

EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

Message #85

Genesis 41:1-40

The way to being promoted by God, whether on a job, in politics, on a team, in school, in church or in life is by persistent faithfulness. It may mean being faithful through months and months of intense hardship, difficulty and setbacks. But in the end one faithful to God wins.

Joseph was a faithful man of God who was sold as a slave at age 17 (37:2). He would not be promoted until he was 30 (41:46). For 13 years he was a slave and much of this time was spent in a dungeon. But he never wavered in his faithfulness and now he would be promoted to one of the highest levels of anyone in the Bible. Dr. S. L. Johnson called this section “From Prison to Prime Minister” (Study #57, p. 1).

GOD’S FAITHFUL SERVANTS WILL EXPERIENCE MANY HARDSHIPS, DIFFICULTIES AND SETBACKS, BUT THOSE WHO REMAIN FAITHFUL TO HIM WILL EVENTUALLY BE HIGHLY PROMOTED AND ELEVATED BY GOD.

John Calvin said the reason the story of Joseph is so difficult for us is because we do not want to put up with anything difficult for even a short period of time, let alone 13 years. He further says that hardships and difficulties prove faithfulness, which leads to promotion and honor (*Genesis*, p. 318). God’s elevated promotions are not easily earned, nor quickly given.

REALITY #1 — God promotes and elevates His faithful servant by giving revelation that others cannot understand. 41:1-8

These dreams were sent directly from God (41:32) and both woke him up from his sound sleep (41:4, 7). The first dream had a couple of very perplexing elements for an Egyptian Pharaoh: 1) The dream was something negative coming out of the Nile River, which was foreign to the Egyptian mind, because the Nile always stood for success and fertility; 2) The dream was something negative, having to do with cows, which were sacred to the Egyptian goddesses “Hathor” and “Isis”.

REALITY #2 — God promotes and elevates His faithful servant by causing certain authoritative people to recognize His faithful servant. 41:9-15

We begin to see now why God put the cupbearer in the dungeon with Joseph two plus years prior. The thing the cup-bearer remembered about Joseph was not his kind care (40:4, 6-7), but his ability to accurately communicate the revelation of God (41:11-13).

REALITY #3 — God promotes and elevates His faithful servant who continues to give all credit and glory to God. 41:16

There is a noticeable reality in the life of every person God highly promotes - they give the credit and glory to God for whatever is accomplished.

This is true with Joseph, Moses (Exodus 15), David (I Samuel 17:37, 46) and Paul, who taught “neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth increase” (I Corinthians 3:7).

REALITY #4 — God promotes and elevates His faithful servant by giving him an ability to understand and interpret His revelation. 41:17-32

Keep in mind that until this point in time, Joseph’s previous interpretations have not done much positive for him: 1) It got him sold as a slave (Genesis 37:5-11); 2) It got a baker executed (40:22); 3) It got a cupbearer promoted (40:21) while Joseph stayed in jail. Up to this point, Joseph’s faithful communication of God’s Word had not been too advantageous for him. But that was all about to change, right here and now.

REALITY #5 — God promotes and elevates His faithful servant by giving Him an ability to practically apply His revelation. 41:33-36

Joseph not only understood God’s Word, he knew how to properly apply it.

REALITY #6 — God promotes and elevates His faithful servant by causing him to be literally promoted. 41:37-40

For Pharaoh to promote a Hebrew to the second in command of all of Egypt is an absolute miracle of God. Not only did God turn Pharaoh’s mind, but God turned “all servants” minds to accepting it (41:37).

Never again would Joseph sleep in a dungeon. Never again would Joseph wear rags or need a shave. Never again would Joseph eat prison food. **Joseph had stayed faithful to God and now he was being promoted by God.**

You give yourself to carefully understanding and applying God’s Word to your life and you will end up on top. It may take a while, but in the end, God will raise you up. He will use you and He will bless you, just like He did with Joseph.