

EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

Message #84

Genesis 39:21-40:23

There is, within the pages of the Bible and within history, a very unusual phenomenon concerning the great servants of God, in one way or another they have all experienced great hardship, including suffering, misunderstanding and mistreatment. However, in the aftermath of the difficulty, God elevated each one of them. One of the most faithful servants of God that any will ever meet in the Bible is Joseph.

WHEN A BELIEVER REMAINS FAITHFUL TO GOD BY REFUSING TO YIELD TO SINFUL TEMPTATION, THAT BELIEVER MAY BE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT EVEN THOUGH HE MAY EXPERIENCE SOME VERY NEGATIVE RESULTS, GOD IS STILL WITH HIM AND WILL EVENTUALLY HONOR HIM.

God's promotions are earned by faithfulness. Faithfulness is demonstrated in the face of temptation, hardship and adversity. Think of Joseph's situation. He had lost his family, his homeland, his job, his reputation and was chained in a dungeon. **All of this happened to him because he was faithful to God.**

SOVEREIGN WAY #1 - God's sovereign direction and presence in Joseph's life brought God's kindness. 39:21a

The word "kindness" implies that God loved and favored Joseph and zealously desired to demonstrate His kindness toward him. The fact that Joseph loved God enough to say "no" to temptation, moved God to love him at a very unique level, even to the point in which God zealously desired to do good things for Joseph.

SOVEREIGN WAY #2 - God's sovereign direction and presence in Joseph's life brought the chief jailer's favor. 39:21b-23

God turned the mind of the keeper of the jail to favor Joseph, to the extent that he put everything into Joseph's unlimited and unaccountable authority. As we said, four times in this chapter it is specifically stated that "the LORD was with Joseph" (39:2, 3, 21, 22). Twice it is specifically reported that God causes those in charge of Joseph to recognize it (39:3, 21b-23). It is quite obvious from this that God wants us to know that promotions come via Him turning leaders' minds. Both Potiphar and the Chief Jailer are godless Egyptians in pagan religions.

SOVEREIGN WAY #3 - God's sovereign direction and presence in Joseph's life brought key leaders into jail. 40:1-3

The "chief cupbearer" and "chief baker" were two important officials in Pharaoh's court; the cup-bearer was responsible for preparing and handling the wine and drinks and the chief baker was responsible for overseeing the various breads, pastries and cakes served to the king. Both of these had "offended" the king, a Hebrew word that **means both had missed the mark of Pharaoh's expectations** (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 271).

In this one place where Joseph is located you have the chief bodyguard, cupbearer and baker. God quietly was bringing all of these leaders to this one house.

SOVEREIGN WAY #4 - God's sovereign direction and presence in Joseph's life gave him responsibility of caring for key leaders. 40:4-8

Three facts are brought out as to how Joseph cared for these people:

Fact #1 - Joseph served them physically. 40:4b - "he took care of them"

Fact #2 - Joseph cared for them emotionally. 40:5-7 - they were "dejected"

Fact #3 - Joseph cared for them spiritually. 40:8 - "interpretations belong to God"

SOVEREIGN WAY #5 - God's sovereign direction and presence in Joseph's life gave him the ability to interpret the dreams. 40:9-22.

The interpretation to the cupbearer's dream was very favorable, but the chief baker's dream was very unfavorable.

Notice how the chapter ends "the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph." 40:23

Practical Lessons:

- 1) Faithfulness to God may cause us to end up in hostile circumstances.**
- 2) Faithfulness to God in temptations and trials brings God's special attention and favor.**
- 3) Faithfulness to God is the key to eventual promotions, both in this life and the next life.**
- 4) Faithfulness to God means God will bring many people into our lives, who will eventually be used to care for us and even promote us.**
- 5) Faithfulness to God means clearly and accurately setting forth God's Truth.**
- 6) Faithfulness to God does not mean instant prosperity or promotion.**
- 7) Faithfulness to God means God will NEVER forget about you or your work.**