

Never Forgotten

I. Slide1 Intro: Never Forgotten

- A. Joseph had *several cycles of loss and restoration*.
- B. **Joseph's timeline**: he was **17** when story starts/sold into slavery (37:2).
28 when he entered prison in Egypt. **30** when he gets out & promoted (41:46).
 1. Which was maybe **11 years** of temptations from Mrs. Potiphar. **OR....**
 2. He was **17** when story starts/sold into slavery (37:2). **30** when he gets out & promoted (41:46) **so 13** in prison (2 yrs from ch.40).
- C. Here Joseph is about to interpret 2 Dreams. **I had a dream 2 nights ago...**
- D. **Start reading** from Ch.39:21. [**listen for character qualities** in Joseph as I read]
- E. **Prayer**: *God what do you want to communicate with us? Lord how will this truth help us commune with you? As we read this text will You read our hearts? Please speak and reveal Yourself to us. Please communicate Your thoughts and emotions of this story.*

II. Slide2a PRISON MINISTRY (1-4) serving others

- A. 1st thing I see here, *don't get into baking* :)
- B. **Slide2b Ask**. What **qualities** did you pick up on about our friend **Joseph** here? **Ask**.
 1. Serving others (4). Care/empathy (7). Humility (8). Innocence (14). Honest reality (16-19). Ability of hearing from the Lord (12,18). Patience/trust (23).
 - a) **Here, he attended them** - He served/looked after/saw to the needs of the other prisoners. **He treated** them as **human beings**.
- C. **Why were Joseph's victory over temptation** (last ch.), **and using opportunities that come his way to prove God and help others, so important at this stage?** [God is building character]

III. Slide3a 2 DREAMS (5-8) care/empathy

- A. **Dreamed** - dreams were considered a common mode of divine communication in the OT **and** the wider ancient Near East.

1. Joseph affirms this worldview in v.8. He knows that **God** is the source of correct interpretation.
- B. (8) His **experience with dreams** (37:5-9) **and his confidence in God's sovereignty** prompt his request for these men, and Pharaoh in the next ch. to tell him their dreams.
- C. **Care/empathy** - Wherever we are in the world, there's a *fellowship of sad and lonely hearts* for us to cultivate. Like Joseph, let's seek to help others, and so find *solace & support & help* for ourselves. [it starts with just **noticing**, *hey, you having a bad day?*]
 1. He was touched by **their hurt**. And they shared their anxieties with him (trust).
 2. Do people trust you with their hearts? Why/why not?
- D. Slide3b Joe not only had a **position** but a **ministry**. Do not neglect *small acts of ministry*.
 1. **Faithfulness** in *the very little*, leads to **the throne-life**.
- E. (8) Note his **humility**. *Interpretations belong to God* (not me).

IV. Slide4a **CHIEF CUPBEARER (9-15)** *ability to hear from the Lord* (12,18)

- A. **Cupbearer** (מִשְׁקֵה, mashqeh). An officer of high rank in ancient *Egyptian, Persian, Assyrian, and Jewish courts*.
 1. It was the duty of the cupbearer to fill the king's cup and deliver it to him.
 2. Slide4 Since this position offered regular opportunities to poison the king, the chief cupbearer had to be **highly trustworthy**.
 - a) According to *Xenophon of Athens*, ancient cupbearers **drank** some of the king's wine **to see** if it was poisoned before they offered the cup to him (Cyropaedia 1.3.9).
 3. **Other biblical cupbearers**: Nehemiah was cupbearer to King Artaxerxes of Persia (Neh.1:11).
 4. King Solomon also had cupbearers (1 Kgs 10:5; 2 Chr 9:4).
 5. According to Xenophon, ancient cupbearers **drank** some of the king's wine **to see** if it was poisoned before they offered the cup to him (Cyropaedia 1.3.9).
- B. (12) Joseph had an *ability to hear from the Lord* (12,18 *this is its interpretation*).
- C. (13) Ps.3:3 *But you, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head.*

- D. Slide4c (14) There is such a *human touch* in Joseph's request to the cupbearer, *only remember me*.
- E. (15) I was indeed stolen - *contempt* for the circumstances of his arrival in Egypt or his *shame* regarding being sold into slavery by his brothers.

V. Slide5a CHIEF BAKER (16-19) *honest reality*

- A. (17) **all sorts** of baked food for Pharaoh - **38** varieties of **cake** and **57** of **bread** were listed in *The Dictionary of the Egyptian Language*. Which give an idea of the professional standards of this department.¹
- B. Slide5b (19) *birds will eat the flesh from you* - this would be especially horrible to an Egyptian.
1. Egyptians at this point in history linked *preservation of the body* to their *wellbeing in the afterlife*. [i.e. mummies, King Tut, etc.]
- C. Prepare for death.
- D. Since **Joseph** is *a type of Christ*, these 2 men (cupbearer & baker) remind us of the 2 thieves crucified beside Jesus. *To the one he was the savior of life, to the other of death*.

VI. Slide6 HOPE DEFERRED (20-23) *patience/hope*

- A. Slide7 (20) Only 2 birthdays in scripture. Jeopardy: Bible Birthdays for \$400? *Who was the 2nd?*
1. Hey Pharaoh, *what do you want for your birthday?* Impale someone, alright.
- B. Slide8a (22) Type of hanging was by *impalement* in that day/region.
- C. (23) A 2nd *human touch*, yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but **forgot him** - a few **days** went by, I'm sure expecting every moment to hear that Pharaoh had commanded his release. *The days became weeks, weeks became months, months became a year. Then another*.
1. Slide8b Hope was *deferred* for Joseph. Prov.13:12 *Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire/dream nlt fulfilled is a tree of life*.

¹ The Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache (Dictionary of the Egyptian Language) large Egyptian hieroglyph dictionary. By Erman, Adolf, 1854-1937; Grapow, Hermann, 1885-1967

2. Slide8c Joseph learned to hope no longer *in man*. All *human* hope was now lost Yet, “Joseph’s thoughts, however, did not creep down slimy stairways to gravel in base thoughts of suicide; *instead* they borrowed Jacob’s ladder and lifted Joseph up to heaven’s halls.” John Phillips, *Exploring Genesis*, pg.315.

3. Slide9 Ps.42:1-3,5 *As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? 3 My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, “Where is your God?” ...5 Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.*

D. Now despite the bleak outlook...*do you remember an earlier mention of God’s favor with Joseph?* that hints that something good is looming on the horizon. (39:20-23)

1. BTW this incident **will lead** to the highest promotion in his life.
2. GOD DID NOT FORGET HIM.
3. *Bleak outlooks*, can turn into sovereign preservation.

E. How did God make Joseph's prison experiences *work together for good?*

1. 2 or 13 year investment into the future. Serve others now.

F. **Take Away’s:**

G. If Joseph could interpret the dreams of the **butler** and the **baker**, he must've been able to understand his own dreams.

1. Which must've been an *encouragement*, knowing that one day his 11 brothers would have to bow before him. Not from “pride” standpoint, but from “God is in control” frame of mind.

H. Slide10 “Sometimes God allows/permits what He hates to accomplish what He loves.”

Joni Eareckson Tada, *The God I Love*

1. i.e. it was 100% **unjust** that Potiphar threw Joe in prison. God hates *injustice*.
2. *Sometimes God allows/permits what He hates to accomplish what He loves.*
 - a) How does that apply to your life? What injustice has come your way?

- I. Joe could say like Paul, *and I am certain that **God**, who **began** the good work within you, will continue his work until it is **finally finished** on the day when Christ Jesus returns.*

Phil.1:6