

CCLEB SERMON

NOTES

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 15, 2026
GENESIS 40:1-23

MATT KORFF

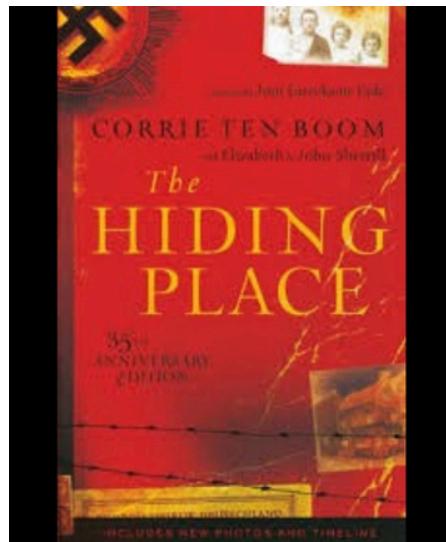
HANG IN THERE



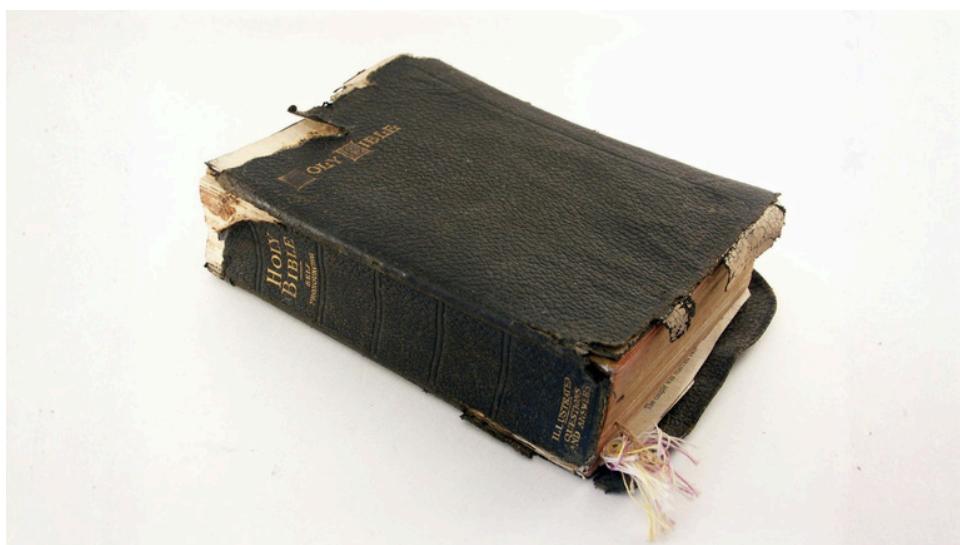
About a week ago, I had a dream that I arrived here at church early (about 6:30am) to present this message. I laid back in the truck for just a moment, then, when I opened my eyes the clock said 11:11am. In a panic, I tried to rush into the church, to apologize profusely for having missed two services already. Unlike the dreams in our story today, there was no interpreter, and now that I am here with you this morning I can successfully say: It was just a dream.



In her book *The Hiding Place*, Corrie Ten Boom recounts the time that she and her sister were whisked away from their father during WWII, and taken into a concentration camp. With all the horror and aimless misery, Corrie struggled to understand what God was doing.



When they arrived at the camp, somehow they were able to smuggle a Bible in with them. The guards would typically leave them alone at night, and this gave opportunity for the residents to hold Bible study.



In Corrie's words, they were "like waifs clustered around a blazing fire... the blacker the night around us grew, the brighter and more beautiful burned the Word of God."



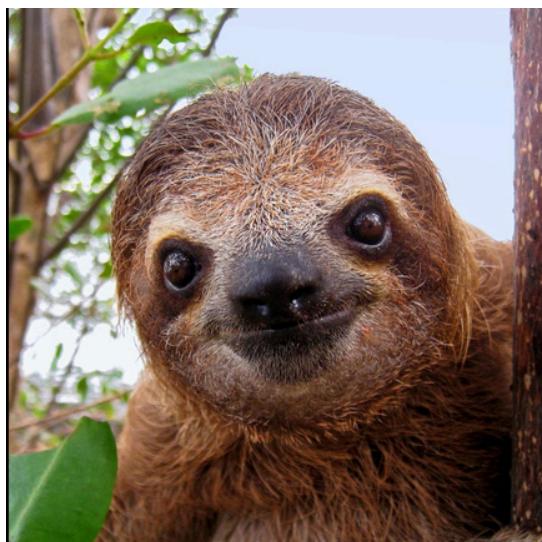
One day, Corrie's sister reminded her of **1 Thessalonians 5:18**, "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." She went on to pray with Corrie, thanking God for the things one can be grateful for in a concentration camp. Surely a small list. Then her sister prayed, "God, thank You for the fleas."

