

Favor in the sight of the prison keeper

Christ seen in Joseph
(Gen. 39:1-23)

The text of our sermon today is Genesis 39:1-23. I will summarize the first part of this chapter, but I want to read the last few verses with you:

“20 Joseph’s master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison. 21 But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. 23 The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him [Joseph], and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper” (Gen. 39:20-23).

I’ve entitled this message, “Favor in the sight of the prison keeper.”

The Old Testament contains many historical accounts. It contains many prophecies. It contains the whole law that God gave to Israel by Moses. Yet in all of those events and prophecies and in the law itself, the consistent message is the

Son of God who would come from heaven, and come into this world to save His people from their sins. Jesus said “*Moses wrote of me*” (John 5:46). Moses wrote the book of Genesis. What Moses wrote there is about the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “*He wrote of Me.*” That summarizes all of the Old Testament events and prophecies and the whole law. Throughout all of scripture, God teaches sinners about Christ and Him crucified. The Apostle Peter said that the Spirit of Christ who was in the prophets testified before of “*the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow*” (1 Pet. 1:10-11). Therefore, we know that the life of Joseph is a clear and wonderful prophecy and type of the Lord Jesus Christ in His salvation of His people from sin and death and from the devil.

God saved all the land of Egypt from famine through the wisdom and faithfulness of one man, Joseph. God revealed to Joseph in a dream that one day his father and mother and brothers would bow to him. Joseph was true to his God. He was true to his father Jacob. He was true to his twelve brothers. But ironically, when his brothers who sold him into Egypt stood in trial before him, those same conniving brothers defended themselves. They said, “*We be true men*” (Gen. 42:11, 19)! How naturally prone we are to justify ourselves when we ought rather to own our sin that we might find all of our salvation in Christ alone (1 Tim. 1:15). We ought rather to cry as the Publican, “*God! Be merciful to me THE sinner*” (Luke 18:13)! There is

only One who is True and Faithful to God. There is only One who is True and Faithful to His Father. There is only One who is True and Faithful to His brethren, to save His people by own His obedience and sufferings and death which He offered to God in their place! That One is the Lord Jesus Christ! *“Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12)! *“I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war”* (Rev. 19:11). Oh, may God show you and me that Christ alone is able to save because He alone is Faithful and True!

God brought a famine over all of the earth in the days of Joseph. God had a purpose in doing so. He determined to exalt Joseph over all that by him He might save His people (Gen. 50:20). God created this world, and determined before creation, to save His people from death, the great famine brought upon them by their sin. God determined from eternity to exalt His Son as Lord over all that by Him, He might save His people from sin and death. His very name is JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21)! He is the chosen and anointed Christ to accomplish this work of salvation and to be given the kingdom God! God created and preserves this world for one reason: to exalt His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the salvation of His elect. To fulfill this eternal purpose, all of God’s elect were

given to Christ before the world began as His brethren. God the Father has “...*chosen us in Him [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself*” (Eph. 1:4-5). To bring many sons to glory, God made His Son their brother. He prepared a body for Him, a body that was made in the likeness of our sinful flesh (Rom. 8:3), that in His body He might come under their obligations to God and offer Himself for their sins and bring them to God (1 Pet. 3:18). Therefore, in all things, He was compelled (behooved) to be “*made like His brethren that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest for them in things pertaining to God*” (Heb. 2:17).

The famine God brought upon the whole earth in the days of Joseph drove Jacob and his sons to seek food in Egypt. But to get food, they had to go to Joseph. Just so, all who come to Christ in faith, believing that God has made Him the only Savior, and exalted Him alone as Lord of all as our Mediator, that God has done all of this to save His people by Him, all who thus believe Christ, go to Christ alone for this salvation. They starve in their souls until they go to Him and find in Him their all. They do not come by their own will. They do not come by their own works. They are drawn by the Father (John 6:44-45). No one can come to Christ unless God the Father draws them with irresistible, compelling love and grace. Jesus said, “*No man*

can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw (drag) Him” (John 6:44)! When God draws a man to Christ, that man shall come; there can be no failure when the sovereign power of almighty God woos a sinner! But all who come to Jesus for salvation to find their salvation from sin in His sacrifice of Himself in blood; all who come to Jesus to find all of their righteousness before God in His obedience; all who come to Jesus as Lord of all, who alone obtained and gives eternal life according to the will of God, believing in their heart that He is the Lord of all, trusting Him for everything in their salvation, confessing Him as their only Savior and Lord, all sinners so made to look to Christ are saved by Him with an everlasting salvation to the uttermost (Rom. 10:9-13; Heb. 7:25). They shall be made holy and without blame before God in love (Eph. 1:4). They shall be presented to Him in His presence, as sons of God, faultless and with exceeding great joy (Heb. 7:25; Jude 1:24; Rom. 5:10)!

