

Genesis 39-40

"Faith & Favor"

James said, *"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."*¹

Translation; as a child of God, there's no way around it; to a greater or lesser degree, suffering will be apart of equation. James is saying, "Don't waste your suffering; glean from it, grow by it. Rejoice in it, because it means God is doing a further work in your life."

We don't rejoice *because of* the trial, "Yippie, I'm suffering!" 😊 But we joy in the fact that it means God is up to something. Something that if I'll seek to learn from rather than kick against God will work it out ultimately/eternally for my good & His glory. I will grow in spiritual maturity. The testing of my faith (if I will let God have His way) will produce growth in my life.

Just as the author of Hebrews was speaking of when He spoke of God chastening every child whom He receives that we might be partakers of His holiness. That we might crucify the flesh & walk in the Spirit. He said, *"Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."*² You see it's not pleasant to endure initially; but ultimately God will yield great things in our lives if we will but trust Him & submit ourselves unto Him. If we will but take the attitude; *"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."* Job 13:15

Now if there were ever a man who experienced trials in his life (outside of the obvious Job) it was Joseph. Despised & rejected by his brothers, thrown into a pit, sold off as a slave into a foreign land at the age of 17. The boys deceived their dad so that he wouldn't pursue the issue, just let him believe that he was dead. He was falsely accused, thrown into prison (for yrs)!!! But God was working in Him & was working His plan for him every step of the way.

It's interesting; you'd be hard pressed to find anyone in the OT in whose life God's purpose is more clearly seen. The providence of God is manifest in virtually every detail of his life. Yet (as far as the record shows) God never appeared to him even one time. As for the other patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac & Jacob); God appeared to them, but not to Joseph.

¹ The New King James Version. (1982). [Jas 1:2-4]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² The New King James Version. (1982). [Heb 12:11]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Yet the direction of God can be seen more clearly in *him* than in any of the others. It's like he's the embodiment of Rom 8:28. *"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."*³ Even though it only seemed to go from bad to worse for him, we're able to see how each event was a step in bringing to fruition God's purpose for his life.

Now that should encourage you. Because God's never appeared to you either (& He's never appeared to me), but even as He sovereignly directed Joseph you can trust that He's sovereignly leading & directing you to...

You might be going through tough times. There may be tribulation/affliction in your life. Learn the lesson of the life of Joseph. Don't think your life would be better if you could avoid it. Your life will be better having gone *through* it seeing what God does in your life as the result of it. Because even as God was w/Joseph, He is w/you.

God has said, *"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the Lord your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior;"*⁴ & Again, *"Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."*⁵

Vs 1

Where we read that he was bought by an "officer" of the guard; that word "officer" could be (& at least 17x's has been) translated "Eunuch". Meaning that in order to receive that position more than likely he'd have been castrated ensuring his total devotion to Pharaoh & he could never be a threat to the throne because he had no seed to follow after him. So his marriage was either purely ceremonial, or it was something he sacrificed (relationally) in order to be promoted to this position.

But when we read that he was "Captain of the guard", we're talking here about being the head of Pharaoh's "Secret Service". He was over the most powerful man on the planet's personal security force. He was a highly trusted official in the government of Egypt.

Vs 2-3

This is where Joseph really starts to shine. Because so many of us having been thrown in a pit, sold off as a slave, being thrust in culture we know nothing about, forced to learn everything from nothing might be tempted to give up on God.

³ The New King James Version. (1982). (Ro 8:28). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.
⁴ The New King James Version. (1982). (Is 43:2-3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.
⁵ The New King James Version. (1982). (Is 41:10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

To take the rationale, “God, why are You letting this happen to me? I know that You’re able to keep me *from* this, or at least deliver me *out* of this. But You’re just letting it happen... If You let these kinds of things happen to *me*, than why should I serve *You*?”

But Joseph didn’t do that. He refused to succumb to the mentality that God owed him health, wealth & prosperity (a life on easy street). & He trusted that if for whatever reason God *allowed* it, he would let his light so shine (to the glory of God) in the midst of it.

