

THE FORGOTTEN FAVOR

Genesis 40

Do you know what it's like to face those times in your life when GOD TAKES TOO LONG?

Joseph's trust in God is again put to the test while he's in prison.

He was faithful to God when faced by the temptress.

And what did he get for his faithfulness to God and master?

He's thrown in jail! That's not fair!

How can God let that happen to His faithful servant?

Again he establishes a reputation for outstanding service in jail.

But he is stuck there for two years!

Why doesn't God DO something about it?!!

The prison years

39:20b-41:1

JOSEPH'S SUCCESS IN PRISON 39:20b-23

God is with him

Though thrown in jail unjustly, the Lord is with him and blesses him there.

Even in jail in a pagan country, God blesses Joseph.

God doesn't take Joseph out of the place of suffering, but He is with him in it!

The warden puts him in charge of everything.

Joseph again demonstrates leadership ability and trustworthiness

The warden trusts Joseph and puts him in charge of everything in the prison

God gives him success in everything he does.

Rather than get discouraged and sit around pouting all day, Joseph determines to serve God faithfully in the prison.

He stands out in the crowd as someone who is different.

JOSEPH'S ENCOUNTER WITH THE KING'S SERVANTS 40-41:1

The servants' arrival 1-4a

During the time Joseph is in prison, Pharaoh throws two of his servants into jail.

They offended the king in some way.

He's angry with them.

In the midst of a pagan prison, Joseph is able to represent God.

He couldn't yet see how God could use this.

But God's at work!

His faithful service in jail eventually leads to his exaltation.

If he just sat around lamenting his mistreatment, he wouldn't have been used by God, nor ready for the next step!

The servants' dreams 4b-5

The servants' discouragement 6-8

Their assumption: they need pagan magicians to interpret the dreams for them.

Their frustration: they can't turn to the king's magicians.

The gods are trying to tell them something!

But they can't reach them!

Since there aren't any magicians in prison, they'll never know what the dreams mean!
Therefore, they are discouraged.

God provides the opportunity for Joseph to demonstrate His trust in God—even in jail!

Their situation is demonstrated by their dejection. 6-7

Joseph had enough problems of his own!

He could have missed the clues altogether!

When we're focusing on our problems—when we're acting like *victims*—we miss the opportunity for God to do His work through us!

He cares enough about them—even though they're *pagans*—he observes their sadness. He cares. He asks. *He offers to help! GOD USES HIM IN THEIR LIFE!*

He was used by God to minister to others, even in his own adversity!

God's faithful servant seizes opportunity to demonstrate trust in God!

Joseph ministers to them, even in his own adversity!

He reminds them that this is GOD's role! **40:8**

JOSEPH REFUSES TO TAKE CREDIT FOR HIMSELF!

God is the source of dreams

Only GOD can interpret their dreams.

God is able to interpret their dreams concerning their future.

Joseph is ready to seize the opportunity to represent God.

Joseph wants to clarify their misunderstanding.

It doesn't matter that there are no magicians.

Dreams don't belong to the magicians anyway.

Dreams come from God; He is the source of their interpretation!

They can trust GOD to interpret the dream for them!

[Through his encouragement about *their* dreams, God reminds *Joseph . . .*]

God hasn't abandoned Joseph's dreams either!

Joseph can trust God to fulfill the original dream too!

God hasn't abandoned *his* dream; re-affirmed by the dreams of the servants.

Their dreams remind *him* that God sends, and God interprets dreams.

He can trust God to carry out HIS plan in HIS life too!

Two distinct predictions 9-19

Prediction of restoration 9-13

Appeal for help to escape 14-15

He has been kind to them.

He asks the cupbearer to return the favor and remember *him*.

He asks him to show him "loyal love" even as he had done for them.

He was innocent.

Joseph knows he is suffering without cause.

He wants out of there!

Prediction of death 16-19

The baker had not expected good news.

When he heard the good news, he's encouraged to find out what *his* dream means.

His isn't good news! He's going to die!

Two dreams fulfilled as predicted 20-22

Joseph's faithfulness and acceptance before God is affirmed by the fulfillment of his prediction.

That fulfillment also re-affirms that God will fulfill HIS dream!

Joseph is forgotten in prison 23

In spite of his promise, when the prediction is fulfilled, the cupbearer forgets about Joseph.

The fulfillment still isn't going to happen yet!

Joseph delivered by Pharaoh's dream 41:1a

Joseph ends up forgotten in prison for 2 more years.

Again Joseph is frustrated because he has to WAIT for God's timing

What a waste! Doesn't God know that the years are passing?

I'm not getting any younger!

WHY DOESN'T GOD DO SOMETHING?!!

Nevertheless, even as he waits, **Joseph can still trust God.**

God isn't finished with him yet!

Phil. 1:6 . . . No matter how long it takes!

God's in NO HURRY!

Then the cupbearer remembers about Joseph and tells Pharaoh about him.

LESSONS FOR US FROM JOSEPH'S STORY:

1. Genuine faith isn't destroyed by God's delays.

Even in discouraging circumstances, Joseph trusts God and seizes opportunities God gives him to serve Him.

He doesn't sit around moaning, worrying and complaining.

2. Even in discouraging circumstances, people who trust God seize the opportunities God gives us to represent Him faithfully.

3. God often tests our faith in His promises before giving us greater opportunities.

4. People who are convinced God wants to use us trust Him, even in discouraging situations.

So, how about us, *are WE trusting Him?*