

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (April 16, 2023)

For Personal or Group Study

Joseph rose from the pit in the desert to Pharaoh's palace not because of what he did, but because of who he knew. We all know that it's always good to know someone in high places, right? How much higher can you get than God? Joseph trusted that God would use his circumstances for ultimate good. We see it in Joseph's life in today's lesson and we will see that God will use him for His ultimate good in the future. Yes, Joseph thrived in his lifetime and was instrumental in reuniting his family. Yet, God's plan for Joseph's life wasn't fulfilled until hundreds of years after his death. In Exodus we read that after Joseph died, the Israelites grew in number in Egypt. Moses was born and years later the 12 tribes and God's chosen nation of Israel was established. And you can trace it all back to Jacob, his sons, the truly ultimate faithfulness of Joseph. Not a bitter and resentful Joseph. Not a revengeful and hateful Joseph, but the faithful Joseph, through both good and the bad, the successes and failures, all of the circumstances and events throughout his life. God still uses people in incredible ways. He changes lives when we least expect it. He uses people and situations for His good. God is sovereign. Think about where you are in your lives today. The people who have helped to mold you, and to shape you. The good and the not so good. The life changing situations you may encounter and have already experienced - God uses them all and will continue to do so if we just trust in Him. God always makes a way when there seems to be no way.

From Pit to Prison to Palace

SERMON PASSAGE: Portions of Genesis 41:1-40

41 When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream: He was standing by the Nile, ² when out of the river there came up seven cows, sleek and fat, and they grazed among the reeds. ³ After them, seven other cows, ugly and gaunt, came up out of the Nile and stood beside those on the riverbank. ⁴ And the cows that were ugly and gaunt ate up the seven sleek, fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up. ⁵ He fell asleep again and had a second dream: Seven heads of grain, healthy and good, were growing on a single stalk. ⁶ After them, seven other heads of grain sprouted—thin and scorched by the east wind. ⁷ The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven healthy, full heads. Then Pharaoh woke up; it had been a dream. ⁸ In the morning his mind was troubled, so he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them for him.

⁹ Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, "Today I am reminded of my shortcomings. ¹² Now a young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. We told him our dreams, and he interpreted them for us, giving each man the interpretation of his dream. ¹⁴ So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was quickly brought from the dungeon. When he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came before Pharaoh. ¹⁵ Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." ¹⁶ "I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."
³³ "And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt. ³⁴ Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. ³⁷ The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials. ³⁸ So Pharaoh asked them, "Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?"
³⁹ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. ⁴⁰ You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you."

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. Imagine you are Joseph. As this chapter begins, you have been in prison at least two years. How are you feeling? Weary, Angry, Desperate, Resigned, Forgotten, Optimistic.
2. What quality in Joseph's life stands out the most? Patience, Humility, Faithfulness, Trust.
3. Have you suffered for things that weren't your fault or when life was unfair? How did it feel? How did God make things right?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

4. How did Joseph resist the temptation to take pride in his abilities? When have you likewise given God the credit for something He has done in your life?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

5. Which of Joseph's qualities while in prison do you need in your life?
6. How do you feel God usually gives you guidance? Dreams or visions, Scripture, Prayer, Circumstances, Counsel from other Christians, Common Sense.
7. When was a time you wondered if God had forgotten you?
8. What have you found helpful when going through tough times?