That’s what we’re reading of in Vs 3, “His master saw that the Lord was w/him.” Now why do you think that was? How do you think he could discern that? Because even though he was in Egypt, he didn’t conform to the life of the Egyptians. He was *in* the world, but he wasn’t *of* the world. His life was in contrast to those *around* him. He was salt & light, set apart *from* them.

We might say that though everyone else was indulging in worldliness, Joseph was walking in holiness; there was a notable difference about his life. Potiphar took note of it. Question; is there a notable difference between your life & the lives of everyday unbelievers around you? Are we complaining about our “lot in life” or doing our best to serve J.C. come what may? Paul told the Philippians, “Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,”⁶ Joseph’s life was dismantled; betrayed by his brothers. Taken away from his family (as far as he knew he’d never see them again) & yet he maintained his integrity, trusted in the Lord whole heartedly & chose to serve God in the midst of his tragedy.

People should see Jesus in us by the way we lead our lives, how we handle ourselves at work &/or at school. Our light should so shine that people see our good works & glorify our Father who is in heaven.

We’re going to see again & again throughout this Ch the overwhelming emphasis placed upon the fact that the Lord was w/Joseph. Think about that. Betrayed by his brothers, mistreated, sold as a slave, put to forced labor; yet the Lord was w/him. Trials & tribulations aren’t generally the 1st thing we think of as fingerprints of God being w/us, are they? Peter said, “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;”⁷

⁶ The New King James Version. (1982). [Php 2:14–15]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁷ The New King James Version. (1982). [1 Pe 4:12]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

But for some reason we always wonder, “Why?” & We have a hard time receiving difficulty because we belong to God. When the bible demonstrates again & again that belonging to God will many times invite difficulty, suffering & affliction into our lives. Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, all kinds of people stroll down that path, because it’s easy. It’s go w/the flow. Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. Because God will use affliction to help mold us into the character of Christ; the flesh dies hard, it’s painful, but the fruit it yields is peaceable. God will use tough times to prepare us for the plans He has for us.

& He will never leave you; in the midst of it all God never abandoned Joseph in even the slightest way.

Vs 4-6

You might take note of the fact that as Joseph was honoring God, God was honoring Joseph. As Joseph sought to walk in personal holiness; God was blessing his life & raising him up even in what might’ve otherwise been seen as a place of tremendous disadvantage. & Again, I love this because when we feel like we’re at a place of disadvantage we can cease giving our all or grow lethargic in what we do. “What’s the point anyway, it’s not like anyone is going to give me a promotion.” It’s interesting how people act & react when they believe that regardless of what they do it won’t in anyway benefit them.

But the bible says, *“For promotion cometh neither from the east, Nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another.”*⁸ In other words, as a believer it really doesn’t matter who sees you or who doesn’t see you. Because God sees you; & He’s well able to honor you & raise you up. Just like w/Joseph here. He’s just serving as a slave, but God begins to give him favor & raise him up in Potiphar’s house. He was like the man of Psalm 1; finding his delight in the word/ways of God he was like a tree planted by the rivers of water, whose leaf did not wither & whatever he did, he prospered.

Joseph made sure that his work place was better & brighter because he was there & it got noticed. Potiphar began to entrust more & more to him until it came to the point that Joseph was over everything. Potiphar trusted him so implicitly/absolutely that he didn’t even know what he had or didn’t have except for the meal that was set before him.

Now don’t think this happened over night. He was 17 when he was taken to Egypt & he was 30 when he stood before Pharaoh.

⁸ The Holy Bible: King James Version. (2009). (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version. Ps 75:6-7). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

We know that he was in prison for a minimum of 2 full yrs & so he was serving Potiphar for some 10-11 yrs. It took awhile to come to this place. Some people think that if God's in something it'll explode & be exalted overnight. **Not necessarily. It could take yrs of development, learning patience, establishing roots. You might get a squash out of your garden nearly overnight, but for an acorn to become a giant oak takes a little longer ☺. Often times God allows His work to develop slowly, overtime. Such was the case in Joseph's life.**

Now in Gen 29 we're told that Joseph's mom was beautiful in form & appearance. Joseph must've inherited his looks from his mother because here we're told (Vs 6) that he was "handsome in form & appearance."

