



# **THE BEGINNINGS!**

**The Book of Genesis**

## **Faith and Disappointment!**

**Genesis 40:1-23**

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**Sunday Morning Service**

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# Faith and Disappointment!

## Genesis 40:1-23

### Opening Comments

- Good morning – we will be in **Genesis 40**
- Today we continue our journey through **Genesis: THE BEGINNINGS!**
- One of the things that we do as humans is to look at the future and decide how we want it to turn out
- This could be something as trivial as how a sporting event turns out
- Or it could be more important – like how a job interview goes
- Or the results of a medical test
- We call those things expectations

**Expectation - a strong belief that something will happen or be the case in the future.**

- When I go into a restaurant, I expect good service and well-prepared food
- What happens when things don't go according to our expectations
- We are likely to experience some amount of disappointment

**Disappointment - sadness or displeasure caused by the nonfulfillment of one's hopes or expectations.**

- The higher your expectation – the greater your disappointment can be
- How a person handles disappointment says a lot about their faith
- It is impossible to go through life without experiencing disappointment
- It is what we do with disappointment that will impact our quality of life and usefulness to God
- Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to open our heart this morning
- **Pray**

### Teaching

- **Faith and Disappointment!**
- We are in the section of Genesis that focuses on the life of Joseph
- He was the favorite son of his father Jacob
- That favoritism got him in trouble with his ten older brothers

- And then God gave Joseph two dreams that indicated that they and their parents would someday bow down to Joseph - expectation
- His brothers betrayed him and sold him into slavery – disappointment
- God was with Joseph and he was sold to Potiphar who saw God’s hand on him and promoted him – expectation
- Potiphar’s wife took a liking to Joseph and tried to get him to sleep with her
- He refused and she falsely accused him of trying to rape her
- And now he is in prison – disappointment
- God was with him there in the prison too – promoted
- We can’t know what Joseph expected to happen there in prison, but years pass – must have been hard **Proverbs 13:12**  
**Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but *when* the desire comes, *it is* a tree of life.**
- Then some new prisoners show up
- **Genesis 40:1-4**
- Some translations use the word ‘cupbearer’ rather than butler
- ‘cupbearer’ is a better translation
- The butler/cupbearer served wine or other drinks to Pharaoh
- The baker served food
- We are not told what the offence is that landed them in prison, but it might have to do with something Pharaoh ingested that made him sick
- May noy not have know who caused it so he blamed them both
- Joseph was put in charge to serving them during their time in prison, which probably wasn’t very long
- **Genesis 40:5-8a**
- Dreams were very important in Egyptian culture
- They believe dreams connected them with another realm of existence
- There was a pseudo-science that grew up with professional dream interpreters who used a vast collection of dream books to interpret the symbols found in dreams
- The butler and the baker were sad, not because they were in prison but because they had dreams that they knew were important but had no one to interpret them
- God can and does speak to people in dreams

- If you search Amazon for ‘dream interpretation’ hundreds of books are available.
  - There are even some that claim to be biblical dream interpretation.
  - Be careful – not all dreams are from God
  - In fact, most of them probably aren’t from God
  - Speaking about false prophets, the apostle John gave us sound counsel regarding things like dreams **1 John 4:1**
- Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.**
- Test with Word of God and seek good biblical counsel
  - Joseph sees these two men and can tell that something is wrong with them
  - He doesn’t respond with a ‘boo-hoo, poor you’ or a ‘suck it up buttercup’
  - His question is proof that God has been doing a work in him
  - Before he was betrayed by his brothers, he exhibited very little sensitivity to them – he was a self-centered teenager
  - He has no human reason to show care or compassion to these two pagan unbelievers – except that God has been remaking his heart
  - And then Joseph says something that is remarkable
  - **Genesis 40:8b**
  - Joseph is talking to two men who grew up and practiced idol worship to a pantheon of false gods
  - Joseph is saying your false gods cannot help you
  - Neither can the dream interpreters and their dream books
  - Only the One True God can interpret dreams
  - Then he says, ‘Tell them to me, please.’ Why would he say that?
  - Joseph believes that God gives dreams, interprets them for people, and most importantly, brings those dreams into reality
  - Remember, God gave Joseph two dreams, that have not become reality yet, but he still believed God would do it – that’s faith
  - All of Joseph’s ups and downs did not wreck his faith in God
  - And by asking them to share their dreams with him he is offering to act as the conduit through which God can give them an interpretation
  - This is also a bold confession of his faith to unbelievers

