

JOSEPH IN PRISON

- INTRO:** -The same words apply to Joseph in prison as when he was in Potiphar's house: "The Lord was with him... and prospered him!"
 -May we first of all see in Joseph a type of our Lord Jesus Christ sent by God to prepare life and salvation for us.
 -May we second of all see God's calling to us in our trials, disappointments and struggles. We are not alone.
- I. DREAMS AND PROMISES:**
- A. God gives dreams.
1. In the life of Joseph, there are three sets of dreams as God exalts his son.
 2. Two dreams to Joseph his dear child.
 3. Four dreams to heathen men: the butler, baker, and king.
 4. What is the purpose of these dreams? Why to heathen men?
 5. All that God does is in the service of his people, to do them good and save them.
- B. The interpretation of the dreams:
1. As are the dreams, so is the interpretation of the dreams: of God!
 2. Notice that Joseph does not say, "Dreams, who needs them. They are only the fancy of overly imaginative minds."
 3. Joseph acknowledges his faith in God.
 4. Joseph is willing to be the instrument through whom the Lord makes known what will happen.
- C. Promises, promises, promises.
1. The guilt or innocence of the butler and baker are not the issue.
 2. Rather, the dreams and their interpretation are used by God to bring Joseph into contact with the King.
 3. While Joseph waits for the Lord to vindicate and deliver him, he is not passive. He pleads his cause.
 4. A promise is requested that the butler will remember him and his cause before the King.
 5. There is a willful forgetting of the butler's promise, and Joseph languishes for another two years in prison.
- II. DISAPPOINTMENT AND HOPE:**
- A. Joseph was a victim.
1. a victim of his brother's hatred
 2. a victim of Potiphar's wife's treachery
 3. a victim of the butler's willing forgetfulness.
 4. Many times we might feel as victims: bully on school grounds, boss, friend, etc.
 5. We too will have disappointments hoping for marriage, for children, for health, jobs, etc
 6. What patience and submission is needed as we wait for God's will in our lives.
- B. Joseph did not grow bitter.
1. We do not find Joseph complaining, embittered, or wallowing in a "poor me" complex.
 2. Rather we find him living before the face of God 'prospering'.
 3. Joseph is faithful in the tasks God gives to him.
 4. Joseph waits for God to vindicate his cause!
 5. What a type he serves of Jesus Christ our Savior.
 6. What a model of what we are called to do by the grace and Spirit of Christ dwelling in us.
- C. Joseph is made a comforter.
1. Joseph instead of turning inward with bitterness reaches out in compassion to others.
 2. Joseph looks at these two prisoners and asks, "Why are you sad?"
 3. Joseph reaches out in sympathies and offers to help.
 4. II Cor. 1:3-4 teaches that we comfort others with the comfort we have received of God.
 5. May God lead us so that our trials and difficulties enable us to sympathize and reach out to one another.
 6. Joseph is able to speak of his faith in God and is honest in his explaining of the dreams.
- III. GOD IS OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTH**
- A. Patience is needed.
1. We need to say with the Psalmist, "Be still my soul..."
 2. As we look and wait for God to help, we recognize that God is not a genie in a bottle.
 3. Our crosses, struggles, disappointments are in God's plan, which is wise and good.
- B. God shaping and preparing Joseph.
1. As Joseph prays to be set free and go to his father's house, God answers his prayers, but in his own time and way.
 2. The Lord exalts Joseph in prison, just as he did in Potiphar's house.
 3. God was training Joseph in preparation of his future labors
 4. Whether in joys or in sorrows, God is leading with his sovereign and good providence.
- C. The LORD was with Joseph.
1. Sometimes the way of trial can be long and lonely, resulting in anxiety and depression.
 2. But as God's children we can be sure that God's love never fails, his purposes though hidden are good.
 3. There is a day of hope and deliverance!
 4. "Hope in the Lord, ye waiting saints and He will well provide. For mercy and redemption full and free with him abide."
 5. May the Lord give us a spirit that does not become bitter, but rather we reach out to others and to God.