That was it for Corrie. There was no way she was going to thank God for the fleas. Not only was the camp terrible, but the fleas?



I imagine Joseph was feeling similar to Corrie Ten Boom about this time.

Verse 1: As we have been studying these last several weeks, Joseph went from being a favorite child, to a slave, now to a prisoner in the house he was a slave in. **Verse 1a** "Some time later". 3 words you never want to hear in prison. By this time, Joseph had already been a slave for about 11 years, and now we begin the chapter with "some time later." Think of what we miss going from **chapter 39** to **chapter 40**. I would love to have seen some of Joseph's prayers during that time. Would it have looked like Job's? Would it have looked like Christ's?



Nevertheless, some time later two of Pharaoh's officials (the cupbearer and the baker) enter the story.

Verse 2-4: The text tells us that Pharaoh is angry at them, but it doesn't tell us why. It can be assumed, that since the cupbearer (cupbearer) was typically the one to check food and drink for poison, something bad made it to Pharaoh.



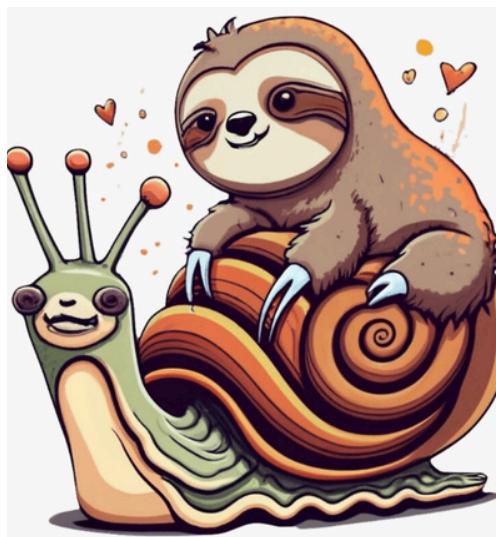
I wouldn't think it would be poison, since Pharaoh is still alive, but there is a Jewish Midrash (commentary) that speculates there was a stone in pharaoh's bread or something like that.



Now, obviously the baker would make the food, but that would have to pass through the cupbearer before Pharaoh sank his teeth into it. So, it seems the reason for the prison sentence, and the subsequent consequences was that Pharaoh was trying to figure out who was in on the plot. Did it just happen to slip by the cupbearer, or was he the culprit? Stay tuned.



But again, there is a second pesky phrase, "quite some time." Some time later the officials come in, then quite some time later we find out why. Has Joseph been forgotten? Forgotten by his family, his homeland, forgotten by God, or is this a Divine setup.



Verse 4: Hebrew says, the captain of the guard appointed them to Joseph and he ministered to them. This is the same word used for the work done in the Tabernacle and Temple. Joseph was doing ministry at the lowest point of his life.



Verses 5-7: Now you can see why my dream troubled me last week. It wasn't that I thought my dream might come true, it was that the particular passage I was wrestling with was about vivid dreams coming true, and most dreams I don't even remember, but this one was clear as day.

What interests me about Joseph is that he notices the officials are pretty downcast that particular day. I would think they would be downcast every day, going from a high-official to a prisoner in the house of the captain of the guard (prison). And as pastor Duane said last week, the Captain of the guard is a high official of Pharaoh, and keeps the political offenders in his prison. But Joseph was so in tune to these two officials, since he had been given charge over them, that he noticed the difference. Who has God given you charge over? Do you notice them? Maybe it is your children. Maybe you manage some employees. Maybe you are over a ministry, students, hospice. Whomever it may be, God has appointed you to take notice and minister to them, when times are good and times are bad.

Verse 8: Ok, I think it is important to notice that Joseph was confident that God would give him the interpretation. He doesn't take credit as the one who had the ability, but gives all glory to the one Who gave him the ability **1 Corinthians 4:6-7**

Joseph understood what Paul would write over 1,000 years later. And who knows, maybe Paul got this principle from this very Scripture.



