

"The one thing I ask of the Lord - the thing I seek most - is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, delighting in the Lord's perfections and meditating in his temple." Psalm 27:4



WEEK 3

TRIUMPH IN GOD'S TIMING

Genesis 40 - 41:36

Much had happened in the preceding days. It was a whirlwind of sorts for Jesus' disciples. Just 40 days prior, Jesus was brutally crucified and hung on a cross for all of Jerusalem to witness his humiliation and death. As grief and confusion swirled in the heads and hearts of Jesus' followers, three days later Jesus would show himself alive to His disciples. It was all making sense. Jesus must suffer first and then His glory would come. The disciples began understanding the things Jesus shared while they had walked with Him witnessing miracles, signs and wonders; hearing His teachings, and perceiving but not understanding the things of which Jesus spoke. Now it was all coming together.

Jesus joined them in an upper room in Jerusalem. They had been waiting for Jesus to set up His kingdom on the earth. Would that time be now? Jesus told them that they were to continue waiting for the Promise of the Father to be fulfilled. The Holy Spirit was coming to empower them in a few days. The disciples got excited thinking the future was finally lining up with what had been promised in the past. They probed deeper into Jesus' heart anxiously asking, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus interrupted their thoughts telling them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority" (Acts 1:6-7). Jesus had work for His disciples to accomplish. He would use them to reach out into the nations with the truth of the Gospel, affecting lives for eternity. They weren't to be concerned with dates, times or seasons. They were to trust God and rely on Him to accomplish all that He had promised.

We see this very principle operating in Joseph's life as we study through our verses today. Joseph had been given a dream by God concerning his future. So many things didn't make sense as Joseph watched time and time again his life's trajectory change in unpleasant and unwarranted directions. But deep in his heart Joseph knew that God had His hand on each detail. As Jesus came to do the will of His Father in Heaven, so too, Joseph was doing God's will. His life was being used by God to touch the lives of rulers, jailers and prisoners in Egypt. As Joseph suffered much the last ten plus years, today we'll see Joseph brought to a place of status and glory with one man's suggestion. God is setting in motion the framework for Joseph to help save the Egyptians and Jews from starvation while pointing them all to God. Right where Joseph is, is right where God needs him to be.



Joseph could have easily lost heart, cursed God and fallen into despair; yet, quite the opposite is seen. His life demonstrates a deep conviction of God's love and sovereignty, allowing Joseph to truly triumph in God's timing. Waiting is so excruciatingly hard sometimes, especially when our eyes tell one story and our faith tells another. And yet, I (Stacy) have seen God's faithfulness over and over again in my life, my circumstances, my disappointments and my deep trials. I don't know what dreams God has put in your heart, but may you be encouraged as you study through the verses today that God's timing is truly best. "For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, It will not tarry." Habakkuk 2:3



R RECEIVING God's Word

Open in Prayer

Read Genesis 40-41:36



E EXPERIENCING God's Word

Experience 1: Genesis 40:1-23

1. Read Genesis 40:1-4. While in prison, Joseph meets two high-ranking men from the royal court who have been detained in the same prison as him. Who are they and what did they do to deserve being put in jail?
 - a. What was Joseph's position of authority over these men?



2. Read Genesis 40:5-7. What new character trait is revealed through Joseph's behaviors toward the new prisoners when he saw they were sad?

3. In verse 8 we learn why the prisoners are sad. What is the reason given?
 - a. Joseph responds to their need by acknowledging God's omniscience. How does he offer to help them?

 - b. Read Jeremiah 17:7. Joseph has been in one trial after another for the last ten years, yet we see him speak confidently about the Lord and His power. What does this demonstrate about Joseph's faith in God?

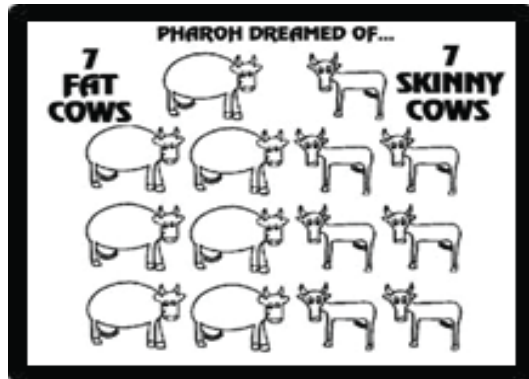
 - c. Consider that Joseph's dreams from God have not yet been realized, and his life circumstances do not demonstrate any likelihood that they will be fulfilled anytime soon. How might the enemy have used these circumstances negatively in Joseph's attitude, faith and willingness to listen to the butler's and baker's dreams?



