

## Genesis 40

### Scriptures:

### Notes:

Robert Murray M'Cheyne, who remarked: "Do not forget the culture of the inner man – I mean the heart. How diligently the cavalry officer keeps his sabre clean and sharp; every stain he rubs off with the greatest care. Remember you are God's sword, His instrument – I trust a chosen vessel unto Him to bear His name. In great measure, according to the purity and perfections of the instrument, will be the success. It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God."

It is hard to imagine what it would have been like to be Joseph. He was in the worldly, idol-worshipping land of Egypt. He was the only Hebrew and the only God-worshipper. He was a stranger in a strange land.

Scriptures:

<sup>1</sup> It came to pass after these things <sup>9</sup>that the butler

4945 -  
cupbearer

Notes:  
'butler' = cupbearer – better translation.

Butler/cupbearer served Pharaoh his wine and performed other duties. Baker served him his food. Both were positions that were close to the Pharaoh – needed to be trustworthy.

and the baker of the king of <sup>9</sup>Egypt offended their

2398 – to fall short – “To fail to meet an expectation or set amount of something.”

'offended' – no clues are given that tell us what the offence was but their roles suggest that it might have to do with something the Pharaoh ingested that made him sick.

<sup>9</sup>lord, the king of <sup>9</sup>Egypt.

Scriptures:

<sup>9</sup><sup>2</sup> And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers,

7107 - displeased

Notes:

the chief butler and the chief baker.

Scriptures:

<sup>3</sup> So he <sup>g</sup> put them in custody in the house of the

Notes:

captain of the guard, in the prison, the place where

Joseph <sup>J</sup> ~~was~~ confined.

631 -

Scriptures:

<sup>4</sup> And the captain of the guard charged Joseph <sup>J</sup>

6485 – to appoint

Notes:

'he served them' – We will see later that Joseph serves them with care and compassion. Serving others, regardless of our own circumstances will pull you up above your circumstances as you lift them above theirs.

with them, <sup>Bub</sup> and <sup>J</sup> he <sup>Bub</sup> served <sup>Bub</sup> them; so they were in

8334 -

custody for a <sup>⌚</sup> while.

Scriptures:

<sup>5</sup> Then the <sup>C</sup>butler and the <sup>B</sup>baker of the <sup>king</sup>king of

Notes:  
Dreams are a recurring theme in Genesis. God has and still does speak to people in dreams.

“The ancient Egyptians put great stock in dreams because they believed that sleep put them in contact with another world.”  
(Hughes, 2004) page 469

<sup>9</sup>Egypt, who <sup>were</sup>were confined in the prison,

had a dream, both of them, each <sup>man</sup>man’s dream in

2492 - dreamed      2472 – a dream

one <sup>night</sup>night <sup>and</sup>and each <sup>man</sup>man’s dream with its <sup>own</sup>own

interpretation.

6623 – “An explanation that results from interpreting something.”

Scriptures:

<sup>6</sup> And <sup>3</sup>Joseph came in to them in the morning and

Notes:  
Why were they sad? This was more than just being in prison.

“A pair of dreams, it was thought, indicated certainty of fulfillment. And, due to their imprisonment they did not have access to professional interpreters whose ‘dream books’ were thought essential to unlocking the symbolism of dreams.” (Hughes, 2004) page 469

<sup>so</sup> looked at them, and <sup>so</sup> saw that they <sup>so</sup> were sad.

2196 – to be  
dejected

<sup>7</sup> So <sup>3</sup>he asked <sup>9</sup>Pharaoh's officers who <sup>so</sup> were with

Notes:  
At this point Joseph has been in Egypt for about nine years. Not told how long he was in prison.

Joseph was accustomed to being around people in prison. He had the discernment to see that this was something more than just being sad about being in prison. Joseph's focus is not on himself. He is truly serving these men he has been assigned to and he is doing it with compassion.

<sup>3</sup>him in the custody of his <sup>so</sup> lord's <sup>3</sup>house, saying,

“Why do you <sup>so</sup> look so sad today?”

Scriptures:  
Hebrews 11:1 – Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

John 16:33 - These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

<sup>C+B</sup>8 And they said to him, <sup>3</sup>“We each have had a

dream, and *there is* no interpreter of it.”

So <sup>3</sup>Joseph <sup>C+B</sup>said to them,

“Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell *them*

??

to <sup>3</sup>me, please.”

brothers that led to their betrayal. He has gone from self-centered to others-focused. It was the ups and downs of his life that God used to change Joseph's heart.

