

The Story of Joseph: Seeing the Bigger Picture

Week 4: Joseph Thrown into Prison

Scripture:

Genesis 39:19-40:23

Motivation (Why You Need This):

Where are we in Joseph's story?

- Joseph was hated by his brothers – favoritism by his father, coat, dreams
- Joseph was forsaken by his brothers and sold into slavery (ended up as the overseer of Potiphar's house in Egypt)
- Joseph was falsely accused of rape by Potiphar's wife

When we left off last week, we concluded that **Joseph kept doing the right thing even when things went *from good to bad to worse***. Why? He trusted that God knew what He was doing and knows the bigger picture.

Information (What You Need to Know):

Ways we see the Lord work in Joseph's circumstances...

▪ **The Lord was with Joseph in prison (His PRESENCE)**

- ✓ The Lord didn't swoop in and deliver Joseph from false accusations

Genesis 39:19 (ESV) As soon as his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, "This is the way your servant treated me," his anger was kindled. **20** And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison.

- ✓ The Lord was with Joseph, even in trial

Genesis 39:21 (ESV) But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

- The Lord was with him (His presence; Joseph wasn't alone)
- The Lord showed him steadfast love (lovingkindness in troubles)
- The Lord gave favor with the keeper of the prison and a promotion to keeper of the prison

Genesis 39:22 (ESV) And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. **23** The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because the Lord was with him. And whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed.

▪ **The Lord put the right people in Joseph's life (His POSITIONING)**

Genesis 40:1 (ESV) Some time after this, the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and his baker committed an offense against their lord the king of Egypt. **2** And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, **3** and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where Joseph was confined. **4** The captain of the guard appointed Joseph to be with them, and he attended them. They continued for some time in custody.

✓ The cupbearer and baker offended Pharaoh in some way and he was angry

✓ Both were sentenced to prison where Joseph watched over them

“The previous chapter noted that Joseph was given authority within the prison because of his success and the favor of the warden, so here that authority and responsibility extend to serving these two imprisoned officials. Joseph has gone from being a favored son to the servant of imprisoned servants. Surely, this point in his life, Joseph feels he cannot sink much lower.” – Bible Knowledge Commentary

▪ **The Lord used Joseph's gifting of dreams (His PROVISION)**

✓ The cupbearer and baker had troubling dreams, which Joseph told them only God had the interpretations

Genesis 40:5 (ESV) 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. **6** When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were troubled. **7** So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in custody in his master's house, “Why are your faces downcast today?” **8** They said to him, “We have had dreams, and there is no one to interpret them.” And Joseph said to them, “Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell them to me.”

▪ Joseph hears and interprets the cupbearer's dream (and asks for a favor)

○ Joseph hears the dream

Genesis 40:9 (ESV) So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph and said to him, “In my dream there was a vine before me, **10** and on the vine there were three branches. As soon as it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and the clusters ripened into grapes. **11** 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.”

○ Joseph interprets the cupbearer's dream (he'll be restored to his position)

Genesis 40:12 (ESV) Then Joseph said to him, “This is its interpretation: the three branches are three days. **13** 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.

- Joseph asks the cupbearer to remember him when he’s released

Genesis 40:14 (ESV) 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. **15** 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.”

- Joseph hears and interprets the baker’s dream

- Joseph hears the baker’s dream

Genesis 40:16 (ESV) 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, **17** 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 interprets the baker’s dream (it is not good news)

Genesis 40:18 (ESV) And Joseph answered and said, “This is its interpretation: the three baskets are three days. **19** 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.”

- Both interpretations came to pass

Genesis 40:20 (ESV) On the third day, which was Pharaoh’s birthday, he made a feast for all his servants and lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants. **21** He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh’s hand. **22** But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them.

Application (What You Need to Do):

Are things are looking up for Joseph now that he has someone to plead his case?

Genesis 40:23 (ESV) the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

Joseph’s dreams, interpretation of dreams, and kindness get him nowhere...

- Sold by his brothers to some caravanners going to Egypt
- Refusing to compromise his moral standards gets him falsely accused and prison
- Helping a fellow prisoner, who forgets about Joseph when he has the chance

Daily steps in the right direction doesn’t always mean immediate deliverance. Sometimes disappointment precedes deliverance.