- In Gen. 37:28 and in Genesis 39:1 and following (Gen. 40:15), we learn that Joseph’s brothers sold him to Ishmaelites, who then sold Joseph into bondage of slavery and affliction in Egypt. But as Moses wrote of Christ, so this scripture also speaks of Christ.
 - This historic scriptural account was fulfilled when unbelieving Jews bound and accused and mocked and

delivered Christ to Pilate and the Roman Gentiles to be crucified.

- On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached to those who killed Jesus, saying, “*Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain*” (Acts 2:23). It was their sin, but it was God’s purpose to use their wickedness to save His people from their sins (Acts 4:27-28; Gen. 50:20; Heb. 2:9-10, 14-15)!
- The purpose of God was accomplished when Christ was made under the law, that He might redeem His people who were under the law (Gal. 3:13; 4:4-6). God’s purpose was to redeem His people from their sins and from the curse and bondage of the law (Gal. Acts 13:38-39). Therefore, God the Father sent His Son from heaven into this world. He prepared a body for Him (Heb. 10:7; 1 John 4:9-10). Christ took our nature. In that nature He bore all of the sins of all His people, all those God the Father gave to Him to save, those chosen by God the Father to eternal salvation in Christ. “*As many as were ordained to eternal life believed*” (Acts 13:48). “*We are bound to give thanks to God always for you brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief*”

of the truth: 14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess. 2:13-14; Eph. 1:4). Christ was made under the law to redeem them that were under the law. He was made a little lower than the angels, that by the grace of God, He might taste death for every son, every chosen sinner predestinated God the Father to the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ (Heb. 2:9-10; Eph. 1:4-5).

- (Gen. 39:1-6) In Genesis 39, a captain of Pharaoh’s guard, named Potiphar, bought Joseph as a slave (v1). But Potiphar saw that the LORD was with Joseph. He saw that the LORD made all that Joseph did to prosper (Gen. 39:3). This teaches us several important spiritual truths.
 - God the Father not only sent His Son into the world, but He upheld Him (Isa. 42:6) and made all that Christ did to prosper for the salvation and blessing of His people. Nothing could fail of all that God gave Christ to do, because “*God was in Christ*” (2 Cor. 5:19) reconciling His elect people throughout all the world to Himself. Jesus Christ came to do the will of God (Luke 2:49; John 4:34; John 17:4; 19:30; Heb. 10:7). He did that will. He finished that work. It is now done. It never needs to be repeated. Nothing needs to be added to it. By His work alone, Christ obtained the eternal salvation of all those given to Him to save. “*By*

his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb. 9:12; 5:7-9).

- Just as Potiphar saw that the LORD prospered Joseph in all that he did, in Gospel fulfillment of this history, all who see God’s blessing of eternal salvation in Christ as Savior and Lord, commit their life for all eternity into His hands (Gen. 39:4).
- God blessed Potiphar’s house for Joseph’s sake (Gen. 39:5). In the Gospel fulfillment of this historical account, God gives all spiritual blessings in heaven to all who entrust their all to Christ (Eph. 1:3).
- (Gen. 39:6) *“Potiphar left all that he had in Joseph’s hand. He knew nothing of all that he had, save the bread which he ate.”* Just as God the Father entrusted Christ with the salvation of all of His people, so all believers leave all of their life and all that they have into the trust and care of the Lord Jesus Christ. They do not concern themselves with what they have in themselves, because they are convinced and live on the truth that all that they have is in Christ. As Potiphar, believers do not keep an account of what they have to preserve it or to improve on it, because they know that they have all things in Christ, and that all that they have is only what God has for sinners in Him! *“Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord*

Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1:3). I do not want anything except what God has given sinners in Christ! And yet, I want all that God has promised sinners in Him!! Trusting Christ, as Potiphar trusted all that he had to Joseph, every believer rests in full contentment that the Lord Jesus will keep me and give me all that God gave to Him in promise for His people. The Apostle Paul said, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day” (2 Tim. 1:12).

- (Gen. 39:7-20) Potiphar’s wife falsely accused Joseph. Therefore, Potiphar, Joseph’s master, put Joseph into the dungeon, into prison (Gen. 40:15).
 - Joseph was cast into prison by the false charges of his master’s wife. In Gospel fulfillment, Jesus was falsely accused by unbelieving Israel. They delivered Him into the hands of Pilate and the Gentiles, to be put to death. Potiphar’s wife was unfaithful to him. Unbelieving Israel was the unfaithful wife of the LORD. Their accusations put Christ in prison. They bound Him and delivered Him to be put to death. But because the Lord Jesus, by His own death, paid the debt of crimes His people owed, and because His death made satisfaction to God for His people,

therefore, “*He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who shall declare His generation*” (Isa. 53:8)? All who hold to their own self-righteousness in unbelief, refusing to bow to Christ, and to trust His righteousness alone, are no different than the unbelieving Jews. May God have mercy upon us, and deliver us from that great sin!

