

**Study Questions** Ice breaker- What was your best/worst surprise?

1/ Describe a time when you cried out to God: "Lord, Why is this happening?" What did it feel like?

2/ How do you think Joseph felt when he had been forgotten by the cupbearer?

3/ Describe a time when someone let you down? How did you cope? How did you move on?

4/ In what way is waiting on God an important spiritual discipline? Discuss some people in Scripture who had to patiently wait on God's timing? What lessons can we learn in our seasons of waiting?

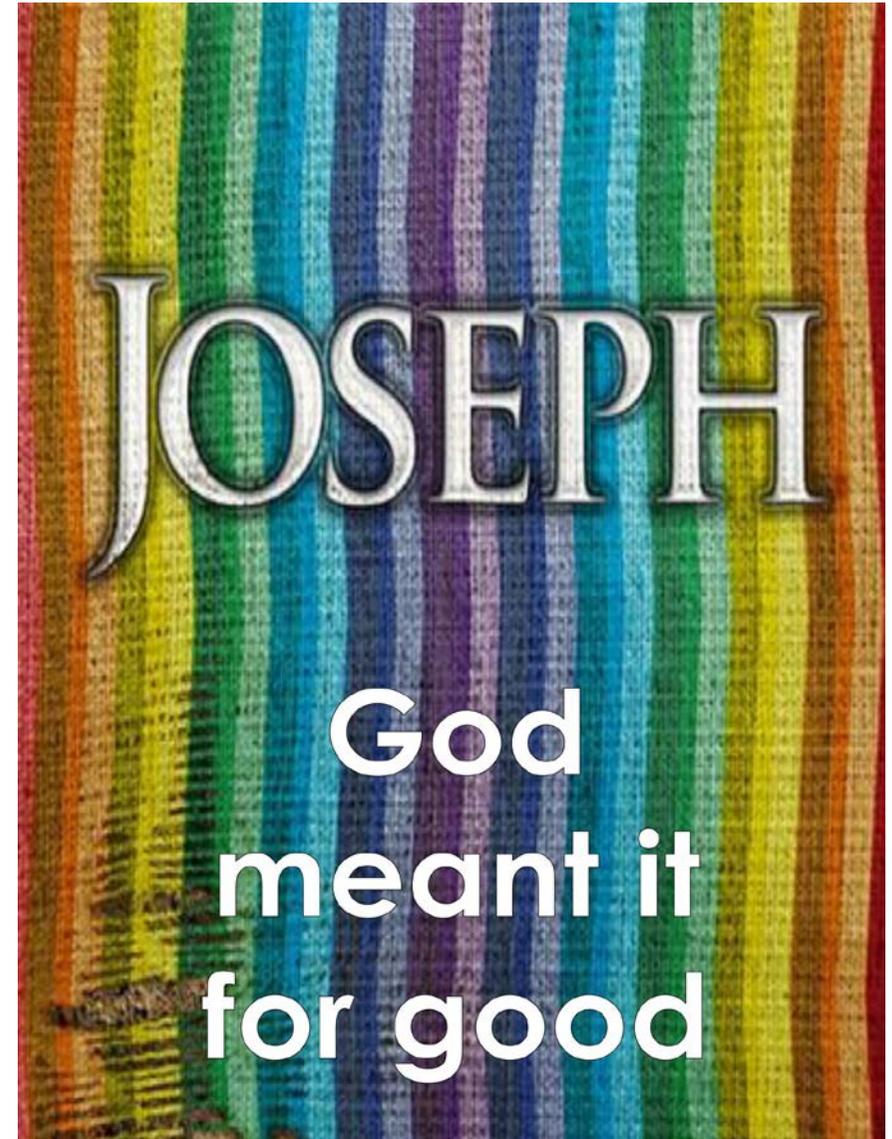
5/ After Pharaoh is perplexed by dreams the cupbearer then remembers Joseph. He advises Pharaoh about Joseph and also confesses his shortcomings in forgetting him? How quick are we to admit our shortcomings and failures? Very often we are quick to point out the piece of sawdust in someone else's eye when we have a log in our own.

6/ When Joseph is told of the dreams he clearly states to Pharaoh that he cannot interpret them but God can? In our lives how do we stay in a humble place of dependence upon God?

7/ In v40 we are told that Joseph is promoted to Prime Minister to implement the plan he had suggested to Pharaoh. What a miraculous example of the providential will of God. God had been preparing Joseph for such a time as this. In what ways had God prepared Joseph for this task? In what ways does God prepare us for future ministry opportunities?

8/ Discuss this quotation by Thomas Watson: "The test of a pilot is seen in a storm; so the test of a Christian is seen in affliction."

This week: Pray simply every day: "Lord help me remember that nothing is going to happen to me today that you and I can't handle together."



