

Faithful But Forgotten

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[0 : 00] All right, church. Well, thank you for being here and worship with us this morning. We are continuing on in our series, Meant for Good, Principles from the Life of Joseph.

So if you would take the Word of God with me and go to Genesis chapter 40. While you're turning to Genesis 40, I want to give you a couple reminders. Our series text is found 10 chapters later in verse 20, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good to save many people. And let me tell you, that has been God's *modus operandi*, his MO, his standard operating procedure throughout all of his dealings with mankind. His Satan and evil and the powers of darkness meant it for evil, but God's will, God's sovereignty, God's power triumphs and wins the day. And he always uses it to save many people. So we see that played out in the life of Joseph.

So a couple of weeks ago, we looked at Joseph back in Genesis 37, favored but fallen, favored but fallen. And our takeaway was that pride and envy are early warning signs in the, in the story of Joseph. But the start of his story that we see revealed to us in the book of Genesis points us to Jesus. Joseph is a type of Christ, an Old Testament figure that is not Jesus. He is not God, but certain things about him and the way he lives out his life in his faith point us forward to the coming of Jesus himself. So all throughout the Old Testament, we see these and Joseph is a prime example of it. Last Sunday, we talked about Joseph tempted and tried back in chapter 39.

Joseph tempted and tried with Potiphar's wife and we see him thrown into prison then, unjustly accused. And the trials that God allows us to endure are always designed to draw us into closer relationship with him. God doesn't allow us to go through storms and difficulty on this earth just because he's mean, just because you've got it coming. God has a design for every problem, every trial he allows you to experience in your life. And it is always to draw us into a closer relationship with him. And we see that played out in the life of Joseph. So now this week, we're going to look at Joseph faithful, but forgotten. Faithful, but forgotten. Let's look at Genesis chapter 40 and verse 1. Genesis chapter 40 and verse 1. I'm reading from the Christian Standard Bible. After this, the king of Egypt's cupbearer and baker offended their master, the king of Egypt. So the scene shifts. We've been following Joseph from his early days as the favorite son of his mom and dad. Certainly didn't have a great relationship with his brothers. All these trials start to, he has to endure. He's sold into slavery, lands in the house of the chief of the guard, of Pharaoh's guard. And of course, he's tried to be seduced by his boss's wife, resists temptation, and then is unjustly accused, thrown into prison. So we've been following Joseph's trajectory. And now the scene shifts to Pharaoh's court. Pharaoh's trusted cupbearer and baker.

The cupbearer was like his personal butler, the one who would taste of his cup before Pharaoh would drink from it to make sure it wasn't poisoned. So it had to be a very trusted official who would be allowed this position of absolute trust.

[4 : 00] And something happened with the cupbearer and the baker. Of course, the baker had to be an incredibly trusted position. He was in charge of baking Pharaoh's bread, literally the food he would eat.

So these two guys, trusted members of Pharaoh's court, had offended their master. And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker. And he put them in the custody in the house of the captain of the guards. We don't know what happened here. We don't know why they offended Pharaoh. What happened? Was there politics involved? We don't know the backstory. But somehow, these guys crossed the line and Pharaoh threw them into prison. But it wasn't just in any prison.

Who did it say it was? The prison in the house of the captain of the guards. Do we remember who the captain of the guards was? Anybody? A little louder? Yes, I knew it. I saw a couple of you mouthing it.

Potiphar. Boy, God is always working behind the scenes, isn't he? He's always got a plan going here. So he throws these two guys, key important members of his court, into the same prison that Joseph is in.

And what did Potiphar do with Pharaoh's two VIP prisoners here? What does it say? Verse 4, the captain of the guards assigned them to Joseph as their personal attendant. And they were in custody for some time. So isn't that interesting? That even though Potiphar was questioning if Joseph had betrayed him with his own wife, and yet we have enough reason to believe that maybe he doubted his wife's report of what had happened in that house. And he doubted them enough and had enough faith in how well Joseph had served him to say, listen, warden, I want you to put these two VIP prisoners coming from Pharaoh into the care of Joseph, one of your prisoners. Because I believe that they will be untouched in Joseph's care. I believe they will get through this time in prison just fine while Pharaoh figures out what to do with them. So verse 5, the king of Egypt's cupbearer and baker who were confined in the prison, each had a dream. Both had a dream on the same night. And each dream had its own meaning.

[6 : 40] Verse 6, when Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they looked distraught. These guys were upset. They had not slept well. They'd had these restless, fitful dreams that came from God himself.

