

Back In Prison
Genesis 40

Back In Prison

Begin with prayer

Read: Genesis 40

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Dear God,

When we feel forgotten and overlooked, anchor us in the truth that You have not forgotten us. Teach us to give You all the glory.

Amen



Joseph's Life in Prison



Genesis 40

Why was it the will of God that Joseph be in prison at this time?

We're about to find out. Around this time, the butler to the king of Egypt and his baker had done something that landed them in the same prison where Joseph was. Remember this was Pharaoh's prison. **This was not a coincidence.**

Joseph was already in a good position, even here in the prison. **Because God gave him favor, everywhere he went, Joseph's ability was recognized** (see *Proverbs 18:16*). God was moving in his life with a very definite purpose.

Joseph got to know the baker and the butler because the guard gave him the responsibility to take care of them while in prison. That's how Joseph came to know that both the butler and the baker had a dream one night, but they were sad because no one could tell them what their dreams meant.

Purpose of Dreams in the Old Testament

Joseph offered, "Don't interpretations come from God? Tell me the dreams." He says that God, not humans, knows the meaning of dreams. But by asking them to tell him their dreams, he implies that God will help him understand their meaning.

Even in this, Joseph gives God all the glory. We learn a valuable lesson from this young man. **Anything we do for the Lord should be done for God's praise.** We're not blessed as much as the Lord would like to bless us because **when He gives us something wonderful, we take it for granted and don't give God the glory.** Joseph models the right response.

God used dreams in the Old Testament in a unique way, because the whole canon of Scripture wasn't complete. **We don't need dreams the same way today because God speaks to us through His Spirit and through His Word.**

But in that day, God used dreams and symbols that were familiar to them to teach them something about Himself and His purposes.



God's Interpretation of Dreams & The Outcome

The butler told his dream about a vine and branches to Joseph. He was familiar with the symbols of serving wine to Pharaoh. God gave Joseph the ability to interpret his dream and promised the butler that he would be restored in three days.

Then he asked the butler a favor. Would he put in a good word for him with Pharaoh? Would he help him get out of prison? Joseph told him a bit of his story and asked, **"Please don't forget me."** The record doesn't say, but the butler probably promised he would speak to Pharaoh on Joseph's behalf.

Next, Joseph heard the baker's dream that was full of practical symbols of his profession - baskets of food and feeding birds. Joseph's explanation brought bad news. He said that in three days, the baker would be taken out and hanged, and the birds would eat his flesh.

Three days later, it was the Pharaoh's birthday, and he threw a party for all his servants. On that day, he restored the butler and hanged the baker, just as Joseph had said.

The butler was freed from prison, but he forgot all about Joseph. **The one small hope Joseph had, that the butler would remember him to Pharaoh, was lost.**

God's Purpose in Letting Joseph be in Prison

God wanted to leave Joseph in the prison for a purpose. If Joseph had been released from prison then, he likely would have returned to Israel. But now, when the time comes for Joseph to interpret Pharaoh's dream, they won't have any problem finding him.

In spite of the discouragement, **Joseph believed God was moving in his life.** Joseph was faithful in every relationship of his life. He was faithful to Potiphar. In prison he was faithful to the keeper of the prison. He was faithful to God, always giving Him the glory. He would soon be faithful to Pharaoh, and he would be faithful to his own brothers. **Joseph's faith in God made him faithful.**

Joseph's faith in God allowed him to have an optimistic outlook on life, even under all his trials. His faith made him sympathetic and kind toward everyone, including this baker and butler, and someday he would be kind to his brothers.

His faith also made Joseph humble. He gave God the glory for all his achievements. He believed in God, as his great-grandfather Abraham had believed Him, **and this faith produced blessing in his life.**

So we leave Joseph, forgotten in prison. **But God hasn't forgotten him, and He is at work in his life.**



If you are His child, He is permitting things to happen to you for your own good.

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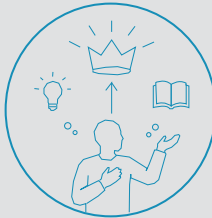
God's Eternal Truths

Relevant to us from Genesis 40

1

All wisdom, interpretation, and useful service come from God and must return to His glory:

Joseph would not take credit for interpreting dreams. He openly confessed that the answer belonged to God. Whatever gifts, insight, or success the Lord gives us are to be received humbly and used so that God, not self, is honored. (Genesis 40:8; Daniel 2:28; James 1:17; 1 Peter 4:10-11)



2

Human beings may forget us, but God never forgets His servants:

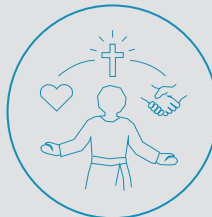
The butler forgot Joseph, but God did not. Delays, silence, and disappointment do not cancel God's purposes. When people fail us, God is still faithfully at work. (Genesis 40:14, 23; Isaiah 49:15-16; Psalm 105:17-19)



3

Faith in God produces faithfulness and kindness in every relationship :

Joseph's faith made him trustworthy in responsibility and compassionate toward others, even in suffering. True faith produces consistency, integrity, and kindness, even when no one is watching. (Genesis 39:4-6, 21-22; Genesis 40:6-7; Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 3:23-24)



Reflection Questions

Question 1

Giving God Glory: When you succeed or are recognized, do you tend to take credit, or do you acknowledge God as the source? How can you intentionally give God glory in your work, conversations, or achievements this week?

Question 2

Being Forgotten: Have you felt forgotten, overlooked, or disappointed by others? How has that affected your trust in God? How can you remain faithful and hopeful while waiting for God's timing?

Question 3

Faithful Character: Are you consistent in your character across different environments - whether seen or unseen? In your current relationships, how can you intentionally show faithfulness, integrity, and kindness this week?



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