

## The Life of Joseph - Trusting that God has a plan through the ups and downs of life

The pain and harm that is caused by unjust suffering is one of the worst things that someone can go through. In this type of trials some become stronger while others are deeply wounded and never recover.

Perhaps the injustice is to be a victim of domestic violence or perhaps it is a false rumor that threatens to destroy a person's reputation. Whatever it is, most people when confronted with injustice want revenge and are resentful, but we should not forget the Psalm 146.7 that says that **God keeps every promise forever. He gives justice to the oppressed...**

You don't know if in the future you will be treated unfairly, but you can decide today how you will respond. **Your surrender of all things to God will be proportional to the confidence you have that He loves you, that He knows the truth, that He will take care of you and will do you justice.**

In the first 2 messages of this series about the life of Joseph we saw that he suffered unjustly. The first time was when his brothers sold him to be a slave and the second time was when Potiphar's wife accused him of wanting to rape her. The end result of this lie was Joseph going to jail.

But although he was in prison unfairly, Joseph didn't change, he continued to be the same person faithfully doing his work and waiting for the day when the dreams that God had given him came true. **Joseph teaches us that we must protect the dreams that God has given us and not allow our circumstances to rob them or to diminish our trust in God in making them come true.**

We never heard Joseph complain or ask: Where is God as this happens to me? He doesn't ask because he knows the answer: Genesis 39.20-23 says: **But the Lord was with Joseph in the prison and showed him his faithful love. And the Lord made Joseph a favorite with the prison warden. Before long, the warden put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners and over everything that happened in the prison. The warden had no more worries, because Joseph took care of everything. The Lord was with him and caused everything he did to succeed. With Joseph we discover that it is possible to be suffering and still be in the center of God's will.** Here we find out that he God not only had *not abandoned* him but *blessed* him.

Joseph teaches us how to respond to adversity. Instead of being bitter and seek revenge, he decided to persevere amid his trials and trust in God. That is why the Lord continually gave him peace and favor before men.

God didn't change his circumstances, but he gave him the grace and favor to face them. Many times, we ask God to change our circumstances, but his response is that he will not change them because he wants to use them to change us and prepare us for something greater. His answer is the same that He gave Paul: **My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness. We can have peace in all things as we walk with God in all situations.** But only the person who believes that **God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love Him** can have this kind of peace - and Joseph believed in this.

For Joseph, the relationship with God was above all; he didn't argue with the Lord, but trusted Him. His attitude, once again, was going to impact the lives of other men as he had impacted already the life of Potiphar. Let's look at what happened ...Genesis 40.1-7 **Sometime later, Pharaoh's chief cup-bearer and chief baker offended their royal master. Pharaoh became angry with these two officials, and he put them in the prison where Joseph was, in the palace of the captain of the guard. They remained in prison for quite some time, and the captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph, who looked after them. While they were in prison, Pharaoh's cup-bearer and baker each had a dream one night, and each dream had its own meaning. When Joseph saw them the next morning, he noticed that they both looked upset. "Why do you look so worried today?" he asked them.** The baker and the cupbearer were trusted by Pharaoh and one oversaw the wines and the other the food. Here we read that because they did something bad they were sent to jail and **Joseph looked after them.**

It is interesting to note that despite his difficult condition, Joseph was sensitive to the needs of others. He did not let his circumstances and personal pain prevent him from seeing the pain in the lives of those around him. He could have thought: "Why should I worry about others when nobody cares about me?" What a lesson for us! Take care of others and God will take care of you. **While we wait for God to act and respond, we are called to impact the lives of those around us.**

These two men told Joseph why they were worried 8 **"We both had dreams last night, but no one can tell us what they mean."** **"Interpreting dreams is God's business," Joseph replied. "Go ahead and tell me your dreams."** It is interesting that Joseph brought God into their problem. He took the opportunity to speak to them about the Lord. We must also have the courage to tell people that God is the one who has the answer for their need.

The interpretation that Joseph gave of the 2 dreams was that the cupbearer was going to return to his work while the baker was going to be hanged. After interpreting the cupbearer's dream, he asked him for something: v. 14-15 **Please remember me and do me a favor when things go well for you. Mention me to Pharaoh, so he might let me out of this place. For I was kidnapped from my homeland, the land of the Hebrews, and now I'm here in prison, but I did nothing to deserve it.** Three days later, what Joseph said came true, but v. 23 **Pharaoh's chief cup-bearer, however, forgot all about Joseph, never giving him another thought.** This man had a short memory and forgot completely about Joseph. **Is painful to be forgotten by someone we helped in a time of need. It's easy to be disappointed with the people who forget or abandon us and then, with God. If we allow these feelings to grow they will make our heart hard and bitter.**

Maybe you have had similar experiences to those of Joseph: you might have suffered injustices, or you were falsely accused, or you helped someone, and they forgot you when you needed them. But you must never forget that people are imperfect, and everyone can someday disappoint you, only God will never do it.

Despite everything, Joseph did not allow the injustice he suffered by his brothers, Potiphar or the cupbearer to affect the hope he had in God. And although he ended up staying 2 more years in prison He could have become depressed, angry, disillusioned or desperate, but, once again, he placed his trust in God in the same way as Psalm 146.3,5-7 encourages us to do: **Don't put your confidence in powerful people; But joyful are those who have the God of**

Israel as their helper, whose hope is in the Lord their God. He keeps every promise forever. He gives justice to the oppressed and food to the hungry. The Lord frees the prisoners. The Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are weighed down. Whenever you feel forgotten, abandoned, disappointed don't forget that there is only one that is worthy of our trust and that he promises to do justice for you.

Chapter 39 ends with sad words 23 **The cup-bearer forgot all about Joseph, never giving him another thought.** But God had not forgotten Joseph. Although he spent 13 years as a servant and prisoner, they were years of preparation for an incredible future. The best was yet to come!

**Conclusion** - You may ask yourself where is God amid the trials you are facing at this time? What is He saying to you through this message? Hopefully that He is with you and can make you prosper in everything you do in spite of your circumstances as he did with Joseph. But He asks that you believe that **He loves you, that He knows the truth, that He will take care of you and that, in His time, He will bring you justice.**

-We all want to do great things for God, but that is impossible without be prepared. And preparation means lots of waiting, some trials and suffering. If God is preparing you for something greater, this will have to happen.

- Just as Joseph, in prison, cared for the needs of the two men, all of us have a group of people who have been entrusted to us to care for, and with whom we must share Christ.

- While you wait for God to act and respond, you are called to influence the lives of those around you. Who is God calling you to impact? Lead those people to God, ask for His guidance as you seek to share Him with them. Learn to live in the present and "wait upon the Lord". Serving Him now because life is what happens while you wait of a different or better future.

- Don't do to others what the cupbearer did to Joseph.

- In God's hands the worst things that happened to you can be the best things that happened to you because **God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love Him.**