So he asked, Joseph asked Pharaoh's officers who were in custody with him in his master's house, why do you look so sad today? Well, maybe because they didn't sleep well. Maybe because they were in prison. I don't know. Can't imagine there was a lot of joy in these guys' lives at this season while they're behind bars. But they tell him, verse 8, we had dreams, they said to him, but there's no one to interpret them. Then Joseph said to them, watch this, don't interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams. Wow. Prison changed Joseph.

Do you remember some other dreams in the story of Joseph that we have covered already? What happened? Did Joseph dream his own dreams? And then he went and told them to his family?

But there's no record of him having any kind of interpretation from God for those dreams back then. His father even made some kind of attempt at discerning the meaning of Joseph's dreams.

Of course, couldn't understand what they were about. So Joseph went from this 17-year-old boy, the favorite of his father's house, who's dreaming these dreams from God and doesn't know how to interpret them, to now being, just a few years later seemingly, in prison with two key members of Pharaoh's court telling him their dreams. And immediately his response is, let's go to God for this.

[8 : 47] I believe that God has the interpretation of these dreams. Tell me your dreams and I'll take them to God for you. Prison had changed Joseph. These experiences, captivity had changed Joseph. These really difficult struggles that Joseph had had to endure had matured him and his faith in God, his relationship with God, to the point where now he was certain that God would bless him with what was needed for that moment. So he was in tune with the Holy Spirit of God. He was locked in.

And God must have impressed on his heart in that moment, Joseph, I will interpret these dreams. Ask for the dreams. So what happened?

Chapter 37, he couldn't interpret his own dreams. But now God has grown his faith through suffering and is using him to interpret the dreams of others. And what do we see from him? Joseph wasn't using that to draw attention to himself. He wasn't saying, hey guys, God has given me this special gift.

Watch this. Watch this magic trick here. Watch this parlor trick. You tell me your dreams, I'll tell you what they mean. That was a big, big deal back in Egyptian culture. They even wrote a textbook on it eventually, on how to interpret dreams. Of course, all the methods that they used were sketchy at best trying to use what little they knew of math and science and probability and cause and effect to try to interpret dreams. But in reality, they had no clue, right? Because no one can actually interpret dreams except for God. So, Joseph pointed them to God. He pointed the heathen to God. This isn't the only time in scriptures we see this specific thing happening. Would you look over at Daniel chapter 2 and verse 26? And actually, I've got it on the screen here, but because Daniel also pointed the heathen to God. The king said to Daniel, so jump several books up and we see this tale unfold where King Nebuchadnezzar is speaking to Daniel. He's troubled by this dream and Daniel is one of his advisors. And he says, are you able to tell me the dream I had in its interpretation? Because

Daniel had talked to all of his other wise men. All these other men who maybe had read that old Egyptian textbook on how to how to interpret dreams and it had left them no better equipped than they were before and they couldn't help the king at all. And so, he says to God's servant Daniel, are you able to tell me the dream? And Daniel says to the king, no wise man, no medium, no magician, no diviner is able to make known to the king the mystery he asked about. I'm sorry, king, no one can tell you your dream.

[11 : 50] But it doesn't stop there. Verse 28, but there is a God in heaven. There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries and he has let King Nebuchadnezzar know what will happen in the last days. And he goes on to give him the interpretation from God about the dream.

This is not the only time in the story of Joseph here that we see God's servant point the heathen back to him. And y'all, can I just draw your attention to that phrase here?

Whatever you're going through, whatever struggle comes up in your life that you can't seem to figure out a path forward, you can't seem to find a way to get over it or around it or under it or through it, may I remind you that there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries.

If you walk closely with him, if you strengthen your relationship with him, then he will often reveal the secrets to you as well.

He'll help you get through those dark nights. He'll help you get through those scary storms. He'll help you get through those moments when you feel like you are a little bit like Joseph sitting on the inside of a prison cell, forgotten by your family, forgotten by your friends, forgotten by your employers, your co-workers.

[13 : 16] Everyone in your life has forgotten you, but there is a God in heaven. And you know what Joseph did? He didn't use that fact just for his own comfort.

He used that fact to point others back to God. He pointed the heathen to God. So I'm asking you, church, are you pointing the heathen to God? Anyone in your life, you say, man, all my friends are church people.

All my friends already love Jesus. Well, maybe it's time to start to introduce yourself to some of those people you don't go to church with. Some of those people in your circle that you're not sure if they have a personal relationship with Jesus.