The Corinthians were probably skipping church when certain speakers would come to speak, and were eager to be there when their favorite speaker was there. Joseph, knowing the tendency of people to praise a gift rather than the gift Giver, heads off any confusion at the beginning of this exchange.



Today, if you receive a word from God that is because God has spoken. In the book of Numbers, God spoke through a donkey. It shouldn't be the donkey that receives glory, but the God Who opened its mouth.

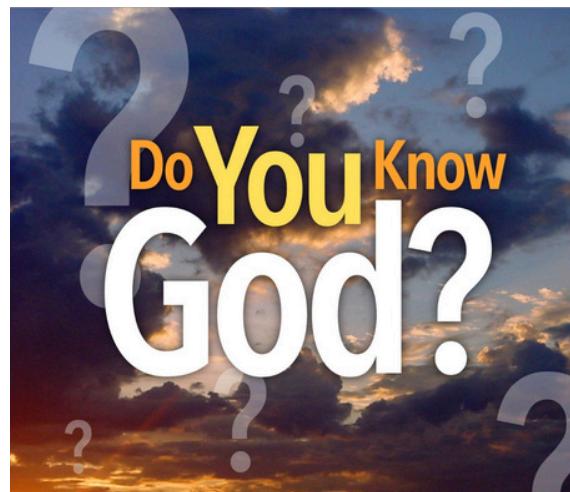
But here also, I think we can see something a little more precious about Joseph. **Verses 6-8:** Joseph notices they are downcast, and asks why, so that he has the opportunity to tell them about his God. I think Joseph has been wondering around this prison, silently ministering to these officials, looking for an opportunity to share his faith with them. At the lowest point of his life.

Then, without questioning Joseph, they share their dreams.

Verses 9-19: Something tells me that the baker was looking a bit more downcast than the cupbearer. And I mean before he even told Joseph his dream, because it wasn't until he saw that Joseph gave a favorable interpretation to the cup bearer that he was willing, and eager, to share his dream.



What is also interesting about these two dreams, is that by reading the cup bearer's dream, you can tell that it is going to end well. On the other hand, just by reading the baker's dream, you can tell that it is not going to end well. In fact, I dare say they didn't even need an interpreter to know what the dreams meant, they needed someone who knew God to tell them whether the dreams would come to pass.



Now, I am not a dreamer or an interpreter of dreams, but I would encourage anyone who believes they have had a dream from God to share it with Godly counsel. In the Bible, dreams came through an angel or an interpreter, so it can only be a good thing to seek counsel with Godly dreams. Daniel and Jesus' earthly father Joseph had angels to interpret their dreams. These officials, Pharaoh in the next chapter had Joseph to interpret their dreams. Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar had Daniel to interpret their. If a pastor or mentor tells you that the dream is not from God, you may have just been nervous about something like I was last week. Or had too much Taco Bell, that happens to me from time to time.



What I would like to focus in on here is **Verses 14-15**

Here we finally get a look into the heart and emotions of Joseph. By this time, we could be reading the story of Joseph and just thinking he is singing kumbaya as he goes through these terrible experiences. The reason it looks like that is because we keep getting phrases like: "some time later," "quite some time later," or, in the next chapter "two years later." This has been a terrible 11 years of Joseph's life, but as pastor Duane pointed out, Joseph nevertheless remains obedient to God, even in his hardest times.

