

Sermon Notes 7/4/21

“The Affliction of Joseph”

How should we respond to Genesis chapter 40?

1. Serve others with _____.

Genesis 40:4, 6-7

Mark 10:42-45

2. Share God’s word with _____.

Genesis 40:8

2 Timothy 3:16-17

3. Remember the _____ of Christ.

Genesis 40:14-15

1 Peter 2:21-24

1 Corinthians 11:23-25

4. Remember that God _____.

Genesis 40:23

Isaiah 49:14-16



“Joseph son of Jacob, in jail” by Mariano Barbasan (1864-1924, Spain)

Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 40: July 4-11

Genesis 40

In Genesis chapter 40, Joseph has been in prison for several years, still trusting God and believing that God will fulfill the dreams he had back in chapter 37. In this time of affliction, God continues to shape Joseph into the leader he needs to be.

Read Genesis 40:1-23

1. What did the Pharaoh's cupbearer and the baker do in verse 1?

We don't know how many years Joseph was a slave in Potiphar's house or how many years he was in prison, but the total amount of time he spent in both places was 13 years. Joseph was 17 years old when he was sold into slavery (37:2). He was 30 years old when he released from prison to serve the Pharaoh (41:46).

2. Where were the cupbearer and the baker confined? (40:2-3)

As with the previous chapter, we see the providence of God guiding the events in Joseph's life (both good and bad) to accomplish a greater redemptive purpose for His people. Paul Kissling believes that the "captain of the guard" in this chapter is Potiphar, who was identified as the "captain of the guard" in 39:1. He writes,

While we do not know what caused Pharaoh's anger, providentially they were imprisoned in the very prison which Potiphar, who was captain of the guard, oversaw; the same prison where Joseph had risen to a position of prominence! Joseph might be a slave and a prisoner, but he is associating with the most powerful people in Egyptian society.¹

3. What task did the captain of the guard give to Joseph in verse 4?

4. What did both the cupbearer and the baker experience on the same night in verse 5?

¹ Paul Kissling, *The College Press NIV Commentary: Genesis Volume 2* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2009), 462.

5. What did Joseph ask the cupbearer and the baker when he saw that they were troubled? (40:6-7)

Kent Hughes shares how God used the trials in Joseph's life to develop his heart and teach him to serve others with compassion and empathy.

Joseph's compassionate question to his sad charges displayed a striking contrast to what he had been as a seventeen-year-old, because (though he had been guileless and transparent) his interaction with his brothers revealed insensitivity on the level of a self-centered child. But now, though he had every reason to ignore the feelings of his fellow inmates, he was tender and solicitous of their feelings. It is apparent that what Joseph had experienced in the famous ups and down of his own life had made him unusually sensitive and compassionate toward others.²

6. What did Joseph say when the cupbearer and the baker complained about having no one to interpret their dreams? (40:8)

Even before he offered to interpret the dreams, Joseph gave God the glory for his gift. Dennis Prager observes,

Regarding one's special talents as gifts from God has two important moral benefits. The first is humility. Seeing one's talents as gifts from God is the antidote to arrogance... The second moral benefit of regarding one's special talent a gift from God is that one will use it in the service of God, not just in the service of self.³

7. What happened in the cupbearer's dream? (40:9-11)

8. What interpretation did Joseph give for the cupbearer's dream? (40:12-13)

9. What did Joseph ask the cupbearer to do for him in verse 14?

10. What did Joseph say about the injustice of his situation in verse 15?

² R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 469.

³ Dennis Prager, *The Rational Bible: Genesis* (Washington, DC: Regnery Faith, 2019), 458-459.

Joseph believed that God was still at work in his life, but he didn't sit back and expect God to do all the work. He knew that God wanted him to look for and act on the opportunities God was giving him.

Kissling comments:

Joseph sees enough of the big picture to ask that the cupbearer mention him to Pharaoh so that Pharaoh would release him from "this [prison] house." Somehow Joseph knew that he was placed in the home of Potiphar with such close connections to Pharaoh and that this could well be the means of his gaining his freedom. Joseph is thus portrayed as being quite sensitive to God's working behind the scenes in guiding the circumstances of his life no matter how unfair, irrational, and chaotic those circumstances might seem on the surface.⁴

11. What did the baker decide to do when he saw that Joseph gave a favorable interpretation to the cupbearer's dream? (40:16)
12. What happened in the baker's dream? (40:16-17)
13. What kind of interpretation did Joseph give for the baker's dream? (40:18-19)
14. According to verse 20, what was special about the third day?
15. What did Pharaoh do to the cupbearer in verse 21?
16. What did Pharaoh do to the baker in verse 22?
17. What did the cupbearer do in verse 23?
18. What aspects of Joseph's life remind us of Jesus?
19. What should we do when we are suffering from injustice and there is nothing we can do to escape or change the situation?
20. How can you serve someone with compassion this week?
21. How will you share God's word with someone this week?

⁴ Kissling, *The College Press NIV Commentary: Genesis Volume 2*, 466.