Vs 7-10

Joseph was under the favor *of* God; even so he was faithful *to* God. You might write it down, "A conscious awareness of the presence of God will breed (or promote) holiness in my life."

If it be true that Potiphar was a eunuch than perhaps his wife was justifying what she was doing & thinking that she could get her needs met elsewhere & Joseph was a good looking guy, he was her slave (her property) therefore he should satisfy her physically.

But Joseph didn't play that game. Notice he held marriage in high esteem. He recognized that God gave marriage to mankind & to not honor the marriage is to not honor God who gave it to us. Listen to me; it doesn't matter how much people talk about "love" & seek to defend sex outside of marriage; it's wrong & it's sin. Joseph recognized that & wasn't about to sacrifice his purity nor his integrity just to please his master's wife.

What was he? 20 yrs old (give or take a couple yrs). To her it was a moment of pleasure, but to him it was (notice) a "great wickedness & sin against God." Day after day, week after week, month after month she was pressuring him, tempting him to be w/her & how easy it would've been for him to succumb to such temptation. But he understood who he was & it strengthened him in his purity, "How can I?"

She was probably trying to ease his troubled mind; telling him it was ok, it wasn't uncommon in Egypt. Everyone does this sort of thing... Perhaps everyone does, but how can I? I'm a child of God... If I were *of* the world I might do *as* the world, but I'm not, I'm a child of God, so how can I? You say no one will see us, you say no one will know, *God knows*. How can I do this great wickedness & sin against *God*?

You see that conscious awareness of the fact that the Lord was w/him (Vs 2) promoted practical holiness in his life. He knew that in entering into this sexual situation he'd been sinning against God.

Of course others would be hurt in the process, but his chief concern was w/God. Like when David sinned w/Bathsheba & Nathan confronted him. He'd sinned against Uriah, against Bathsheba, against the child that was to be born, against his nation & his family. Yet when broken by his sin he cried; "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions." He said, *"For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight-"*⁹ Yes, he'd sinned against others, but he recognized that he'd violated his relationship w/God.

Paul told the Romans, *"How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"*¹⁰ Joseph says, "How can I, do this great wickedness & sin against God?"

Don't buy the lie that seeks to convince you that you're the only one assaulted w/strong temptation to sin. Strong temptation to sin is *common* to man. Joseph refused to make provision for his flesh; he did not heed her, be it to lie w/her or to be w/her. In other words, he wouldn't even go near her. He didn't linger around in a lustful environment.

Don't forget that God is w/you; it will promote practical holiness in your life.

Vs 11-12

He left his robe in her hand & took off running in his whitey tighties ☺! Or Boxer briefs ☺.

Listen, God will always provide the way of escape but it's up to us to take it. This is the OT picture of the NT principal that Paul told Timothy when he said, *"Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."*¹¹ Be it metaphorically or literally, we've got to flee the environment that seeks to lead us into sin.

Vs 13-18

Notice she doesn't use his name. She's all, "This *Hebrew you* brought into our house has sought to make a mockery of me, he wanted to rape me, but I screamed & he fled, look here is his garment." P.S. this is the 2nd time Joseph has been lied about & his garment has been used as circumstantial evidence.

⁹ The New King James Version. (1982). [Ps 51:3-4]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹⁰ The New King James Version. (1982). [Ro 6:2]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹¹ The New King James Version. (1982). [2 Ti 2:22]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

It's the 2nd time he's been serving faithfully & was reported on deceitfully. Yet, even though he was accused wrongfully (in what would be considered a capital crime) we don't see him ever seeking to defend himself. Even as Jesus was led as a lamb to the slaughter & as a sheep before it's shearers is silent, so He opened not his mouth. (Just 1 more pic of Jesus in the life of Joseph).

Vs 19-20

It's interesting that we read that Potiphar's anger was aroused, but we don't read whom it was aroused against... The penalty for attempted rape upon the wife of a high official would more than likely be death. But Joseph was sentenced to (what would seem to be) life in prison.