Experience 2: Genesis 41:1-36

1. Read Genesis 41:1-8 and 17-24. Two years have passed and Joseph is still in prison. Pharaoh had two dreams that greatly troubled him. From the verses you just read, answer the question below.

Describe Pharaoh's first dream as it coincides with the image below.



Describe Pharaoh's second dream and draw your own picture of the content in the box below.



2. Read Genesis 41:9-15. The chief butler speaks to Pharaoh recounting his days in prison under the care of Joseph. Romans 8:28 says that "And we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." In one moment, God changed Joseph's life situation for good. From these verses in Genesis, how did God use the people listed below to change the direction of Joseph's life?

- Pharaoh
- the magicians
- the chief butler



TIME STAMP

Before the digital age, when important paper documents were received, a clerk would use an ink stamp to mark the time and date on them to stand as an official record of an event. It has been said that life events can also be like “time stamps” upon our hearts. Incidents that happen in life, both good and bad, leave an indelible stamp upon us and are not easily forgotten.

Joseph has many “time stamp” moments in his life. As you look back on this week’s lesson, what events would you say are “time stamp” moments for Joseph?



A ACTING on God’s Word

Have you ever experienced a difficult time which tested your patience regarding God’s timing only to encounter a person who repeated a well known cliché to try and encourage you? Perhaps they said something like, “God’s ways are not our ways,” or “God is rarely early, but never late.” Although these statements are certainly true, often in times of waiting and uncertainty we just want answers sooner rather than later.

Stacy and I (Brenda) had planned to go away and write this study at a particular time, but “God’s ways are not our ways.” Stacy broke her leg, and then my husband had to be out of town when we were planning to be away, so we postponed our trip. We were both annoyed by the delay. Then a week prior to leaving on our rescheduled writing trip, I got the flu and a sinus infection. Once again, we needed to delay leaving until I was well enough to travel. “God is rarely early, but never late.”



The funny thing though about the clichés I’ve mentioned is that they are actually pretty profound when coupled with the bigger picture of God’s sovereignty. Stacy and I watched several interesting events unfold during the rescheduled trip, and they made us ponder God’s timing. The day when we arrived to write, the internet was not working at the home where we were staying. The gracious homeowner reached out to the internet provider, and we received a technical support call from a gentleman in the Philippines. As he was trouble shooting, he began a conversation with us. He asked us if we were on a vacation. We explained we were not, but rather away to write a women’s Bible study. He laughed and said, “You can pray for me.” Well, you just know Stacy and I jumped on the chance to pray with the guy! We said, “Absolutely! How can we pray for you?” He told us that his wife was about to have their second child, and he wanted prayer for the birth of the child and her pregnancy. There was concern in his voice. He did not go into detail regarding the circumstances, just that he was expecting a baby girl. Before we concluded our call, Stacy and I prayed for him, his wife and the unborn child.

Stacy and I had an agenda when going away to write, and it included having working wifi, no distractions and lots of productivity! This unwanted glitch seemed like just another pause in accomplishing our purposes for the trip. However, after studying the life of Joseph for several days, we then saw our postponements as God’s providential timing. We were given an opportunity to pray with a man who needed it, at just the right time, which might not have occurred if we had traveled to write as originally scheduled. Perhaps you can identify well with disturbances and delays. Let’s take some time to reflect on how these may be used very purposefully by the Lord.

1. How do the following clichés about God’s timing ring true in your life?

You may provide your own cliché if you would prefer.

- “God’s ways are not our ways...”



- “God’s rarely early, but never late...”

2. What Biblical principles apply to what you have written above? Is there a verse God has given you or a concept He is teaching you while you wait?
3. Now, let’s get a bit more specific. Over the course of just the last month, write several delays that have unfolded. Then answer the questions below:
 - a. Has God allowed you to see the purpose for the interruption(s)?



- b. If He hasn't given you that level of clarity yet, write a prayer below thanking Him for what He will do with this set of events He has allowed and how it will strengthen your faith to trust His timing.
- c. Is there anything in the lesson about Joseph's life that you can apply to your own waiting?



D DELIGHTING in God's Word

From today's verses, how has the Lord prompted you to pray?



Write a verse from the chapter that God has spoken to your heart.

Close in Prayer