

Joseph, Sermon #8

Genesis 41

Joseph's dreams got him into trouble, but thirteen years later, Pharaoh's dreams would get him out of trouble.

God is working all kinds of things together for Joseph, Israel, and Himself.

Pharaoh and his great empire were but a drop in the bucket in relation to God's eternal purpose.

Isaiah 40:15 – *“Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh [considers] up the isles [coasts] as a very little thing.”*

I have entitled today's message “Joseph Is on the Move”

Genesis 41:14

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

Genesis 41:14-16, 25, 33-44

Let us pray.

You may be seated.

Joseph Is on the Move

I would love to have a before and after photograph of Joseph standing before Pharaoh! It was the meeting of a powerful leader and a prisoner.

- Joseph had gone from the prison to the palace in one day.
- Joseph found himself standing before the mighty monarch of the greatest nation on earth at that time.

This all came about from a Providential meeting in the jail with the butler of Pharaoh. Now, remember Pharaoh had two dreams.

- In verse 8, a crisis in Pharaoh's life created a need in his life.
- The magicians and wise men of Egypt failed to help him.

Let me tell you a little bit about these men according to secular history and the Scriptures.

- Egyptologists tell us that you could go to school to study magic and the occult.
- There was a lot of Satanic activity in Ancient Egypt.

400 years later in Exodus 7, Moses and Aaron stood before Pharaoh and God told them as a supernatural sign to the people to cast down the rod and when Aaron did that, it became a serpent.

You remember that that didn't faze the Egyptian magicians at all. They simply threw down their rods and they also became serpents.

The good news is that Aaron's rod ate all the other serpents.

When Moses performed the first plague and went out and called all the rivers of Egypt to turn to blood, the magicians duplicated that first plague.

When God gave Moses authority to perform a second miracle and there were hordes of frogs from the Nile, the Egyptian magicians duplicated that plague also.

So, their magicians had great demonic powers.

One of their strong points was the divination of dreams.

- In their schools, they would study oneiromancy (Oh Nyr mancy), which is divination by dreams, and be able to interpret a dream.

Pharaoh's dreams should have been the magicians' forte/strength.

- They should have been able to interpret them, but they could not.
- So, the traditional help could not offer an interpretation to Pharaoh.

God now brings into that need/vacuum His chosen servant to be the man of the moment.

- This is what God does with Joseph.
- All of a sudden, the chief butler remembers (vs. 9).

We can see this same pattern in other parts of the Bible.

- God allowed Goliath to hurl insults for 40 days in the face of Israel. Why did God allow that?
- To impress upon every man in Israel that there was a crisis and no man had stepped forward.
- God had prepared David (just like he prepared Joseph) physically and spiritually, and when it was time, God brought His man forward.
- It was a very dramatic opportunity for David to be introduced to the whole nation.

Daniel 5—Belteshazzar in Babylon called for the golden objects which came from the temple of God in Jerusalem to be brought in and they partied, using the things of God.

- Drunken debauchery—then a man's hand appeared and wrote on the wall.
- Belteshazzar could find no one to interpret it and that moment—a total failure of all traditional helps.
- The Queen said there is a man in the kingdom
- And then God inserted His man into that situation and Daniel was introduced.

God will, in His own time, create an opportunity of service for us.

- God will see to it that the place of His appointment is prepared. You can count on it.
- God always has a prepared place for the prepared man.

Ezra

Ezra 7:10, *“For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.”* And, then God called on him to help Israel rebuild!

Wait on God, pray to God—God will give the place of service.

Once, the opportunity was provided, Joseph was ready for it.
Joseph’s heart and mouth are full of God.

Note this—Pharaoh said in Vs. 15e

Notice Joseph corrects the Pharaoh in verse 16.

Vs. 25

Vs. 28

Vs. 32

God will do it. What a testimony!

Joseph’s first words in verse 16 quickly dispelled any thoughts about his having secret powers.

- Joseph was giving the credit to God.

★The child of God should be very careful that God gets the glory for all of His accomplishments.

If what we do is a blessing, it is because God is doing it through us. Amen!

Now, notice Joseph is careful to not offend Pharaoh—we should not be unnecessarily offensive to unbelievers.

Vs. 14—the Bible says Joseph shaved himself. This is significant.

- For Joseph, a beard was a mark of dignity and masculinity and you only shaved your beard if you were shamed or in mourning.
- The Egyptians were a clean-cut people and it was offensive to appear before Pharaoh unshaven.

