

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Afternoon

Date 11th September 2022

Preacher Rev Philip Knowles, Ps/Hymns 32:1-5 Salzburg, 426, 437 Read: Genesis 39:20-23 Text Genesis 39:20-23

Series: Joseph (32) Title: Joseph's Time In Prison (3)

There are many lessons to be learned in life which is true generally, but also spiritually.

Lessons that will teach us more of God, in His love, grace, His ways and works in our lives.

At this stage of Joseph's life, God has permitted Joseph to enter prison, in order to save the nation.

Therefore, God has brought Joseph from Hebron to Egypt in His own will. It was safer for Joseph to be in an Egyptian prison in God's will than to be anywhere and doing anything else out of God's will on his own accord.

It was safer for Joseph to be in prison having suffered for righteousness sake than to enjoy the pleasures of Egypt for his own sake.

Joseph's life teaches God is in control, He is directing and fulfilling His eternal plans which centre upon redemption in Christ.

God has chosen the life of Joseph as a picture pointing to Christ in His first coming in Humiliation through His second coming in Exaltation.

All that God did in Joseph's life was to exalt Christ and edify Joseph, Likewise believer all the way your Saviour leads you, is to exalt Christ and edify you in your walk with God.

We have already considered **Joseph's time in prison was a Painful, Prolonged, and Purposeful time,** Please also consider with me.

IV FOURTH, JOSEPH'S TIME IN PRISON WAS A PREPARING TIME

Notice, **Genesis 39:20** “*and 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.*”

While God was preparing Joseph throughout his life, yet in focusing particularly upon the years spent in prison, these were years of preparation.

God was preparing Joseph for a day of exaltation, a time when he would rule over Egypt, but above all, the preservation of the nation.

Likewise, believer, God prepares you in the present for the future.

When God places His people in a time of preparation its because He is going to use them and work through them.

God never wastes a life He prepares to work through.

The Lord used the trials that Joseph experienced to prepare him for the place of service God had planned for Him.

You see, God put Joseph in the prison to have him in the right place at the right time.

Joseph's path lead through pain, rejection, shame, discouragement, hated by his brothers, sold into slavery, betrayal, temptation, falsely accused and sent to prison, in order to lead into the Palace to be a blessing.

God did not exalt Joseph until he had completed the examinations for that Leadership position.

Through the process of preparation, each step prepared Joseph for the next assignment.

1. He was placed over a family - Gen. 37:2-14.

2. He was placed over a household - Gen. 39:4.

3. He was placed over a prison - Gen. 39:22-23.

4. He was placed over a nation - Gen. 41:40-41.

The secret of waiting FOR God is to wait UPON God!

You see, Trusting God's timing is trusting what is always right.

Throughout scripture there are examples of believers who during times of a literal, emotional or spiritual prisons were prepared by the Lord for future ministry.

In **Acts 16**, Paul and Silas were prepared for future work as they spent time in the jail at Philippi, as the Philippian Jailor and his house believed on God.

In **1 Kings 17-18** Elijah had to go through the Cherith and Zarephath experience before his victory on Mt Carmel.

Believer as God prepares you, don't give up, don't lose heart. This prison experience may be to help another person at some point, a comfort in sorrow, a companion through sickness, a carer to support.

You may experience a dark or many darks prisons, to be a light in another person's dark prison experience, to shine the light to a better day, As Paul said of God's comfort in **2 Corinthians 1:4**

"Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God"

He may be preparing you because the same prison experience will occur again in your life, a sickness that returns, another sorrow, heartbreak.

It does not mean it will be any easier but you will be better prepared.

In the life of Christ every event in His life, the places He visited, the people He shared the gospel with, had compassion upon, but

above all the life that He lived, it was preparing Him for the work He came to do, purchase redemption for guilty sinners He came to pardon.

Christ's sinless life prepared Him to die a sacrificial death on the cross.

Christ's life was examined severely, He was placed in the wilderness temptations, He faced His accusers, betrayal and mockers.

Due to His sinless life, He offered Himself to God a willing sacrifice. **1 Timothy 1:15 Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.**

V FIFTH JOSEPH'S TIME IN PRISON WAS A PROVIDENTIAL TIME

Though Joseph was bound yet the ways of God are never bound.

In prison, there is the keeper or guardian of the prison. A position of responsibility and accountability.

His job is to make sure no prisoner escapes, otherwise he faces punishment.

Being a keeper or guardian of the prison would mean viewing and treating prisoners as they are prisoners. None should receive special treatment.

However, since the LORD is with Joseph, then the LORD intervenes wonderfully. He providentially works to give Joseph favour in the sight of the keeper.

The word **favour** in **verse 21**, is the word meaning **grace**. Now to receive and find grace and favour in the sight of another is to understand, it was not deserved in the first place.

Joseph did not deserve the favour or grace of the Keeper of the prison. Joseph being the prisoner, guilty, accused, meant the keeper had all right and authority to abandon him. He was not under an obligation to favour Joseph.

So, if the Keeper of the prison was to afflict Joseph with hard labour in prison work, he had every right to do so, because to the keeper, Joseph is guilty, and broken the law.

For now we are applying this on a human level to make spiritual application.

The same thought and word **favour** is used Ruth 2, where Ruth finds **favour** or **grace** in the sight of Boaz, a mighty man of Bethlehem.

Ruth was a stranger, she had no position or privileges in Bethlehem. **However, God providently moved, bringing to the two together and out of love Boaz favoured Ruth.**

Ruth found in Boaz all she needed, because only Boaz could supply it. In Boaz, there was security and acceptance.

There is a wonderful picture of Christ showing grace to sinners who are underserving.