By the way, just because somebody goes to church doesn't mean they have a personal relationship with Jesus, right? That's certainly true. Whether it's a collection of people at Walmart or Cowboy Stadium or the church house, it doesn't mean that everybody in there is Christians.

There's going to be a hodgepodge of hypocrites and judgmental sinners, and that's who we are regardless of where we go, and only by the grace of God can any of us be any different than that.

[14 : 30] So, there is a God of heaven, and we have the responsibility and the privilege of pointing the heathen to him. So, what did he do? Back in Genesis 40, let's pick it up in verse 9.

Verse 9. So, the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph. In my dream, there was a vine in front of me. On the vine were three branches. As soon as it budded, its blossoms came out, and its clusters ripened into grapes.

Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. Weird dream. Can't say I've ever had anything like it.

How about y'all? Nobody? Nobody? So, Joseph immediately gets the interpretation from God. Wow, God came through in just the right moment.

He always does. He always does. Sometimes we feel like it may not be the right moment. Sometimes we don't get an answer quite as quickly as Joseph did. But in that moment, God knew Joseph needed that answer right then, and he gives it to him.

[15 : 36] This is its interpretation. Joseph said to him, the three branches are three days. In just three days, Pharaoh will lift up your head, otherwise known as letting him out of prison.

Restore you to your position. You will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand the way you used to when you were his cupbearer. But when all goes well for you, remember that I was with you.

Please show kindness to me by mentioning me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison. For I was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I've done nothing that they should have put me in this dungeon.

So Joseph, by faith, receives this interpretation from God. Gives glory to God by being able to reveal the secret of this dream to this Egyptian officer.

And then he can't help but throw that last part in. By the way, when this happens, because he had enough faith to believe that what God said was going to happen would happen. Any of us ever been there?

[16 : 36] Have enough faith to believe that what God said will happen will come to pass? Sometimes it's hard, right? The Bible talks about if you ask in faith, believing, and Joseph believed it would come to pass.

And so he said, when this happens for you, remember me too, because I didn't really do anything wrong, and I'm stuck here in this prison, don't forget about me. Back in verse 16 of chapter 40, when the baker, the chief baker, saw that the interpretation, the butler, the cupbearer's interpretation was positive, he said to Joseph, well, hey man, I also had a dream.

Three baskets of white bread were on my head. In the top basket were all sorts of baked goods for Pharaoh. But the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head.

Joseph replies, this is its interpretation, the three baskets are three days, just like the other guy. In just three days, Pharaoh will lift up your head from off of you.

Did you catch that? Lift up your head from off of you and hang you on a tree. Then the birds will eat the flesh from your body. A little different interpretation there.

[17 : 53] A little, right? Sorry to be the bearer of bad news, baker, but he doesn't like your bread. On the third day, well, before we get there, of course it happened, just like Joseph said.

Now, what we see from Joseph, without dwelling on these two dreams and what they could have meant and see if there's anything more significant about these two dreams with these two men, what I think the real takeaway here is seeing how Joseph's faith grew.

Joseph exhibited consistent growth in his walk with God. He started off believing in God. He was a descendant of Abraham.

We talked about the Abrahamic covenant last week, that promise that God made to Abraham and the generations that would follow after him to preserve them, to bless them, to make them succeed.

And we see so much drama, so much turmoil in the family of Abraham despite this Abrahamic covenant, this promise from God.

[19 : 09] Joseph was not exempt. He was going through so much trouble. And yet, all throughout the trouble, as each new tragedy, each new disaster would play out in his life, man, I don't think the biggest temptation that Joseph ever faced was from his boss's wife.

I think the biggest temptation was depression when he was let down time and time again by people. His dad let him down by showing all this favoritism to him as a child that set him up for a fall.

His brothers obviously let him down when they wanted to kill him and then settled for selling him to slave traders. And even in Egypt, when he thought, finally I'm working for an unbiased third party and at least this heathen, Potiphar, sees the value in me and has promoted me.

And now he let him down too when his boss's wife compromised her marriage, tried to seduce him. Time and time again, he's let down by others.

But we never see him go into a funk. We never see him lose his faith. We see him continually grow. And that's another type of Christ.

[20 : 33] Because you know who else did that? In a much greater way? A much more perfect way? An absolutely perfect way? Jesus himself. Luke 2.52, Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people.

And that's the challenge for you and for me. How much have we grown? We've got people sitting in this room right now who have been followers of Jesus for just a very short time.

And then we've got people who were saved and put their faith in Jesus decades ago. We've got the whole spectrum here in this room. But my question for all of you and for myself is how much did you grow with your walk with Jesus this year?

