**Genesis 40:1-23: “Joseph’s Prison Ministry”**

In this chapter, we find Joseph consigned to prison after having been accused falsely by Mrs. Potiphar. Rather than curling up in a fetal position and bemoaning his circumstances, he perseveres in faith and provides a lasting model for all who find themselves in circumstances they never anticipated. Sustained by the presence of God, Joseph has a powerful prison ministry!

**The cupbearer and baker are imprisoned (1-4)**

-positions of significant authority

-confined with Joseph

-Joseph appointed to attend them

**The cupbearer and baker have dreams (5-8)**

-disturbing dreams

-dejection

-Joseph’s recognition and request

**Joseph interprets the cupbearer’s dream (9-15)**

-cup in Pharaoh’s hand

-restoration within three days

-Joseph’s request and declaration

**Joseph interprets the baker’s dream (16-19))**

-expectation of a positive interpretation

-birds devour baked goods

-execution within three days

-telling it like God says it is

**Fulfillment and forgetfulness (20-23)**

--restoration of cupbearer

-execution of baker

-forgotten by man but remembered by God

**So what?**

-Knowing that the Lord wants to work in and through you, remain faithful in discouraging circumstances.

-Determine to stand on the promises rather than the circumstances.

-Rely on the revelation of God. Joesph had dreams. We have the Word.

-What “prison ministry” do you need to cultivate?

-Rest in the assurance that God never forgets His own.

-Look to the One whose sufferings exceeded those of Joseph.

**Genesis 41:1-57: “Who’s in Charge Here?”**

After the dream of Genesis 37 and before its fulfillment in Genesis 45, we see that a dream and its interpretation result in Joseph’s elevation. Notice the three key characters in Genesis 41: the faithful Joseph, the potent antagonist Pharaoh and God Himself.

**Pharaoh dreams (1-8)**

-after two years

-cows and grain

-troubled spirit and inability to interpret

**Cupbearer remembers (9-13)**

-imprisonment and dream

-identification of Joseph

-accurate interpretation recalled

**Joseph interprets Pharaoh’s dreams (14-36)**

-Joseph is summoned

-Joseph acknowledges his God

-Pharaoh relates his dreams

-seven years plenty and seven years famine

-fixed by God

-Joseph’s wise counsel

**Pharaoh promotes Joseph (37-57)**

-recognition of Joseph’s giftedness

-endowed with authority

-administrates grain storage at age thirty

-births of Manasseh and Ephraim

-all the earth to Egypt and Joseph

**So what?**

-Because God controls the destinies of nations in order to protect and provide for His people, declare His power and submit to His plan.

-connection to Christ: the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4)

-“He who is aware of God is humble and fearless at the same time. Every king is nothing compared to God.” (Ross) (Prov. 21:1)

-“Joseph acts out of confidence in the character of God.” (Waltke)

-“Ye fearful saints fresh courage take; The clouds ye so much dread are big with mercy and shall break in blessing on your head. Blind unbelief is sure to err, and scan His work in vain; God is His own interpreter and He will make it plain.” (Cowper)

-“Life, death and hell and worlds unknown hang on His firm decree. He sits on no precarious throne not borrows leave to be.” (Watts)

**Genesis 44:14-45:15: “Operation Reconciliation”**

This section covers the resolution of the drama regarding Joseph and his brothers which began back in Genesis 37. It serves to remind us of the truth that the will of God, not the will of man, is the controlling reality in the circumstances of our lives.

**Background**

-brothers go to Egypt: guilty consciences awakened (Genesis 42)

-brothers return to Egypt: test of maturity, taking responsibility, Benjamin with them (Genesis 43)

-brothers tested again: test of loyalty, the cup in Benjamin’s sack (Genesis 44)

-goal of tests: bring to repentance and restoration

**Guilt acknowledged (14-17)**

-brothers fall to the ground (42:6)

-confession of guilt: found out (16), no justification, not spies or thieves but crime against Joseph

-Benjamin to be held as slave (9)

**Judah’s appeal (18-34)**

-recollection of previous meeting (18-23)

-Jacob’s concern for Benjamin (24-29)

-Jacob’s sorrow (30-32)

-request to take Benjamin’s place (33-34)

**Emotional revelation to brothers and their response (1-3)**

-Joseph overcome by emotion

-Brothers overcome by terror

-neither can speak

**Joseph addresses his brothers (4-13)**

-explanation of Gods’ purpose (4-8)

-instructions for migration to Egypt (9-13)

-note use of “ruler” in verse 8 (also 37:8)

**Emotional reunion (14-15)**

**So what?**

-When you know God is in control, you can extend forgiveness and experience reconciliation.

-“To see God in all things, both good and evil, enables us to forgive easily those who injure us.” (Barnhouse)

-Apply the elements of true repentance: admission, contrition, exhibition

-“When you hold a grudge, you doubt the Judge.” (Piper)

-The Joseph/Jesus connection: A greater deliverer!

-Get the strings of your heart tuned to the cross.