

## **Genesis 41:37-57 A Profile of Faithfulness 10/21/18**

*This proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants. <sup>38</sup> And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?" <sup>39</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. <sup>40</sup> You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you." <sup>41</sup> And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." <sup>42</sup> Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck. <sup>43</sup> And he made him ride in his second chariot. And they called out before him, "Bow the knee!" Thus, he set him over all the land of Egypt. <sup>44</sup> Moreover, Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no one shall lift up hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." <sup>45</sup> And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphenath-paneah. And he gave him in marriage Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On. So, Joseph went out over the land of Egypt.*

*<sup>46</sup> Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went through all the land of Egypt. <sup>47</sup> During the seven plentiful years the earth produced abundantly, <sup>48</sup> and he gathered up all the food of these seven years, which occurred in the land of Egypt, and put the food in the cities. He put in every city the food from the fields around it. <sup>49</sup> And Joseph stored up grain in great abundance, like the sand of the sea, until he ceased to measure it, for it could not be measured.*

*<sup>50</sup> Before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph. Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, bore them to him. <sup>51</sup> Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh. "For," he said, "God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house." <sup>52</sup> The name of the second he called Ephraim, "For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."*

*<sup>53</sup> The seven years of plenty that occurred in the land of Egypt came to an end, <sup>54</sup> and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. There was famine in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. <sup>55</sup> When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph. What he says to you, do."*

*<sup>56</sup> So when the famine had spread over all the land, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. <sup>57</sup> Moreover, all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe over all the earth.*

(Pastor prays)

If you've been with us this year, you know we have covered all the patriarchs, and Joseph stands out among them. He's the only one who never had anything negative said about him. He's the only one who seems to have had a monogamist marriage, and that was to a non-believer. Furthermore, in all of the Old Testament, Joseph gives us the clearest foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus, who would come to save us from our sins.

B.E. Meyer invites us to think of the parallels between Joseph and Jesus:

- Joseph was rejected by his brothers; Jesus would be rejected by the Jews.
- Joseph was sold for 20 pieces of silver, Jesus for 30 pieces.
- Joseph had his garment ripped from him; Jesus had His robe torn from Him.
- Joseph was in prison with two criminals; Jesus hung on the cross between two criminals.
- With Joseph, one criminal perished and the other was saved; with Jesus one criminal perished and the other was saved.
- In the end, Joseph was raised to the position of Prime Minister of Egypt. In the same way, Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to His position as Lord of Lords and King of Kings.
- Pharaoh will tell people during the famine, go to Joseph and live. In the same way, the Gospel message says go to Jesus for He is the way, the truth, and the life.

Today, we join the story of Joseph as he ascends to a place of success, authority and usefulness. And even as his life points us to Jesus, he also gives us an example or a profile of faithfulness and reminds us what God can do in the life of one believer like you as you, by God's grace, cling to Him in a daily effort to bring Him honor.

## **God's Grace is Clearly Seen in Your Faithfulness**

I want to use three phrases to walk through this narrative. The first one is...

### **Evidence of Grace**

If God's grace has gripped your life, then there will be clear evidence of the Gospel. Let's illustrate it with Joseph. We are dropped into a story that is already in progress. After explaining the dreams of Pharaoh, Joseph gives a clear plan between verses 33-36. Now let's go to verses 37-39 and listen to what the pagan Pharaoh says about Joseph. *This proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants. <sup>38</sup> And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?" <sup>39</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are.*

Notice especially in verse 38 how the Pharaoh recognized that this young man had something that he didn't have and that God was the source of it. Now certainly the Pharaoh's use of "Spirit of God" is colored with polytheism and paganism. And as he looked at Joseph, although he didn't understand it, he saw evidence of God's grace.

Pharaoh preached more Gospel than he ever knew. The same thing happened in John 11 when there was such an uproar about Jesus. John tells us in John 11: 49-50, *But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. <sup>50</sup> Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish."* In the same way, Pharaoh said more than he understood because he could see evidence of grace.

I think the big question of us is, *Is there evidence of God's grace in your life?*, evidence that gives you the confidence that you are indeed in the faith? John Whitley wrote a book and I recommend it to you. It's called **10 Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health**. It's very helpful. I'll list a few of the questions.

- Do you thirst for God!
- Are you increasingly governed by God's word?
- Are you more loving?
- Do you have a deep concern for the spiritual needs of others?
- Are the spiritual disciplines important to you; giving, reading, worship?
- Do you grieve over sin?
- Do you forgive quickly?

You see, when Jesus changes you, it's not just a *decision* you made, it is a *life* God has given you in Christ. And there will always be evidence of grace.

## Centered By the Gospel

Let's go back to the story. From verses 43-45, you see Pharaoh elevating Joseph, and just look at what happens to him.

Now remember that 24 hours ago, he was a slave. In verse 40 it says - *you are over my house second only to me*. In verse 42, he was given a signet ring and clothes of fine linen. Nobody will take this robe from him. A gold chain was placed around his neck. Verse 43 says, he goes public riding as the Prime Minister and people paid him homage. In verse 45, he was given a new name and was accepted into high society. He was given a royal marriage and now he is moving on up.

Now this is where so many people fall. So often a promotion or more money ruins people. It's remarkable to me the way Joseph kept his eyes on God in adversity, and why that I think it is more remarkable that he kept his eyes on God in prosperity. So often prosperity breeds compromise but Joseph seems to have a growing grasp on how God is using him because, right after his promotion, he starts in verse 46 to follow the plan that God gave him.

How do you stay faithful in good times? I would like to suggest that just as Joseph put on the royal garments in verse 42, that you and I are to put on Christ. It's what the Apostle Paul said in Romans 13: 14, *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires*. One of the evidences of God's grace in your life is that you are centered *on* and *by* the Gospel. There is evidence of grace, you are centered on the Gospel, and the third phrase is ...

## Peace With the Past

If you have been hurt, damaged or abused, it's really hard to get over. Some of you know that all too well. And how easy would it have been for Joseph to carry a justified hatred for all of those who had wronged him so badly? It's true that if his brothers had not hated him and if he hadn't been sold and if he had not been imprisoned, then he never would've ruled in Egypt. But even still, they really hurt him and hurt runs deep.

But I want you to notice something in verses 50-52 and specifically notice the sons that God gives Joseph and what he named them. *Before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph. Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara priest of On, bore them to him.*<sup>51</sup> Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh. "For," he said, "God has made

*me forget all my hardship and all my father's house.” 52 The name of the second he called Ephraim, “For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.”*

Manasseh And Ephraim. There are a couple of things to notice here. First, those were *Jewish* names, an indication that Joseph remained completely faithful to the God of the Bible. But, more pointedly, notice what the names signify in verse 51.

**Manasseh** - God made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house. Not that he cut his family off and forgot those people. No, what Joseph is saying is that God had healed his wounds. God had made his life fruitful.

Do you see that in the name of his second son? **Ephraim**. God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction. Some of you need to claim this as a life verse. If you get so obsessed with your disappointment and hurts, your whole life gets warped. Joseph couldn't live like that. He did what some of you need to do. You need to drop the past off in the ocean of God's grace. That's just what Paul says in Philippians 3:12-14 describing the Christians struggle. *Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

God's grace is seen in your faithfulness. There is evidence of grace, you are centered by the Gospel, and you have peace with the past.

*(Pastor explains The Lord's Supper and prays)*