- Christ was imprisoned under the sentence of death by false charges. Yet, that sinful act of sinful men was by the will of God (Acts 2:23; 4:27-28; 1 Pet. 2:21-24; 3:17-18). They meant it for evil; God meant it for good, to save much people (Gen. 50:20).
- Christ was imprisoned for God’s elect people. They were indebted to God by their sins against Him. They were under the demands and the curse of God’s law, none of which they could fulfill. Therefore, Christ was made under the law and took their sins on Himself to redeem them from sin and from God’s law.
- Christ gave His life a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28). He gave Himself for the Church (Eph. 5:25), for all those the Father gave to Him to save (John 10:17-18). Who are these? They are made known when they believe as sinners, who find Him to be their all-sufficient Savior (John 6:37; 10:17-18, 29; 17:2, 6, 9-12, 20, 24; Eph. 1:4; 5:25).

- (Gen. 39:21-23) But though Potiphar put Joseph in prison, the LORD was with him. Just so, God the Father was with Christ as our Mediator, throughout all of His life, upholding Him by His Spirit to do His will, to finish His work, and in all of His sufferings. Jesus said, “The Father is with me” (John 16:32). Jesus said this about His Father: “He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him” (John 8:29).
 - The Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father (John 14:10-11). There is a union of essence and nature in the Godhead. God the Father is in the Son. The Son is in the Father. And the Spirit of God is the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son. “*There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one*” (1 John 5:7). The three are co-eternal, co-equal (Ps. 90:2; Php. 2:6). If they were not co-eternal, then the Father could not be the eternal Father, nor the Son the eternal, only begotten Son, who is the express image of His Father (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:15).
 - But Christ is not only God, but man; He is the God-man! The fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily (Col. 2:9). In His life on earth as man, the Spirit of God was in Him “*without measure*” (John 3:34). He was completely filled with the Spirit of God in

abundance, so that God was in Him in all of His fulness.

- As Joseph was put in prison, Christ, our Redeemer, in the human nature of those He came to save (Heb. 2:16), was made under the law. And thus, He was with them in that prison. He gave Himself a ransom to God for their sins. That ransom price was His own blood (Acts 20:28).
- But the LORD gave Joseph favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.
- In the same way, God's own law favors Christ for His obedience in death (Rom. 10:4). He was made under the law that He might fulfill that law in the place of His people. Christ fulfilled the law that held us in prison. He fulfilled and satisfied the prison and the prison keeper from which we could not escape. We have no strength to keep God's law. We have no strength to satisfy God for our sins or give God an answer to Him for one thing of all that He requires of us (Job 9:3). Because Christ was made under the law for us, and because He fulfilled that law to God's great honor; because He satisfied the justice of the law to God's delight (Eph. 5:2), therefore, He found favor in the sight of the law of God. This is taught by Joseph who found favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

- God the Father has put all things into His hand (Matt. 11:27; John 3:35; 8:29; 13:3; 16:15; Heb. 1:2 - Heir of all). Every sinner who looks to Christ and commit himself into His hand for all of his salvation, favors Christ above all, just as the keeper of the prison did, and just as God His Father does (John 5:20-23).
- Christ came under the law because His people were held in that prison for their debt of sin to God (Luke 7:41-50), and therefore, under the curse of the law.
- God's people suffer under the law because they are sinners. But Christ **prospered** under the law. He kept its every precept. He satisfied its full justice. He fulfilled it and magnified it and brought it to its consummate end, its perfection. *“By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified”* (Heb. 10:14-18). *“4 when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons”* (Gal. 4:4-5; Rom. 10:4). As the LORD made all that Joseph did to prosper, so Christ prospered in all that He did under the law, to deliver us from the prison of our sins and God's curse.
- (Gen. 39:22) *“And the keeper of the prison committed all that were in the prison to Joseph's hand.”* God the Father committed His people into the hands of Christ, our

Mediator. Jesus Christ is the Great Shepherd of the sheep. His Father gave His people to Him to save. And His Father, by His Spirit, draws them to Him. Jesus prayed regarding those His Father gave to Him: “*Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him*” (John 17:2; 6:37; John 10:29).

