

The Book of Genesis

Chapter Forty

God's Hand in God's Man

Lesson Verse:

I. Lesson Introduction

- A. Joseph finds himself in prison for refusing the lustful intentions of Potiphar's wife. Although Joseph was innocent of any evils, he was falsely accused and numbered with the transgressors.
- B. It is not until chapter 41 that we begin to understand how all things work together for good to them that love the Lord (Rom 8:28). Satan meant evil towards Joseph by casting him in prison, but God used this as a way to exalt Joseph to the side of Pharaoh.
- C. As long as Joseph was in the house of Potiphar, he was only a blessing to one family, namely Potiphar. Even so as long as Jesus was a man, even though He was God, He was primarily a blessing for one nation: Israel. It was after He died and was resurrected that He became a blessing to all nations, *John 12:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit...*

II. Lesson - GOD'S PLAN FOR HIS MAN.

A. Joseph Changed Positions Again But "He" Did Not Change.

1. Once again Joseph changed positions physically but the man Joseph did not change. His character was the same in prison as it was in the house of Potiphar: honest, hard-working.
2. One of the greatest mistakes we make is acting on the belief that changing locations will change us. This is a major tool of deception used by Satan that prevents us from being fruitful. What we must learn and put into action is we have to make the changes _____. Or else when we get to a new location we commence doing the same things, only in a new location.
3. From a favoured servant to a favoured prisoner, *Gen. 39:22.*
 - a. Joseph found himself a favoured servant of Potiphar. The very family that praised him and being a blessing to their home was about to turn their backs on him.
 - b. Once again the Holy Spirit draws us a picture of Jesus. The same nation that hailed Him "King Of the Jews" one day was crying "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" before the week ended.
4. Fellow prisoners, *Gen. 40:1-2.*
 - a. The butler, as he is called here in *Genesis 40*, was not a butler as we know butlers today. The title butler actually means _____, and it was usually a position designated in the service of the king. The butler had the pleasure or misfortune to bear the cup to the king and drink of it before the king. If the butler died, normally the king would not drink from that cup.
 - b. The baker was also a steward for the king. This baker's particular task was to bake a variety of delicious breads for the king and his guest.
 - c. Both of these men dreamed a dream one night. Upon arising they recalled the dreams but were troubled and perplexed because they did not know what the dreams meant. Their dreams bothered them so much inside that their troubles were manifested in their physical attributes. This external manifestation of our inward feelings is called our countenance.
5. What our countenance (face) reveals (7).
 - a. Our countenance reveals our heart. Being able to see the countenance of a person presents a vivid view of the soul.
 - 1) God saw that the countenance of Cain was evil. Cain had an evil heart.
 - 2) Jacob saw that Laban's countenance toward him had changed. Laban's heart was a conniving one.
 - 3) When Hannah, *1 Sam. 1:18*, received word that she would be a mother, her countenance was no longer sad. Her heart was made glad with the news!
 - 4) Nehemiah's countenance was sad, *Neh 2:2*, and the king read it as such. Nehemiah was disturbed over his country.