God never wastes any pain that touches our life. God will allow difficult things to touch our lives (John 16:33). He knows those things are hard on us and comforts us and strengthens us by faith (2 Cor. 1:3-4). Once we have allowed God to comfort us and carry us through those hard things, we are better able to help others as they go through them.

We would not be able to comfort someone who is lonely if we have never been lonely. If you have never been depressed, you may not be able to help someone who is depressed. Joseph's difficult experiences are what prepared him to comfort the butler and baker.

Oneiromancy - the interpretation of dreams in order to foretell the future.

Notes:

‘Do not interpretations belong to God?’ – The Egyptians had turned dream interpretation into a science. Men would refer to dream books to find the meanings of the various symbols that might appear in a dream. The two men were upset because they weren't able to consult the 'experts' about their dreams. Joseph is saying, they couldn't have helped you.

“Joseph declared that the interpretation of dreams was not a pseudo-science of the specialists with their dream books, but a gift that only God can give.” (Hughes, 2004) page 470

God the dreams and only God could give the interpretation.

If you search Amazon for 'dream interpretation' hundreds of books are available. There are even some that claim to be biblical dream interpretation. God is still giving Christians dreams – be cautious – seek good biblical wisdom about their interpretation.

Joseph's response is evidence that even in this unfair and difficult circumstance that God was at the forefront of his mind. Joseph's reflexive response was to bring God into the conversation. It also revealed a true dependence upon God – an absolute necessity for a godly leader.

How you respond immediately to the changes of circumstances reveals what you believe about God.

Joseph can sense God's providential work in this. God had spoken to him in dreams and Joseph believed that those dreams meant something. Even though his circumstances made it seem like his dreams would not be fulfilled, Joseph clung in faith to the trustworthiness of God.

By telling them to describe their dreams Joseph is confessing his faith in God, not only to give the interpretation, but also to do what the dreams will reveal. It was also a declaration that he still believed that God would fulfill the dreams he had given him. By offering to be the conduit for interpretation of their dreams he was confessing faith in God's plan to do something in his life. By faith Joseph believed that his brothers and parents would someday bow before him (Heb. 11:1).

Joseph displays great sensitivity and compassion with his two fellow prisoners. This is quite a contrast to his immature actions toward his

Scriptures:

<sup>9</sup> Then the chief butler told his dream to Joseph,

Notes:

and said to him, “Behold, in my dream a vine *was*

before me,

Scriptures:

<sup>10</sup> and in the vine *were* three branches; it *was* as

Notes:

though it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and its

clusters brought forth ripe grapes.

Scriptures:

<sup>9</sup>11 Then Pharaoh's cup *was* in my <sup>c</sup>hand; and I <sup>c</sup>took

Notes:

the grapes and pressed them into <sup>9</sup>Pharaoh's cup,

and placed the cup in <sup>9</sup>Pharaoh's hand.”

Scriptures:

<sup>3</sup>12 And Joseph said to him, <sup>c</sup>“This *is* the

Notes:

Joseph has the confidence of faith.

interpretation of it: The three branches *are* three

<sup>5</sup>days.



Scriptures:

13 Now within three days Pharaoh will lift up your

Notes:

5375 -

head and restore you to your place, and you will

7725 - to return

put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the

former manner, when you were his butler.

Scriptures:

14 But remember me when it is well with you, and

2142 – “To keep  
in mind for  
attention or  
consideration.”

Notes:

‘...when it is well with you...’ – Joseph is confident in his interpretation. He believed that in three days the cupbearer would be released from prison and restored to his former place.

Faith does not idly sit by waiting for something to happen. Real faith is active faith. Joseph was in the prison based on a false accusation. He knew that only God could change his circumstances, but he also knew that God might be looking for a act of faith from him before doing that.

please show kindness to me; make mention of me

2617 -

2142 -

to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house.

Scriptures:

James 1:2-4 - My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

15 For indeed I was stolen away from the land of

Notes:

Joseph was innocent and so it was perfectly right for him to use whatever means was available to him to get his release.

Joseph was living proof that what James said is true for all believers (James 1:2-4).

the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here

that they should put me into the dungeon.”

953 - pit

<sup>16</sup> When the chief baker<sup>B</sup> saw that the interpretation

Notes:  
Because his dream was similar to the  
cupbearer's dream, the baker  
expected a good interpretation for his  
dream also.

was good, he said to Joseph<sup>S</sup>, "I also<sup>B</sup> *was* in my<sup>B</sup>

dream, and there *were* three white baskets on my<sup>B</sup>

head.