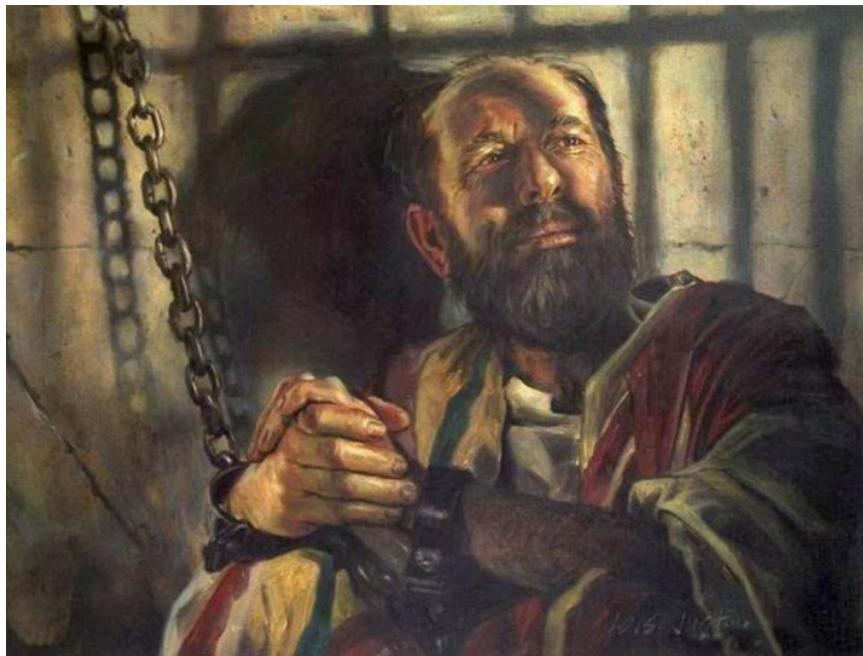


At 17 years old (in our world, not even graduated from high school) he is hated by his brothers. Left in a pit to die, but through a series of “fortunate” events sold into slavery instead. He goes from fancy robes his father gave him as a favorite to a lowly slave. While in slavery, he is almost raped, then thrown into prison. He is scared, threatened, forgotten, hungry, tired, alone.



In spite of all these fleshly feelings, these nagging thoughts, he holds on to the one Who can never be taken away from him, God. Can a walk with God feel lonely, yes. Can a walk with God feel scary, yes. Can you feel threatened, forgotten, hungry, tired, alone, yes. Listen to what Paul says in **2 Corinthians 11:16-33**

Like Paul, Joseph’s life was not easy. Of course he would ask that the chief cupbearer would remember him before Pharaoh. You know, in some Jewish teaching, this is a failure on Joseph’s part, to ask the cupbearer to remember him before Pharaoh. They say that Joseph, in a point of weakness, sought to put his fate into the hands of Pharaoh (a gentile) instead of the hands of God.



I can see that. How many times have we entrusted ourselves to a particular political entity, policy, or government agency? Chuck Colson, who came to know Jesus in prison after the Watergate scandal was often quoted as saying, “Salvation will not come on Air Force 1.” **Proverbs 21:1** says, “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water, He turns it wherever He will.”

But if it was true that Joseph sinned by asking this, it would seem to imply that it would be sinful to ask things in prayer that God has different plans for. I think God wants us to ask for things and He will shape us with the outcome.



Anybody out here know the number of unanswered prayers that have been asked in this world? O. God's answers are 1. Yes, 2. No, 3. or wait. I don't think Joseph is not praying to God that He will release him from prison. I would even venture to say that Joseph saw these officials, and the restoration of Pharaoh's cupbearer as a sign from God that he was going to get out of prison. God's answer?



Well, **verse.20-23**: God's answer to Joseph: Wait. Think of the excitement Joseph must have felt when the cupbearer left the prison. "Surely tomorrow I am going home." Then tomorrow comes. Perhaps Joseph thought, "Well, maybe it will take a day or so for the baker to be hanged and the cupbearer to reconcile with Pharaoh, but by next week. Next week comes, then goes. The next month comes, then goes. A year goes by, still there. How long until Joseph finally began to realize he is not going home.



Do you ever feel like you are forgotten by God? This chapter is bookended by “After some time,” and “forgot all about Joseph, never giving him another thought.” Have you been praying for something, looking for signs, but it just vanishes in front of you? Welcome to the story of Joseph.

But the story doesn’t end in **chapter 40**. Spoiler alert, Joseph does get released from prison. Things go well for him, better than ever. He saves, not only his family, but the whole world. But this, brothers and sisters, this is what Joseph learned: God’s timing is better than my timing. God’s timing is better than your timing.



Verses 14-15: Joseph’s request was a legitimate request, but he could not see all ends. Pretend for a moment that Joseph got what he wanted when he wanted it. The cupbearer is restored to his position, then the next day Joseph is allowed to go home. Then, after 7 years of plenty, he, his family, and the whole world die of a famine. Sure, Pharaoh had a dream about it, but there was no one who knew God to interpret it for him. Pharaoh was warned, but like my dream last week, Pharaoh believed it to be just that, a dream. Too much Falafel. You and I would not be here today, why, because it says the whole world was affected by that famine.