How much have you changed this year? Or somewhere along the way did we slow down?

Did we stop growing? Did we just settle for well this is who I am? You see Joseph learned how to work hard. Joseph learned how to administrate well.

[21 : 44] Joseph learned how to resist temptation. He learned how to point others to God. He learned how to powerfully pray and receive wisdom from God. So are you still growing consistently or have you just made peace with the cracks in your own foundation?

Y'all we've all got cracks at our foundation. But God's will is that we would cease to rely on our foundation and build our lives on the rock the solid rock which is Jesus Christ.

And when we do that then he starts to seal up the cracks in those foundation. He wants to be your foundation. and then he wants to help you seal those cracks and keep out the enemy whose only goal is to seek and to kill and to destroy what God is building in your life.

So, when did we stop growing in Christ? even in the hardest of times in the most difficult of circumstances Joseph kept growing.

But when did we become okay with our weaknesses and then force everybody around us just to be okay with our weaknesses too? That is just who I am.

[23 : 03] God loves you with no strings attached. But God loves you so much he doesn't want you to stay where you are.

He wants to grow you. So if you're not growing maybe it's because you've drifted apart a little bit. You've got to get back to pursuing the person of Jesus becoming more like him.

Let's get back to our text and we'll be done. Genesis 40 and verse 20. On the third day which was Pharaoh's birthday he gave a feast for all his servants.

See, God knew that the third day the three days from then would be Pharaoh's birthday and he would give a feast. And he let both those political prisoners the ones in captivity the chief cupbearer and the chief baker he led him out of prison for the feast.

But what happened? He elevated the chief cupbearer and the chief baker among his servants and everything went great with the cupbearer. He restored him to his position as cupbearer and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand just like he used to.

[24 : 24] But it didn't go well with the chief baker. Pharaoh hanged the chief baker just as Joseph had explained to them yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph.

He forgot him. We're going to get to that part in just a moment but before we get there let me ask you this. Who can you count on? Amen.

Amen. For all you English people whom can you count on? On whom can you count? But I just thought that sounded a lot better so we'll roll with it.

Who can you count on? Well he couldn't count on the cupbearer could he? Even though he came through for the guy. Verse 14 back in verse 14 you remember what he said?

When all goes well for you remember that I was with you. Show kindness to me by mentioning me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison.

[25 : 23] And then back in verse 23 the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph. Forgot him. Who can you count on except God?

Psalms 118 reminds us of that in the New Living Translation it says it's better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in people. Anybody say amen to that?

It's better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in people. Isn't that right? It is better to run to our hiding place which is Jesus Christ than it is to put your trust in mankind.

Sometimes people will come through for you. Usually it's because of love. Usually it's because of people that maybe are walking closely with Jesus and he helps them come through.

But often times even those of us who call ourselves followers of Jesus will let each other down. We will.

[26 : 24] And so we must always run to Jesus as our hiding place. As our ultimate place of trust. The truth I want you to remember that we can learn from Genesis 40.

God will never forget me. God will never forget me. If you can instill that into your brain God will never forget me.

There's two sides to that. One is pure comfort. God thank you so much that no matter how bleak things look on this earth no matter how bad it gets I know you haven't forgotten me I know you're still with me I know you still care for me I know you'll provide for me I know you'll make a way through the storm I know you'll make a way through the wilderness I know that you will come through time and time again and the other side of the coin is this God never forgets about you so quit running from him sometimes we like to think that we've strayed so far away from God that he's forgotten about us man you don't know what I've done yeah I used to go to church how many times I've heard this from people yeah I used to I heard all that when I was a kid but then I got into some stuff and my faith just isn't what it used to be yeah but

God is still who he used to be and he still loves you he still cares he never changed he never moved and he's always right there he has not forgotten about you whether you grow your faith like Joseph and God uses you powerfully every step of the way even through the dark times or whether you fail and you fall and you crumble God still loves God doesn't forget and he's ready to pick you back up and put you back on the Joseph path says let's go come on I got a great job for you if you've read ahead in the story you know that God had an amazing plan for Joseph but he had to get him there first so while it seemed like everyone had forgotten God will never forget us we talked about this last week God's delays are not God's denials