- (Gen. 39:22) “*And whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.*” Joseph was so wise and by the trust given him by the keeper of the prison, took such care of the prisoners, that all that was done in that prison was Joseph’s doing.
 - But in Gospel fulfillment, Jesus Christ is the Surety of His people. They are given to Him by the Father. All that they did in sinning, became His debt of sin to pay. He gave His life a ransom for them (Matt. 20:28; 26:28). All that God required of His people in His law, Christ gladly took obligation to fulfill. Therefore, all that was done by Christ in the days of His flesh as our Surety, is done for His people, and it is counted as theirs.
 - Christ never sinned. He never thought sin. His nature was holy, harmless and undefiled (Heb. 7:26). Yet God imputed the sins of His people to Him (Isa. 53; 2 Cor. 5:21). God counted Him a transgressor by imputation. And Christ lived under the guilt of the sins of His people because, as their Surety, He substituted Himself in their place. He therefore answered God for

all that they did. He answered God's law as a sinner is required to answer it. But as Surety, He alone could fully give an answer of peace to God for all of God's elect prisoners. Though in Himself Christ "*knew no sin*", yet the sins of His people were laid on Him (Isa. 53:6). He bore their sins in His own body on the tree (1 Pet. 2:24). And because He stood before God for them in their place, to give a full answer to God in satisfaction for their sins, and to fulfill all that God's law required of them for obedience, therefore, all that was done in His sin-atonement death and by His justifying obedience, was done by Him, yet done for all of those who were in the prison of God's law, under the curse of it. He paid the ransom price of His own blood, and set the captives free (Luke 4:18; Eph. 1:7). Therefore, all who hear the Gospel and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, wholeheartedly join the chorus of this scripture, that "*all that was done there, He was the doer of it*" (Gen. 39:22)! What a glorious Savior is Jesus our Lord! He was put in prison by false accusation, but it was the will of God. In prison He fully answered all for the prisoners put under His care. All that was done in that prison to satisfy God's demands on sinners for their crimes and to fulfill their righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ was the doer of it. Every believing sinner can now say, "What is true of

my Savior, is true of me!” Christ is the Head. Every believer is a member of His Body. They are one with Him. He stood as the last Adam to obey God’s law and satisfy God’s justice for the sins of His people (1 Cor. 15:22, 45-47).

- (Gen. 39:23) “*The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under Joseph’s hand: because the LORD was with him, and that which Joseph did, the LORD made it to prosper.*” Christ interposed Himself for His people to God. From eternity, He intervened for them to fulfill all God required and all that His justice demanded. This was God’s will. This is why God the Father gave His people to His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is why the Son of God took the nature of the promised seed, those chosen to eternal life and salvation (Acts 13:48; 2 Thess. 2:13-14). This is why He came from heaven. This is why He lived the full life of a man in perfect obedience to God’s law. This is why He died the death of a sinner, fully answering God’s justice in fulfillment of God’s law, in fulfillment of God’s everlasting covenant (Heb. 13:20; Matt. 26:28), removing the curse from them, fulfilling every condition required for God to bless them according to His covenant promises (Eph. 1:3-23). The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ committed all of His elect people to Him. They were in the prison for their sin and the curse of God’s law (Gal. 3:22-23). The Father committed all to His Son, to the

one Mediator between God and men, Jesus Christ the God-man (Heb. 2:10; John 1:14; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:22; 8:6).

- Therefore, the keeper of the prison looked not to any prisoner or any work of all that was put in Joseph's hand. And so every believer, looks only to Christ's obedience for his righteousness before God, and every believer trusts his eternal life into Christ's hands. We do not look to anything for salvation from ourselves, because all has been put into Christ's hand. We cannot contribute one thing to our salvation (Rom. 3:20). Christ must do all. And He has done all. This is why He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:3), because He finished the work His Father gave Him to do (John 19:30). As Joseph was sent to Egypt by the will of God to save much people alive, Christ was sent by God the Father to save His many people from their sins and to give them eternal life (Gen. 50:20). He was blessed by God in all that He did. Though falsely accused, though put in prison, He saved God's prisoners by His substitutionary obedience and death. All was done by Him. As the keeper did not look to anything in the prison, so every believer looks only to Christ, because God the Father looks to Him for His people. The LORD made Joseph to prosper in all that he did. Christ prospered in all that He did. He has obtained the eternal redemption of His people by His own shed blood. He has perfected them

forever by His one offering. God the Father has entrusted Him with His people, His kingdom, His authority, His will and His honor (John 17:1-11; Luke 22:29; Dan. 7:14; Matt. 28:18; Heb. 1:2; John 5:20-23). Every sinner who trusts is discovered to be one of those given to Christ to save. He shall save them to the uttermost that come to God by Him (Heb. 7:25; John 6:37)!