Joseph’s timing was the wrong timing, God was holding his prayer for something much much better that would affect many more than the narrow focus of Joseph’s prayer.

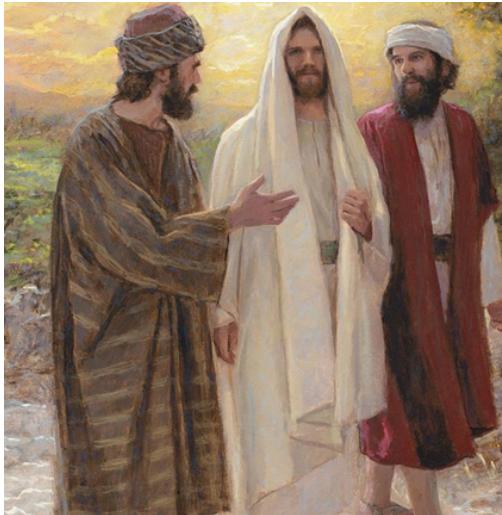
“Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you,” Corrie Ten Boom’s sister repeated to her. Reluctantly, Corrie got on her knees with her sister, and they prayed, “God, thank You for the fleas,” but Corrie was certain that this time, her sister was wrong. At the lowest point in their lives, these sisters held Bible studies at night when the guards were away. Leading other women at the lowest point of their lives to Christ. But why did the guards leave them alone at night? Corrie later found the reason: They were afraid of the fleas.

God allowed the fleas so the guard would leave them alone so they could hold Bible study.

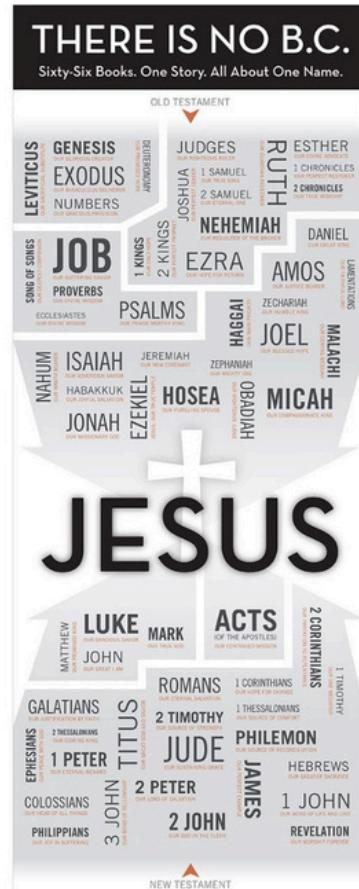
As you go about the week, and reflect on this chapter of Joseph's life, remember these things:

1. God always answers prayer. Sometimes it is just "wait."
2. God's timing is always better than your timing.
3. God uses our brokenness to shape us.
4. His power is perfect in our weakness.
5. Thank God for the fleas.

So as we close, in **Luke 24**, Jesus had just risen from the dead. He came alongside two of His disciples who were looking pretty gloomy. Probably looked very similar to the cupbearer and baker when Joseph saw them. In the same way as Joseph, Jesus asks them (and I am paraphrasing here), "Why do you look so sad?" The disciples, not recognizing Him, say to Him, "Are You not from around here? Everyone has heard about the prophet Jesus Who was killed just days ago.



We really hoped that He was the one to restore Israel, but, just another prophet." Then Jesus chides them saying, "O foolish and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?" Then, it says (and this is a direct quote), "And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."



Emmaus is a 7 mile walk from Jerusalem where they began this trek, would have taken a couple hours to walk. Beginning with Moses includes Genesis. I bet this story is one of those Jesus interpreted to them. Listen to the connections:

- Joseph ministers to the cupbearer and baker so he has an opportunity to share God-Emmaus
- Joseph went from most beloved son to lowest slave.
- The term “3rd day” is mentioned 5 times in this chapter.
- A baker bakes bread, a cupbearer bears wine-communion
- **Galatians 3:13** tells us that Christ took our curse because he was hanged on a tree. Hebrew explicitly says that the baker was hanged on a tree.
- The baker is hanged on a tree, and the cupbearer is restored. Jesus’ body was broken—hanged on a tree—and His blood is what buys us restoration with God.
- Finally, both were servants who saved the world.

Whatever hardship we face as followers of Christ, God’s best gift is yet to come, and it is found in Christ.