Joseph had to be delayed yet again yet again but it wasn't God saying no it wasn't God saying Joseph remember those dreams I gave you give up on them they're not going to come true life got too rough too many people turned against you things fell apart that's never what God's message is God's message is always no I am greater I am stronger than anyone who could rise up against you no one can pluck you out of my hand so God's delays are not God's denials and the truth is in the background while we're waiting God is working while I'm waiting God is always working God never stops working you see you and I might be in a time of delay we might be in a time of waiting we might be in between time of life and sometimes it might look really bad like Joseph sitting in a prison or sometimes it just might mean you're in a dead end job and you can't figure out how to get out of it it might look like you never saw the career that you envisioned for yourself or maybe the relationships you envisioned for yourself and things just aren't going exactly how you pictured but just know that while you're waiting

[30 : 25] God is working behind the scenes Joseph was favored by his father why man it goes all the way back without taking all the time to get into it it goes back to when his father Jacob fell in love with a girl named Rachel and wanted to marry her and the future father in law pulled a switcheroo at the last second and she had a little drama plays out and it's Joseph and so we kind of get the idea of why he was Jacob's favorite and probably his mama's favorite too right but God had planned all this because the pieces had to fall into place and then he allowed Joseph to be betrayed by his brothers because if the brothers had never betrayed Joseph then he wouldn't have been sold to the slave traders and made his way to Egypt where he got promoted by Potiphar from the slave and how unlikely was that in his probably his first year of service as a slave and he gets promoted to the head of household and everything is going great and then boom the roller coaster goes back down again and he is wrongly accused by the wife and it's like man

I can't catch a break around here when it rains it pours right all the things that we say Joseph lived lands in prison but he's not killed because God had a plan Joseph could go to prison but not die and then he earns the favor of the warden and then he gets free range in the prison free range chicken is the best right this was free range prisoner I don't know what that means but I what if he hadn't worried about it but

God was working behind the scenes while Joseph was waiting and then he had to have the interpretation of the dreams right then right then and what happened was soon as Pharaoh needed something the butler remembered Joseph right no yet again another delay another delay and if you want to know what happens next you got to come back next week but Joseph's faith made him faithful Joseph's faith made him faithful guys there's no secret I wish I could tell you some sort of secret ingredient for how to stay faithful through the storms of this life but it's daily pursuing the person of

Jesus strengthening our faith in him that's what allowed Joseph to sustain to not lose his faith to stay faithful to God in the middle of all of this and then Joseph's trials made him grow he didn't just stay faithful to God he didn't just lose his faith he got better he grew he improved he was a better Christian after he came through these storms than before God was using him more powerfully than ever before can we say the same thing let's look at James chapter one real quick we read it last week consider it a great joy when you go through these trials because you know that when your faith is tested it produces endurance so let endurance have its full effect so you can become mature and complete lacking nothing a few chapters over James says brothers and sisters be patient until the

Lord's coming see how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth we just got some precious fruit of the earth last night didn't we thank God for it we got the rain and he is patient with it until he receives the early and late rains you must also be patient strengthen your hearts because the Lord's coming is near so my message to you folks is strengthen your hearts during this in the time season during this waiting period strengthen your hearts and then in verse nine my brothers and sisters don't complain about one another so you won't be judged look the judge stands at the door God is always there he's always watching he's always working so don't be turning on one another that's what we do sometimes when life gets rough when we're in those waiting periods we turn on each other we start sniping at each other we start taking shots at one another we start trying to tear each other down and James knows it's going to happen so he says don't complain about each other verse 10 instead brothers and sisters take the prophets who spoke in the

[35 : 51] Lord's name as an example of suffering and patience see we count as blessed those who have endured well we know Joseph's going to be blessed so we count him as this struggle so our takeaway for today is let this season of divine delay make a discernible difference in how you live your faith a difference that we can discern a difference that people can notice a difference where your husband or wife says you seem happier even though nothing really changed in our circumstances you're changing what's going on with you well just trying to learn what Joseph learned and let this season of delay that seems to be coming from God make a difference in how I live my faith not just how I say I have faith but how

I live it out maybe God can use you to point the heathen to him maybe God can use you to help somebody else maybe God is setting you up for your greatest days yet as part of his plan for you I don't know what God has for you but I know this he's got something or we'd all be home with him right now but the reason he's delaying it the reason for this waiting period God has something great for us so let's grow our faith together Lord Jesus we ask it right now in the name of Jesus we come to you we approach your throne and we say God make us like Joseph that when our faith is tested we would not only pass the test but our faith would be grown where those around us can see you're becoming more like

Jesus whatever those changes need to look like in our lives God reveal them by your Holy Spirit to us and then give us the courage to say yes to you every time it's in Jesus name we pray amen church would you erreichen unless you do■ our hope