Scriptures:

17 In the uppermost basket *were* all kinds of baked Notes:

goods for Pharaoh, and the birds ate them out of

the basket on my <sup>B</sup>head.”

Scriptures:

18 So Joseph answered and said, “This *is* the Notes:

interpretation of it: The three baskets *are* three

<sup>B</sup>days.

Scriptures:

19 Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your

5375 – same as  
verse 13  
Translation is  
based upon  
interpretation of  
context.

head from you and hang you on a tree; and the

birds will eat your flesh from you.”

Notes:

Pharaoh would have the baker beheaded and then his body impaled to be eaten by the birds.

No explanation is given as to why the cupbearer got a favorable outcome and the baker a deadly one. It could be that they ended up in prison after Pharaoh got sick from something he drank (cupbearer) or ate (baker). He may not have immediately known which one was responsible. He may have later discovered that it was the baker who had made him sick.

Joseph did not hide the truth from him. There are some who would suggest that we don't preach about judgment or hell, it will scare them away from the church. Judgment and hell are the truth and the reality of anyone separated from God by unbelief in Jesus Christ. The difference between the gospel and Joseph's interpretation to the baker is that he was offered no hope because there was none. He was doomed and there was nothing he could do about it. The gospel proclaims that judgment and hell are the real future of anyone who rejects salvation through Jesus Christ but then offers hope through repentance and faith in Christ.

Scriptures:

<sup>20</sup> Now it came to pass on the third day, *which was*

Notes:

There are historical records of Pharaoh granting amnesty on his birthday and on the anniversary of his ascension to the throne (the birth of a 'god').

Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his

servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief

butler and of the chief baker among his servants.

Scriptures:

<sup>21</sup> Then he restored the chief butler to his

Notes:

butlership again, and he placed the cup in

Pharaoh's hand.

Scriptures:

<sup>9</sup>22 But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph<sup>B</sup> had  
interpreted to them.<sup>C 9 B</sup>

Notes:

Everything happened exactly as Joseph has interpreted the dreams. How that must have encouraged him as he waited for his own dreams to be fulfilled. He is likely to have gotten his hopes up. Maybe it was through his faithful interpretation of the cupbearer's dream that Joseph would finally be released from his false imprisonment.

Scriptures:

Psalms 42:1-5 -

1 As the deer pants for  
the water brooks,  
So pants my soul for  
You, O God.

2 My soul thirsts for  
God, for the living God.  
When shall I come and  
appear before God?

3 My tears have been  
my food day and night,  
While they continually  
say to me,  
"Where is your God?"

4 When I remember  
these things,  
I pour out my soul within  
me.

For I used to go with the  
multitude;

I went with them to the  
house of God,

With the voice of joy and  
praise,

With a multitude that  
kept a pilgrim feast.

5 Why are you cast  
down, O my soul?

And why are you  
disquieted within me?

Hope in God, for I shall  
yet praise Him

For the help of His  
countenance.

Romans 8:28-29 - And we  
know that all things work  
together for good to those  
who love God, to those who  
are called according to  
His purpose. 29 For whom  
He foreknew, He also  
predestined to be  
conformed to the image of  
His Son, that He might be  
the firstborn among many  
brethren.

<sup>C</sup>23 Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph<sup>3</sup>,  
but forgot him.<sup>3</sup>

2142 -

7911 - mislay

Application:

1. Believed
2. Depended
3. Served

Notes:

The butler completely forgot about Joseph. It would be two years before he is reminded of what Joseph did for him and then only because it would likely benefit him.

Joseph waited – days – weeks – months – years! God was still working on Joseph (Rom. 8:28-29).

"Joseph's life teaches us that disappointments are essential to spiritual growth because they demand faith and resting all hope upon God." (Hughes, 2004) page 473

"Delay never thwarts God's purposes: it only polishes His instrument." V. Raymond Edman (Hughes, 2004) page 473

'chief butler did not remember' reminds us of Jesus on the cross (Luke 23:32-43).

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Luke 23:32-43 - There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. 33 And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. 34 Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

And they divided His garments and cast lots. 35 And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He

is the Christ, the chosen of God."

36 The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, 37 and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself." 38 And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew:

THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS

39 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying,

"If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."

40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." 42 Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."