

Joseph, Sermon #7

Genesis 40

Last week we left Joseph in prison, but he was not alone—the butler and baker of Pharaoh have joined him.

The butler and baker on the same night had a dream.

And, Joseph interpreted their dreams—the butler was to be restored and the baker was to be hanged.

And, Joseph asked the butler to speak on his behalf when he came to Pharaoh and to get him out of that jail.

I have entitled today's message "Joseph Is Waiting"—the Psalmist said, "I waited patiently for the Lord."

Genesis 40:20

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

Genesis 40:20-41:1, 7b-13

Let us pray.

You may be seated.

Joseph Is Waiting

Joseph is the first person recorded in the Bible that went to prison for the Lord's sake—
Jeremiah, Daniel, James, Peter, John, Paul, Silas, Timothy, John Bunyan,
John Knox, John Foxe. . .

Many of God's people are in the dungeons of this earth in order to be true to the throne
in Heaven.

God knew when Joseph would get out of jail, but Joseph did not.

That jail was a part of the process of discipline in bringing Joseph to an explicit
faith and trust in God.

Joseph is learning to wait

- The prison would be a school where Joseph would learn to wait on the Lord.
- All that time—the hours, weeks, months, and years—it's delay—it's like being
“put on hold.”

Hebrews 6:12, *“That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and
patience inherit the promises.”*

- When God allows us in a trial, we have an opportunity to show our faith and
Christian character.

The best way to learn patience is through tribulation.

Romans 5:3-4, *“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that
tribulation worketh patience. . . .”*

During those two years of waiting, Joseph clung to the dreams God had given him, just
the way you and I cling to His Word.

- He didn't know how God would accomplish it or when it would happen, but he
knew that God was faithful.

However, oftentimes in our wait, we jump the gun like Abraham.

Abraham doubted God's message.

Joseph is in jail, but in chapter 41, we see all things working together for good.

So great is God that He harmonizes and weaves all these events together.

Now, we can see what God is doing—Joseph probably could not—but we can see because God has revealed it to us—to teach us that He, too, is weaving and working our circumstances and situations of our life for our good and His glory—if we are faithful to Him/patient.

Evil things are going to happen to us.

- Because of sin's curse, bad things are on the way if they haven't arrived already.
- God can take the bad and evil that comes to us, even our poor decisions, and use it for good if we let Him.

One of the things that God weaves together for good is delays.

- The Bible says it was two full years—24 months.
- Joseph actually is going to spend over 700 days behind bars.
- That would be like going to jail today and not getting out until 2010—that's no small thing.

Do you know how long it was from the time Joseph dreamed his dreams until he stood before Pharaoh?

- Genesis 37:1—seventeen years old; Genesis 41:46 says he is now 30.
- In-between-time was 13 years and two of those years, he is in the dungeon—the bottom of the earth.

All that time, Joseph is a believer—he hopes all things, believes all things, endures all things, and has his mind fixed on the promises of God.

Every day Joseph gets up and says, maybe the butler will remember me and every night when Joseph goes to bed—not today—day after day, no change.

- In prison—in a place of despair—a young man like this would experience more severe doubts than ever.
- Did God really send those dreams that came to him which indicated that he would be a ruler someday?

Joseph could have been disappointed, disillusioned, and doubting.

- Scripture never records such an attitude of unbelief.
- Every day Joseph is busy about his work, working with what he has in front of him—serving.

Genesis 40:4, In 41:12—He is described as a servant

- Would you and I be described as a servant to others?
- Christ was a servant--we should be servants.

★Daily faithfulness in ordinary duties is the best preparation for future service.

In many respects, those years in prison were vital and critical years of Joseph's life.

Joseph not only served, but he:

- Was sensitive to their needs (Genesis 40:6-7).
- Joseph had gone through it and yet he noticed they were sad and takes the time to inquire.

The most sensitive people are the ones who have been through the same troubles.

Joseph's integrity—Genesis 40:16—Joseph told the baker the truth.

Joseph gave the message of God, whether it was easy or hard.

Genesis 40:23—the butler failed and forgot Joseph and did not keep his word and

Joseph had to live with that.

It takes inward strength not to begin to bellyache.

Do Americans have any problems with patience, with delays? We need teaching on delays.

- How many of us would honestly say we are impatient? Bellyached, complained, angry, that we doubt God
- My flight is delayed; my car is delayed; at the checkout counter, I am delayed.

Folks, it is always helpful to think of our delays from the perspective of God

II Peter 3:8, *“But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”*

- Time is for man, not God.
- Time is for man to measure out his days for work and his nights for rest.
- God does not need to lay down and sleep, and He is in no hurry with His work.

Time is for man to repent—time is the probation given by God for the soul of man to come to repentance.

One day, there will be no time with us.

So, try to think of delays in the perspective of God.

- Jesus said, surely I come quickly—in Revelation 22:20.
- It’s been over 2,000 years—is that quick to you?

We sing about being with the Lord—10 thousand years, bright shining as the sun—and we are impatient with our spouse, our children; waitresses, job situation, housing situation, financial situation

Dug ditches/Food Lion—facing dairy products/TSW—resigning my will

Listen, **delays are God’s opportunity to bring about Christian growth.**

Turn over to James 1:2-3.

Verse 3—going through trials without letting them sour the attitude

According to this passage, patience becomes the core of everything good in a Christian's life.

Vs. 4

The virtue of patience is the catalyst that brings about maturity.

- Patience means that I can remain under a load—it may be something we would love to get out from under, but the trial itself is working our ability not to just sit under the load, but to rise up and walk around with it and still go about our business for God with this heavy thing on our backs.

This type of endurance—exertion and resistance always build strong spiritual muscles.

- Ability to remain under while God is perfecting a different part of our character.
- If I can bear these loads and learn from these trials, I will be conformed to the image of Christ.

That's the whole point of delays.

- ★Let us see our delays from the perspective of God and look at them from the standpoint of Christian maturity.
- And, whatever the delay is in our life—whether it's days, weeks, months, or it has dragged on for years—remember that God is about something.
- He is doing something—it is wonderful to be able to see what God is doing.

All of this was happening to Joseph for God's purpose in his life.

If we could recognize God's hand in our lives today, it would give us a different outlook on life!

Life is But a Weaving

My life is but a weaving

Between my God and me.

I cannot choose the colors

He weaveth steadily.

Off' times He weaveth sorrow;
And I in foolish pride
Forget He sees the upper
And I the underside.

Not 'til the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly
Will God unroll the canvas
And reveal the reason why.

The dark threads are as needful
In the weaver's skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned

He knows, He loves, He cares;
Nothing this truth can dim.
He gives the very best to those
Who leave the choice to Him.

Joseph waited and watched—will we?

Let us stand for closing invitation.

Is it the will of God that Joseph be in prison? It is essential that he be there.

The Apostle Paul learned to trust God in the midst of difficult circumstances and was able to say, *“Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content”* (Philippians 4:11).

This is what we need to learn also.

That the delays of life—the trials, tribulations, and troubles—God is using to build character in us, so that we may come forth as gold with the dross removed.

Psalms 37:7, *“Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him.”*

Psalms 27:14, *“Wait on the Lord; be of good courage and He shall strengthen thine heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord.”*

Now, when it comes to salvation, the Bible says that today is the day of salvation.

Gospel