

Even in the valley . . .

## **Joseph, Sermon #6**

Genesis 39

The last two Sundays, we witnessed the sexual temptation of Joseph by Potiphar's wife. We learned how he defended himself and won the victory and stayed pure from the great stain of fornication.

Even though Joseph did right—full of integrity, honored God—he ended up in prison.

I've entitled today's message "Joseph in Jail"

Genesis 39:19

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word.

Genesis 39:19-23

Let us pray.

You may be seated.

## Joseph in Jail

Joseph is in the vise of God—being squeezed.  
 God has Joseph right where he wants him.  
 Now, does Joseph know that? We don't know.

Do we know it when we find ourselves in the vise of God?

Submit to God's will.

There is no way out—can't wiggle, maneuver—Joseph is stuck.  
 By looking at Joseph in this vise, it will help us to interpret our own trials.

Now, everything that we will look at, remember, Joseph did not know.  
 When we read this story, we are getting God's viewpoint about Joseph's affairs.

That's the problem when we look at the situation and cry "unfair, I don't like this," but we  
 fail to see God's viewpoint on our position.

Joseph is in jail and we know that God is working this to His plan.  
 No doubt Joseph's mind has to be running, not understanding, but Joseph cannot view  
 like we view.

They say, "Hindsight is 20/20."

God still works by vises. God still places His people in situations where they are  
 immobile. We are held!

This passage will tell us how to handle that kind of situation.

When God puts us in trials—

First point, #1, most important, we must be confident of the presence of God.

Vs. 21 – **But**

Joseph did not have a Bible to tell him that.

He did not have a preacher or friends to remind him of that.

The Lord was with Joseph.

★That, my dear friends, is hard to remember in the depths of a trial.

We often equate the presence of God with good circumstances:

When things are good, God is with me.

When things are bad, God is not with me.

Listen, when God strips away the favorable, let me point out to you, that may be the point, for the first time in a long time, that we are able to see God.

He is God and, in the end, we must stand on the fact and go back to the truth that “God is with us” despite the circumstances in which we are surrounded.

Joseph probably felt just like we would feel being lied about and now in prison.

His mind must have been full of questions: Had he not been obedient to God?

Had he not kept a good spirit as a slave?

Had he not worked hard and had a good testimony for God?

God, are You punishing me? Where are You, God?

Do You exist? Have you forgotten about Me?

Folks, we can be confident of God’s presence. The Bible says He is present.

Not only in verse 21, but it repeats in verse 23 and says, “The Lord was with him.”

The entire story of Joseph emphasizes the Lord’s presence in the time of crisis.

The only time the Bible says that God was with Joseph was when he was in slavery and in jail.

In Matthew 28:20, as Jesus Christ is preparing to ascend, He says as some of His final words, “. . . and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

That word “always” is three words in the Greek—literally, all the days.

All the what days? All the rainy days and all the sunny days.  
 All the days when I have money and all the days when I don't.  
 All the days when I'm happy and all the days when I'm down.

That is a tremendous promise.

Jesus said about His leaving, *“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you”* John 14:16-17.

Who's the Comforter? The Holy Spirit  
 And the believer's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus goes on to say, *“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you”* John 14:18.

Vs. 18 – the word “comfortless” literally means orphaned/orphans.

What is an orphan? Someone who has no parents—been abandoned.

Hebrews 13:5 says, *“for He hath said, ‘I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.’”*

This is the word of the Lord. Will God fail in His word to us?

Point #1—we must be confident of the presence of God.

Now, this brings us to what Joseph had to do and what we have to do.

What is the way I can keep that confidence? The only way is faith.

We just have to believe in God and, in essence, that is the test.

The real test of our faith is not when we can see God but when we can't see God.

The real test of our faith is not when all is going well—it is when all is going bad.

When Joseph was put into the prison—in the darkness of a trial—Joseph, do you believe in Me? Can you trust Me? Am I real?

Inside of us, there needs to be an implicit, dogmatic, confident belief that God is there. No wavering in our soul, that God is there, that God is present. Do we have this confidence?

Psalm 105:19—the word of the Lord tried him.

What is the trial? Joseph is in prison.

The prison is the trial, but that's not what Psalm 105 says.

What does that mean?

God gave Joseph His word in a dream, and between the dream and the fulfillment of that dream was the imprisonment.

