

Genesis: From Creation to New Creation

Genesis 40:1-23

"Enduring Faith"—September 3, 2023



Introduction

Waiting is difficult and frustrating. As the days, weeks, and years go by without the answer, it becomes an even heavier burden. What gives you hope when you have to wait? When you are left waiting, has the seed of hope shriveled? We can wait so long that we get to the breaking point, wanting an answer, regardless of what it is.

This is where we see Joseph in Genesis 40. He is in prison, waiting. The basis of his hope was that God was with him. What if you are stuck waiting in the darkness of the trial that you are in? What happens if God doesn't seem to move? You are left to wait. That, in itself, can be a whole different form of suffering.

This text ends with Joseph still stuck in prison, forgotten by the cupbearer. We know that he will be released in chapter 42, but all Joseph could see were the prison walls and the shackles. How could he trust God when he felt forgotten? How can you trust God when you feel forgotten? When God's people feel forgotten, they trust God who is at work for their good.

Sermon Outline

1. Scene One: Bloom where you are planted. Vs. 1-8
2. Scene Two: A Glimmer of Hope Vs. 9-19
3. Scene Three: Hope Deferred Vs. 20-23

Read & Discuss

1. Read vs. 1 – 8

Joseph is in prison. What does he do now? Joseph does the next thing in front of him. God is sovereign - we can see that in each verse. The cupbearer and the baker were placed in the same prison as Joseph. They both had dreams. All of these details were under the sovereign control of God. The reason that all things work for the good of all those who love God is because God is sovereign over ALL the details of our lives. Joseph was in a really tough position. ([Ps. 105:18](#)) It had been eleven years from the time he was bought as a slave until this time in prison. In the midst of difficult circumstances are you weary, waiting, and discouraged? This leads us to lament. We cry out to God, "How long, Oh Lord."

When things go wrong in your life, are you surprised? How do you react? [1 Peter 4:12](#) reminds us that we should not be surprised at the painful trials we suffer. Peter was equipping the reader to set their expectations right. Moses was doing the same thing here for the Israelites. We love the God that the world hates. God is equipping us to set our expectations right. This helps us hold on to the hope in the midst of the pit.

Remember Joseph's dreams? At this point, they seemed like they would amount to nothing. Joseph could have become cynical about shattered dreams, but he was not. He didn't lose faith in God, and he didn't get stuck in his problems. He was set free to care for the needs of others. He was confident in a good God who loved him. One way we demonstrate our faith is by considering how we can love and care for others even if our life is not going the way that we planned. It reveals our confidence in God. ([Matthew 5:43-48](#)) If we are busy complaining and being offended as an entitled people, how can we care for others and share the gospel? What does your response to your trials reveal about your heart?

2. Read vs. 9 – 19

The cupbearer shared his dream, and God made the interpretation clear to Joseph. Pharaoh would lift up the head of the cupbearer. It is a picture of fellowship. This would happen in three days. David used the same language in [Psalm 3:3](#) when he was on the run from his son. Our God gently lifts up our head to restore fellowship with us.

The baker shared his dream. God made this interpretation clear as well. It was bad news.

These dreams are given by God as were the interpretations. They are God's word about the future. What should we do about that? God can and may still speak to people in dreams. However, we have God's word.

([Hebrews 1:1-2](#)) This is how we hear His voice and know His will. Can you recall a time when God had spoken to you through His word? Joseph asked the cupbearer to remember him. He had not lost faith in God. He trusted that God's word will come true. What truths from God's word give you hope?

3. Read vs. 20 – 23

God was faithful, and the cupbearer was restored. Joseph had hope. However, as the days go by, he was not released from prison. Eventually, the reality that the chief cupbearer forgot him sank in. Joseph would spend another two whole years in prison. ([Genesis 41:1](#))

Joseph had gone from one pit to another pit in the course of the 11 years. ([Proverbs 13:12](#)). God could have caused the cupbearer to remember, but He didn't. Where was God? What was He doing? Over and over, people forgot Joseph. Had God? It isn't hard to think that this question was in Joseph's mind. The cupbearer forgot to show steadfast love to Joseph, but God had not. ([Genesis 39:21](#)) God was using this time to mature Joseph. His life is a reminder to us that, though people forsake us and forget us, God will not! His love will not fail you. You may not understand all that He is doing, but He will not let you down. Are you in a season of waiting? In your waiting, remember God is at work.

The apostle Paul could rejoice in suffering. ([Romans 5:3-5](#)) For Paul, suffering produced hope by producing endurance and character. You can't get character from a book. It comes from difficult times of waiting and struggling with God. In the dark seasons, even though we can't see him, God will not forsake us. His love will not fail us.

How can you be sure of God's presence when you are in the midst of a great trial, stuck in a pit? Joseph points us to Jesus. Because of our sin and rebellion, like the baker in Genesis 40, we deserve to die. ([Romans 6:23](#)) But while we were yet sinners, Jesus died for us. ([Romans 5:8](#)) On the cross, Jesus took the punishment, was forsaken by God ([Matthew 27:46](#)), and put in a grave ([Matthew 27:66](#)). He was forsaken so that we can be accepted by God. Jesus' resurrection is a guarantee that God will not forsake His children. Can you see God's mercy and holiness? Can you see it in Jesus?

We may not know why things happen the way that they do. We may not know how things will turn out. We can trust God. What are some things you need to trust God with?

Prayer of Response

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to confess? From what do I need to *repent*?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come. If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at fbcum.org

Next week's sermon text: we turn to Genesis 41:1-57 "God Determines the Times"