**Viewfield Baptist Church, Dunfermline**

Sermon 9- Sunday 12 May 2019

"For I know the plans I have for you." Genesis 41

## “For I know the plans I have for you” Genesis 41

When Mother Teresa visited Haiti, she was shown one of the most horrendous slums in the world. She was asked: *“How do you explain all of this in the light of our claims that God is a loving God?”* Why does God let these things happen? Mother Teresa answered, *“Why I see him, He’s got a lot of explaining to do!”* In the face of the reality of suffering in our world and at times in our lives there are times of questioning and doubt. *“Lord Why is this happening?”* *“What is your purpose in it all?”*

I am sure there were times in Joseph’s life when he felt like this. We left Joseph alone in prison as we ended the previous chapter. I am sure he was wondering why all these things had happened to him. I am sure he was wondering about his future. I am certain he was wondering what God’s purpose was in his suffering. The encouragement from the word of God **“Gen 50v20 is: *“You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good, to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”*** The Bible also tells us in **Romans 8v28** that **“in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”**

The truth is that God was working out his perfect plan even through a season of suffering. It wouldn’t be too long before this would purpose would become clear to Joseph. God is also working in our lives for our good and his glory. Let’s consider how the hand of God was working in Joseph’s life?

### 1/ Joseph Forgotten 40v23, 41v1

The scene in this drama begins with Joseph on the sidelines. Joseph had asked the Cupbearer to remember him when he was released and was given his old job back. However, chapter 40 ends with the words **v23:“yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.”** People often let us down, don’t they? It is now exactly two years since the events of the previous chapter. **Read Genesis 41v1.**

Two years is a long time to be forgotten. Again the same old questions come to mind, questions believers regularly ask whenever things don’t go according to plan., *“Why would something like this happen?”*, *“Has Joseph been abandoned completely? Has God forgotten him?”* The answer was that God was still at work in his life. In this story there is one great truth. God had not forgotten Joseph. He was working out his providential will. Joseph was being shaped for greatness. These two full years were neither exciting nor eventful. While Joseph was waiting, God was working. We could look at examples from the Scriptures of how God worked while people waited. Abraham waited for the birth of Isaac., Moses didn’t lead the Exodus until he was eighty, Elijah waited beside the brook, Noah waited 120 years for rain.

The list does not end there. God often does his best work while people wait. Joseph undoubtedly trusts in God, but he is unaware of what is going on beyond his prison cell. Of course we know the real answer, which is that his imprisonment is part of God’s plan to elevate him one day.

### 2/ Joseph Remembered

**After those two full years, Joseph experienced a turning point in his life- on a day that seemed like any other day.** For Joseph it was just another day in prison- except for one little matter that Joseph knew nothing about: The night before Pharaoh had a bad dream. (Gen 41v1-7). Pharaoh was perplexed about the dream.

It is at this point that the cup bearer remembers Joseph...at last!. **Read v9.** He goes on to explain to Pharaoh about Joseph. **Read Gen 41v10-13.** Consequently we are told that Pharaoh sends for Joseph. **Read v14.** Pharaoh then tells Joseph his dream and asks for an interpretation. **v15.**

Joseph’s answer reveals his trust and dependence upon God despite the suffering and the years in prison. He had grown and matured in his faith during these difficult times. Joseph expresses that he cannot interpret the dream, but God can. His hope is in God. **Read v16.** I cannot do it but God can. May we have that reliance on God in faith and ministry. Talk about humility. What absolute integrity. He didn’t complain about the injustice he had faced or sought to get revenge on the cupbearer. He served God.

Then Pharaoh goes on to tell Joseph the two dreams. **v17-24.** Pharaoh tells Joseph that the magicians didn’t know what they meant. Do you? Joseph eloquently explains interpretation of the dreams to Pharaoh **v25-32.** Egypt will soon face seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. Throughout Joseph’s explanation he continually refers to God again expressing his humble position before God. **“God has revealed what he is about to do v25, “God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do.”v28, “the matter has been firmly decided by God and he will do it soon.”v32.** Not wanting to waste the opportunity, Joseph confidently continues by outlining a plan of how to cope with the impending situation. **v33-36.** We are told that Pharaoh is so impressed by Joseph’s wisdom, that he gives Joseph the job of implementing the plan. Ultimately, Joseph is promoted to Prime Minister. **Read v40. Thirdly, we see Joseph’s promotion.**

Joseph, the Hebrew slave was now Prime Minister. God in his providence had ordered circumstances that this happened. He had prepared Joseph in the refiner’s fire so that he was ready for this role. He couldn’t do it. But with God’s help he could.

Maybe you are crying out to God. **Why is all this happening?** God has a plan and it is for your God and his glory. Hang in there.