And all Joseph had to go on was the word from God.

When we are in the midst of a terrible trial, pain, deprivation, we find ourselves wrestling with God, His Word, and our faith—the inward struggles of belief in God's Word and that He will fulfill it.

In the end, it's just simply a matter of whether or not we will look at the circumstance or look at the Word of God. It's not easy, is it!

In this text, God helps us be confident in the Word of God.

In this passage, God has traced for us His design in Joseph's life.

This is the blueprint for how God is working.

Let me show you this in a number of steps.

Notice the first thing about the design of God in this text.

Notice in Genesis 39, verse 21, *“But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.”*

How do we find favor in some people's eyes?

Vs. 21—God gave him favor—there is the hand of God at work.

**Now, notice verse 20.**

Now, there were many prisons in Egypt.

Joseph could have been put into a prison on the edge of the desert—isolated outpost.

Yet, he was put into a prison where the king's prisoners were held.

How did that happen?

Do you know who the person was who was ultimately in charge of this prison?

Verse 20 says Potiphar put him in.

Vs. 21 – He found favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison—this is probably a different person.

**Genesis 40:1-3** – Potiphar's house/complex

**Vs. 3E**

**Vs. 4**

This prison was a prison for people of high rank.

Potiphar's house is a part of that complex and Potiphar is ultimately in charge of this—  
with a keeper of the prison—and right under the keeper of the prison is Joseph.

How did Joseph end up where the king's prisoners were kept?

The whole reason Joseph ended up in Potiphar's house / was to end up in Potiphar's  
jail / so he could meet up with Pharaoh's people / who, in turn, would tell Pharaoh  
of Joseph.

This is all by the design of God.

Isn't this an unbelievable coincidence that Joseph is coming into contact with the high-ranking officials of Pharaoh?

What a place to meet, to rub shoulders!

I got to Kansas through one lady who happens to go to this church—Susan (Kroeker) Penner.

Joseph is making connections in prison—this is by design of God.

And then, will you also notice something that very clearly indicates the hand of God?

**Let's look at Genesis 40:5.**

Who sent their dreams? Is that coincidence?

Vs. 6-7—you probably know the rest of the story.

Each man tells Joseph the rest of his dream.

And what does Joseph do?

He tells them the interpretation of their dreams.

Where did Joseph get the interpretation from?

Vs. 8—where did Joseph get his interpretations? God

One last thing in the text we need to note.

Vs. 14-15

Now when the butler was restored to serving Pharaoh, did he mention Joseph to Pharaoh? The answer is "No."

Vs. 23

Genesis 41:9, he tells Pharaoh the whole story about the dream.

Do you know between Genesis 40:23 and 41:9 how many years go by?

Two years—two full, two long years

Let me tell you something else about the design of God.

Those two years of forgetfulness were also a part of the design of God.

We don't like waiting periods, but they are a part of the design of God.

Let me retrace.

1. Joseph is put into the place of the king's prisoners
2. He is given favor in the eyes of the keeper
3. Brought into contact with Pharaoh's officials
4. Given interpretation of their dreams
5. And he was caused to wait two full years

Is that coincidence?

We see it, but Joseph could not—the hand of God at work.

When we call certain things “coincidence,” that is blasphemy to God.

Romans 8:28, *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.”*

God works together; God harmonizes.

God can take the noises of our life and make it a symphony.

God can make things beautiful in His time—can you see the design of God in your life?

Ecclesiastes 3:11, *“He hath made every thing beautiful in His time . . .”*

Let us stand for closing invitation.

Even though Joseph's situation seemed hopeless, God never left him for one moment.

We, too, have the assurance of God's Word: *"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"*  
(Hebrews 13:5).

In the original language, this phrase is very emphatic: "I will by no means leave you nor will I by any means forsake you."

God will never leave us helpless or abandoned.

Therefore, *"we may boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me'"* (v. 6).

Do we have this confidence?

Regardless of how adverse our circumstances are, as a Christian do we know that  
God will never desert us?

Perhaps we have been going through circumstances that seem as hopeless to us as  
Joseph's did to him.

If so, we have probably realized that our faith is weak and faltering.

However, we must have confidence, not in our faith, but in the faithfulness of the Son  
of God.

Gospel