It's plausible that knowing Joseph's integrity that he was actually angry w/his wife who was forcing his hand (because of her pride) so that he had to get rid of Joseph. Ever since Joseph had been w/him God had blessed his house. But now that his wife is conjuring up these lies he has to do something about it. So rather than have him executed he puts him in the king's prison.

You ever feel like all you're trying to do is serve the Lord, yet things keep going from bad to worse? Yet God is using these things as building blocks to a greater faith in Joseph. What does it look like to trust in the Lord w/all your heart & lean not on your own understanding? We don't understand why things are going the way they are; yet we're to trust in the Lord. Though He slay me yet will I trust Him... Betrayed, sold, enslaved, accused & imprisoned; but the Lord was w/Joseph, notice.

Vs 21-23

Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones used to say, "It's tragic when a person succeeds before he is ready for it." The bible is clear that we inherit the promises through faith; & patience. More than not the way we learn patience is through tribulation (Rom 5:3-4). Joseph was in a terrible place, but it didn't change God's plan.

Ch 40

Vs1-4

It's interesting that though Joseph was over all the prison that rather than having others serve him, he served them. Jesus didn't come to be served, but to serve & give His life as ransom for many.

Now why Pharaoh was angry w/these 2 guys we don't know.

It seems as though perhaps there was a plot to poison Pharaoh & while he was trying to figure out who was responsible for the attempted assassination he just put both his butler & his baker in prison.

Provisionally it's because God wanted Joseph to meet them so that eventually he would stand before Pharaoh because of them. Btw notice that the "Captain of the guard" charged Joseph w/them. Who was the captain of the guard? Potiphar. So by the way he's treating Joseph it seems as though he didn't really believe the accusations of his wife. His hands were basically forced in the situation.

Vs 5-7

Again this blows our minds. For all the wrong Joseph has endured he's concerned w/why *these guys* are sad. He's others oriented. He's not consumed w/bitterness he's concerned for others.

Vs 8-19

& The baker said, "Wh...??? Wait a minute! 😊" So Joseph (knowing a thing or 2 about dreams) says, "Tell me your dreams, if their of significance God can reveal it to us." The butler was all, "I saw a vine & there were 3 branches on it that budded forth & made 3 clusters of grapes. Then all the sudden I had Pharaoh's cup & I squeezed the juice into the cup & put it in his hand." Joseph says, "The 3 branches are 3 days; in 3 days you'll be restored to your former place serving Pharaoh. But do me a favor, when you see him, tell him about me because I'm innocent as well & I'd love to get out of here."

The baker hearing the good news says, "In my dream there were 3 white baskets on my head. There were all kinds of baked goods in the uppermost basket & the birds were eating all the stuff out of it." Joseph said, "The 3 baskets are 3 days & in 3 days the Pharaoh is going to take your head off & the birds of the air are going to eat your flesh..." Sleep tight! 😊

Check it out, Joseph (just like Jesus) was #'d w/the transgressors, between two accused men. 1 received a message of salvation, the other a message of condemnation.

Vs 20-23

Forgotten by the butler, but not by God. I know that "Faith & favor" typically conjure up different images in our minds than what we've read of in these 2 Ch's. But I just wanted you to see that though sometimes it seems like our circumstances are spinning out of control, God is in control.

He loves you, cares about you & has a plan for you; trust in Him & He'll be glorified in your life. Amen?

Prayer Points:

God we thank You for Your love for us, that You will never leave us nor forsake us. We may not know "why" but because we know "Who" we have peace knowing that You're looking out for our eternal good & Your eternal glory. I pray for any here who may be hurting, feeling beat down & ready to give in & give up. Uphold them by Your righteous right hand. Be glorified in their life.

Jesus never said He was the easy way, He said He was the only way; the truth & the life & no one comes to the Father but by Him. He wants to forgive you of your sin & do great things in your life, but you have to turn from your sin, trust in Him & be born again by the Spirit of God. So if He's knocking on the door of your heart, don't harden your heart, open your heart & receive J.C.