- The butler/cupbearer shares first
- **Genesis 40:9-13**
- The interpretation is quick and simple
- In three days, you will be released from prison and restored to your position as cupbearer
- Good news for the cupbearer
- And then Joseph makes a request
- **Genesis 40:14-15**
- Notice the phrase, ‘when it is well with you’
- Joseph believed that the interpretation was true and certain
- That confidence gave him the boldness to ask for a favor
- He had been taken from his family and had been falsely accused
- ‘remember me’ tell someone about my situation – get me out
- Joseph rightly assumed that it was God’s providence that brought these two men into his presence
- It was God who gave them the dreams and interpretation
- Therefore, God might be planning to use them to get him out of this difficult situation
- We will see that he is right, but it won’t happen right away
- The baker is there listening – good news for the cupbearer – must mean good news for me
- **Genesis 40:16-19**
- In three days Pharaoh is going to have you beheaded and hang your body up so the birds can eat it – not good news
- Notice Joseph tells him the truth as hard as it is
- There are some truths in Christianity that are hard
- The Bible teaches that if someone dies without faith in Christ that they will face God’s judgment and end up in Hell forever – that’s hard
- Some churches refuse to tell people about judgment and hell – afraid that it will push people away or make them angry - But it is the truth
- The difference between the gospel and Joseph’s interpretation to the baker is that the baker 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.
- We are not told how they responded to this interpretation
- The cupbearer probably felt a sense of hope
- The baker may not have accepted the interpretation but inwardly feared that it was true
- Three days passed slowly for these two guys
- **Genesis 40:20-22**
- Joseph had faithfully given the interpretation God gave him for the dreams
- Good news for the cupbearer and bad news for the baker
- How do you think Joseph felt as the cupbearer left to return to his life in service to Pharaoh?
- Did he expect the cupbearer to remember him as he had asked?
- Did he wake up the next morning and think maybe today is the day this nightmare will end?
- Did he expect God to act immediately? After all it was God who providentially arranged to whole thing
- One day led to days – to weeks – to months – to years – disappointment!
- It would be a full two years before the cupbearer would ‘remember’ him
- Why did it take two more years? Because! No answer is given

### **Romans 8:28-29**

**And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the 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.**

- The Bible is silent on the two years that Joseph waited for the cupbearer to remember him and show him kindness
- What was God doing?
- I came across a quote many years ago that has helped me during those periods of disappointment, waiting for God to act
- **Robert Murray M’Cheyne** – one of the great spiritual men of the past

**“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.”**

- In that last sentence you can substitute the word ‘awesome’
- God was preparing Joseph to do something great
- Only God knows when His tools are ready for use
- If God is not moving fast enough for you, remind yourself that whatever you are going through is conforming you to the likeness of Jesus
- It is that likeness that God can use to change the world around you
- He used Joseph at the age of 30 to save Egypt from a famine and to save his family from starvation – after about 12 years of preparation
- He took 40 years to prepare Moses to be useful to God at the age of 80
- David spent more than a decade running from king Saul before he was ready to be king
- God is doing a great work in you – making you like Jesus **Philippians 1:6**

**...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ...**

- Last week I got to see what a weapon prepared for the task at hand could accomplish
- Whether you are a weapon against the evil in this world or a tool for God’s glory, you are being prepared by every circumstance and experience of your life for the work He has prepared for you
- Yield yourself fully to him and let Him use you to do something great
- **Prayer!**