Joseph changed his clothing.

For the third time in thirteen years, he lost his coat.

Also, notice Joseph's speech is different:

- Vs. 25
- Vs. 28

Joseph never said "you" to the Pharaoh; he never addressed Pharaoh in the second person (vs. 25, vs. 28).

Joseph never used his proper name.

- In every way, Joseph conformed himself to the etiquette of his time.
- He gave proper respect for higher authority. Joseph was non-offensive.

Yet, Joseph speaks of his God—★it is the one thing we cannot be silent about.★

- Joseph took the risk of offending Pharaoh on this first occasion.
- Joseph clung to the solid Rock and was not trying to gain the favor of a fickle Pharaoh.

Do you know what kind of impression this made on Pharaoh? Pharaoh talked of God.

- Look down to verse 39.
- Joseph made an impact.

The key to Joseph's life was expressed when Pharaoh commented to his servants about Joseph: "Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the spirit of God is?" (41:38).

This was the secret of Joseph's life—God; God was leading him and he was obedient.

Notice what happens—verse 25—he told Pharaoh the dream had a predictive purpose.

The second thing was to tell Pharaoh that the two dreams were one.

There was a unity to these dreams (vs. 26).

The third thing was to identify certain specifics in the dream:

Vs. 27—years

Vs. 29-31—famine is coming

No doubt the thought of famine would strike terror in their hearts.

Famine brings out the worst in people—robbing, killing, infants, serious disaster.

Lastly, verse 32, Joseph explained the duplication of the dream.

The same thing in the same night—there was a Divine purpose for it.

And, it was irrevocable—it was coming.

This is the interpretation of the dream.

But Joseph did not stop there; he goes further and tells Pharaoh the course of action he should take.

He gives the emergency responses to the dream.

There are four parts to his recommendation.

First, vs. 33—choose a chief administrator—"discreet and wise"—he can carefully choose his way between various alternatives in a complicated problem.

Second, vs. 34—he is to appoint regional overseers.

The third part of the plan was a 20% levy on all the grain during the seven good years—that's called a Savings Plan.

The fourth part was the construction of storage facilities in strategic locations, so that the land perish not through the famine (vs. 36e).

And, then Joseph stops speaking (verse 37a)—Verse 37

Finally, we see the advancement of Joseph—Joseph's promotion to responsibility.

Three steps of advancement:

First, his promotion to Prime Minister—verse 40.

- All my people are to be fed by your orders—giving Joseph sole control of all the granaries.

In Joseph's life, we see the principle stated in I Peter 5: *“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.”*

Vs. 41—he is put into office.

Vs. 42—signet ring—that ring was the greatest prize of Egypt.

By the way, that ring had a signet on it.

- When that was put down in wax, it was just the same as Pharaoh's signature.
- Pharaoh is making Joseph his agent. He has the right to use the king's signature.

And, he was put into royal clothing.

- Thirteen years before, his brothers had stripped him of his special robe, but now Pharaoh gave him a robe of far greater significance.
- Gold chain.

Secondly, verse 43—presentation to the nation—made to ride in the second chariot.

Vs. 44—Absolute authority

Thirdly—verse 45a—his naturalization as a citizen—thirty years old and the kingdom is in his hand.

The weight of it all—the bars of the jail are gone; the chains and fetters are gone; but now the weight and pressure of all Egypt is upon him.

I'm afraid we get too enamored with what Joseph was promoted to and we tend to forget the fearfulness of the weight that was placed on his shoulders in just a few short hours.

Please remember, it always looks great on top when you're on the bottom; but sometimes when you're on the top, you desire the simpler life.

There are some great lessons from this story:

- We need to let God work all things for good. We let the Weaver sew the threads; we let the Potter mould the clay.

The Bible says, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord," and He will not put on us more than we can bear.

Let us stand for closing invitation.

God had allowed Joseph to be unjustly accused and punished, no doubt for purposes of developing his character for the great work He had for him to do in the future and so that He could position him to meet the man who will bring him to Pharaoh.

If we can't be trusted now, how will we be trusted later?

If we are not faithful now, how will we be faithful later?

Joseph had passed:

- The test of adversity brought on by his brothers,
- The test of the body brought on by Potiphar's wife,
- The test of patience in prison.

The circumstances did not get him down.

Because of Joseph's trust in God and his desire to please Him in everything he did, Joseph had an opportunity to have an even wider influence for God.

Gospel