- b. Joseph read the countenance of these two fellow prisoners and realized something was bothering them. He did not inquire as to what was bothering them to spread it as gossip. He had genuine compassion for them, and even though he was in the same state as they, he offered them comfort.
6. Joseph had empathy.
 - a. Here is another attribute of the Lord manifested in Joseph. He read the countenance of the prisoners and had empathy with them. Jesus read the multitudes and had compassion for them, *Mark 8:2-3*. Each time He saw the multitudes He was moved with compassion. Knowing He would one day die for their sins, and that the very nation wherein He showed Himself mightily unto would one day deny Him, He still went about helping them.
 - b. Joseph was in the same prison as the butler and the baker. Joseph had his problems. He was a young man in a strange country surrounded by foreigners. However, his countenance was not one of sorrow. He was not a self-centred person; neither was Jesus.
 7. Christian brothers and sisters ought to have _____, *1 Pet.3:8-9*.
 - a. If we are only concerned with self, we cannot see the misfortunes of others. As long as we are looking inside at our problems we will never show empathy for our loved ones or friend.
 - b. Christians ought to have compassion one for another, and usually we do as long as it is someone within our circle of friends. However, at some time or the other we need to have compassion on every member of the local church body. At some time or the other we need to extend this compassion to those who are not members of the body and use it as means of witnessing to the lost. The only way we can is by looking at others and get our eyes off self and our clique.
 - c. Each time it is recorded that Jesus had compassion on someone it was seldom if ever on one of His disciples. Jesus rebuked His disciples more times than He had compassion on them. He used stronger language on them than He did the multitudes. Why? It was because He was moulding them for the work after He was gone. He was trying to get them to look outwards instead of inwards. He wanted them to reach out to the lost world just as He was doing. He wanted them to look to God as their sole comfort. As long as they looked inward they would never look at God. As long as they were looking inward they would never look out and see the fields were white unto harvest.
 - d. God promised a blessing to those that would show compassion.

B. When It Is Well With You, Think of Me (40:14-

1. Once again we see Joseph as a type of Christ as he humbly asked someone who was about to be restored to remember him. We ought to remember Him each day for what He has done for us. If we cannot remember Him when it is well with us, how long will it take us to remember Him when things are bad for us?
2. The butler restored (15 .
 - a. Joseph had good news for the butler. His offense was about to be forgotten and he was to be restored to his former position. Mercy was offered to him. The butler was asked but one thing from the lowly prisoner Joseph: When it is well with you, think of me.
 - b. The butler is to leave the prison in three days, and be restored to his former position as cup bearer to the king. In many ways the butler is a type of the child of God that lost a position due to sin, and regained it back through mercy. The butler is also a type of the repentant thief.
 - c. The butler in prison with no hope of getting out short of a miracle. Then without any effort on his part, grace is extended to him.
3. "Think of me"
 - a. In the words of Joseph asking the butler to think of him we see a picture of the Saviour asking His church to remember Him. No where in scripture does the Bible record the Lord asking the lost and condemned to do something in remembrance of Him. However, He did ask the church to confess their sins and think of Him, *1 Cor 11:25-26* *After the same manner also he took the cup, hen he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.*

4. The baker hanged.
 - a. The baker reminds the reader of someone who delays to act until they understand how such and such a thing is going. Then once they see that there is something personal to gain, they jump on the band wagon and ride it until something better comes along. This is the mental attitude of the baker.
 - b. There are many church members that act and think just like the baker. They hang around church just to listen to what will take place and if it will benefit them. If there is nothing personal to gain, they drift off into the world. In about two to three months they drift back in again, hoping there will be something in it for them.
5. What is in it for us?
 - a. Christians ought to have the humility and compassion manifested in Joseph. Christians ought to have the motivation of the butler. We ought not wait to see if God is going to bless someone for their labours. We ought to be labouring because it is commanded by God.

III. Conclusion and Questions:

- A. Joseph Compared to Jesus Genesis 40. Using Joseph as the example show how Jesus' life was pictured by Joseph.
 1. Although Joseph was innocent, he was _____.
Compare what Isaiah recorded about Jesus, Isa 53:12, to the events recorded about Joseph.
 2. Upon seeing that the butler and the baker were sad, Joseph interceded for them and interpreted their dreams. In so doing Joseph was a blessing to one and a judge to the other. Did not Jesus intercede for two transgressors? Was He not a blessing to one and a judge to the other? See Luke 23:39-43.
 3. Joseph was bound in prison, Gen. 40:3. He was the innocent, falsely accused, accursed by his brothers, accursed by his old friends, and he opened not his mouth to say anything in his defence. To understand how Joseph portrays Jesus, read Isaiah 53 with the plight of Joseph in mind.
 4. The Bible records that the chief butler forgot about Joseph, Gen. 40:23. Of whom are we reminded when we study the forgetfulness of the butler?
 5. What is the one remedy that always reminds us to not forget? See Ps. 50:14, 100:4-5,