



Fulfilment of a Dream

WEEK THREE – PRISON AND PREPARATION

This study starts with a beautiful verse, **chapter 39:21 But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and he gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.**

Our natural reaction to difficult situations is often to ask WHY? And the answer is that we don't know, but God does. It is the point at where we decide to trust God, or we throw in the towel. We looked last week at Daniel and his three friends and how God miraculously delivered them. Throughout Scripture, God promises those who follow him, that he is in control and will make a way for us

Joshua 1:9 Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

2 Corinthians 12:9 My grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness.

Joseph, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego all held on to their integrity (this is who you are when no one is looking), and God honoured them. He will honour you.

Genesis 39:22-23 and 40

Just as Potiphar, initially, had completely trusted Joseph, the keeper of the prison did likewise. Joseph lived out Colossians 3:23: **“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.”** He had no idea how things would work out for him but that didn't stop him from giving of his best.

- Are you trustworthy? Can people rely on you to do what you've said? Can people rely on you to keep their confidences? Think back to when you know you didn't do this. How, afterwards, did you feel about yourself?
- If we have a problem in this area, we need to pray that God will give us wisdom so that he is able to use us in helping others.

We read in chapter 40 about the butler and baker of the king who had both offended him in some way. Their punishment was to be thrown into prison, and Joseph was told by the captain of the guard to serve them. One day Joseph noticed they were both looking a bit down in the mouth, so he asked what the matter was.

- There is a lesson for us here, in that we need to be aware of how others might be feeling. We should not be so wrapped up in our own problems that we cannot see

beyond them. Pray that God will direct us to people who need our help and then act on that direction.

Joseph first interpreted the dream of the butler, telling him that within three days Pharaoh would restore him to his old position. He did make a request of the butler, that on his reinstatement, he would tell Pharaoh about Joseph and how he had been sold as a slave into Egypt.

The baker, having heard the good news for the butler asked Joseph about his dream, thinking to receive good news himself. However, Joseph told him that within three days Pharaoh would have him put to death.

It is important that Joseph had the courage to tell the baker the truth, even though the news was not good.

Within three days, both men received the outcome predicted by Joseph.

- Have you had someone tell you that things in your life are not as they should be, according to God's word? How did you react to this?
- It takes courage and honesty to share God's message when it is not what they want to hear. We should be thoughtful and gentle in how we speak but we should always share only what God has told us.
- People can only accept a message if they have absolute confidence in the messenger.
- The best message is to live out our lives as God's word shows us, so that we help and lead by example.

The last verse of the chapter hints at the disappointment Joseph must have felt: "*Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph but forgot him.*"

- Here is another important lesson for everyone of us. We must keep our word. It is easy to make a promise and then forget so always write down what you have said you will do. It is the only way to gain trust and respect.

How could you forget the man who gave you such life-changing news? We are all very human, lead busy lives, and so on, BUT our word must be our bond.

There is no indication that Joseph did anything different in the face of this disappointment. We too should try not to get hurt when people let us down. We pick ourselves up and move on, asking for God's grace and help because he will never let us down.

One more important message from this chapter.

- We must not allow ourselves to get bitter and disappointed because answers to prayers do not come as and when we think they should!
- Numbers 23:19 tell us: "*God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfil?*"

- Isaiah 55:8-9 reminds us: *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”*

Whatever we go through, God will use it for our benefit and his glory. This is what he was doing with Joseph despite things looking contrary to the fact. God wants to use us all in different ways. To do that, we need be willing and prepare ourselves.

If you have never read Corrie Ten Boom’s book *The Hiding Place*, I would recommend you do so. It shows the triumph of love above the vilest situation of the Nazi concentration camps, and the power of forgiveness.

Whatever God has for you to do, prepare yourself through prayer and reading his word.

Prayer: Thank you Father God for all your wonderful promises. Help me to be willing to do whatever you ask of me.

