a good father, why don't you just bulldoze all the bad things in my path? Why don't you just knock down all the suffering so I don't have to? If you don't do that, you must not be good. You know what's interesting? There's been a lot of research coming out about parenting, this parenting style, that's revealed that bulldozing for kids is actually creating an entire generation without resilience because they're not used to waiting for things. They're used to getting things immediately on what they want right now. There's a lot of people saying that, that we have a whole generation that can't see past the suffering right in front of them because they don't know how to And sit with it and trust that eventually things will work out.

So, you know, we don't want God to be a bulldozer parent over us. Maybe in our waiting and suffering, God is creating spiritual resilience in us to remember that while this suffering is here, even for a lifetime, there is an eternity beyond that's far better. Where God is not just going to pave an easy path for us, but he wants to cause us to long and yearn, to remember that he has not forgotten us, so we should cling to Christ and his promises. And we can trust that even in waiting and confusion and uncertainty and despair, he is still good because he is still God.