Strangers to God, without hope, yet Christ gives sinners what they do not deserve His grace. Christ is our Boaz a mighty man of power, and provision. All we need is found in Him.

We deserve nothing, as we are guilty sinners, yet some can rejoice we recipients of grace, saved by grace alone, this is all my plea. I'm only a sinner saved by grace.

God's providence was seen by Joseph's Conduct

Through the LORD's providential moving that is God working behind the scenes, turning the keeper's heart whither so ever He wills, the LORD gave Joseph favour in the sight of this man.

He could see a difference in Joseph. He seen what Potiphar seen. Joseph's conduct remained the same, in Potiphar's house and in the prison house, before his master and the keeper of the prison, among the men of the house and the prisoners.

When God leads Joseph to the palace and before Pharaoh, he still remains the same, faithful to God.

There is a clear line to Christ, for no matter what place Christ Stood, or whoever stood before Him, they could see, He was the very Son of God, the Just one. They would see by His Conduct the Lord was with Him.

In fact Paul said in **1 Timothy 6:13** "**Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;** The word **confession** in this verse means **profession**.

What you profess, and Who you confess.

It is when conduct and confession meet. It is when your profession is your possession, when your profile is your projection.

The word **witness** means **to give record, to testify to give an honourable account**.

Christ gave a good profession before His accusers.

Christ professed Himself to be the son of God, the Saviour of sinners.

Therefore, believer in prison experiences before work colleagues, family, employers, students, teachers, the unsaved, witness a good confession.

Testify of the goodness of God. In the previous verse **1 Timothy 6:12** "**Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession or confessed a good confession before many witnesses**

In difficult times witness a good profession.

When you say God will bring me through, never forsake or forget me, witness that profession. When you believe and profess nothing is too hard for the Lord, then behave and pray like there is nothing too hard for the Lord. Bare record, God keeps His word. Testify He answers prayer.

When you confess God knows our needs and will supply our needs, He will not withhold any good thing from them which walk uprightly, there is no want to them that fear Him, then witness that good confession. Bare record, be a witness to it.

Hebrew 10:23 “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

Hebrews 4:14 “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

God providentially worked through Joseph’s conduct because it was real.

God providence was seen by Joseph’s chores.

The keeper then committed all the prisoners into Joseph’s hand, or into his responsibly. As prison duties were handed out, Joseph organised the prisoners into their set tasks.

The same idea and meaning, as Potiphar committed into Joseph’s hand the affairs of his house, so the keeper place into Joseph’s hands, authority, the prisoners.

Joseph works very close to them, **whatsoever they did there, he Joseph was the doer of it.** In other words when the prisoners were put to work, Joseph worked as well.

He was faithful in his tasks, in Potiphar’s house, the prison house, so also he would be faithful in Pharaoh’s palace.

Once again, see Christ a greater than Joseph, and all else. He is faithful. It said of Christ in **Hebrews 3:1-3**, ***Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; ² Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. ³ For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses***"

Christ taught in **Matthews 25:21 & 23**, He that is faithful in the small matters He will make us ruler over bigger matters.

You see to whom much is given much is required. When prove faithful in small matters, God will honour you with greater responsibilities.

There is lesson for the preacher, committee men, Sunday school, children's and youth worker, the prayer warrior, when we labour faithfully in preparation, proclaiming the gospel and pray for the people and children that God has given, then He will give greater, He will give more people to pray for and minister to.

God providence was seen by Joseph's company.

As mentioned, there were prisoners with Joseph. But some time after, two main prisoners, two officers of the king of Egypt.

The king's butler and baker.

Genesis 40:1 they ***had offended their lord the king of Egypt***, God had providently arranged they be put in prison the same time as Joseph, because Pharaoh could have there and then executed them.

But God directs that they be put in prison and by the dreams of these men God gives a message, and by the chief Butler being restored to his Butlership, and Pharaoh's dream which no one can interpret but Joseph.

The Chief Butler who forgot Joseph as **ch 40:23** states, then in **ch 41:9-14** is reminded of Joseph and tells Pharaoh about

Joseph who interpreted their dream, this then leads to Pharaoh calling for Joseph, bringing Joseph out of the prison into the palace. No longer under the keeper of the prison, but before the king of Egypt.

No longer a prisoner in Egypt but a prince over Egypt.

It was no accident, nor chance, but God ordered circumstances for eternal reasons. Even the Chief Butler forgetting Joseph and the remembering him at the time he did, was all prompted and ordered by God's providential dealings to meet Joseph

Again, see the link between Joseph and Christ. Just as God brought Joseph out of the pit in order to place him on the throne of Egypt, God brought Jesus out of the grave to place Him on the throne of heaven.

Just as God exalted Joseph to be a mighty ruler, God hath highly exalted Jesus and given Him a name that is above every name.

Just as all men bowed their knees before Joseph, someday all men will bow their knees before Jesus and confess that He is Lord.

Just as Joseph provided bread for a starving world and saved them from death, Jesus is the bread of life who has provided salvation for all who will receive it.

For this reason it was only after Joseph had suffered greatly that he would be exalted.; or so it was to be that only after Christ had suffered that He would be highly exalted.

Joseph's story had an ultimate purpose of pointing us to Jesus Christ, a Greater than Joseph.

And what God did for Joseph in pulling him out of prison and putting him in a palace, He can do for you through Jesus Christ.

Jesus left the palace of heaven and entered this prison world of sin that He might deliver us from this prison of sin and take us to His palace in heaven.

God may be pleased to promote and prosper us on earth, but He guarantees His redeemed a Place in heaven.

Unsaved one He Christ has providently brought you here today. He is able to deliver from the pit of sin and bring you into all the rights and privileges of the people of God, will you come by faith and trust in Him.