

REAL SUCCESS Sunday School- January 8, 2012

Unifying Topic: JOSEPH FINDS FAVOR

Lesson Text

I. Joseph Interpreted Pharaoh's Dreams (Genesis 41:37-45)

II. Joseph's New Position (Genesis 41:50-52)

The Main Thought: And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is? (Genesis 41:38, KJV).

Unifying Principle: Earning other people's faith in us can lead to great responsibility and honor. What results can we expect when others have faith in us? Egyptian king, Pharaoh had faith in Joseph's abilities, elevated him to the second position in all of Egypt, and gave him responsibility for ruling the day-to-day activities of the kingdom.

Lesson Aim: To study Pharaoh's actions in response to his recognition of and appreciation for Joseph's abilities.

Life aim: To explore how superior performance can lead to greater responsibility and eventual honors by leaders and the community.

37 And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants.

38 And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?

39 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art:

40 Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.

41 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

42 And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;

43 And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.

44 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

45 And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.

50 And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him.

51 And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.

52 And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

HISTORY:

Chapter 40:1-23 Things have changed, from Joseph living in the palace to Joseph now living in the prison which was called the dungeon. He is in the prison with the rest of the criminals. He notices two prisoners who had offended and angered Pharaoh (they are the butler and baker of Pharaoh's court). They were in charge of Pharaoh's drink and food. Perhaps both were in prison because someone had tried to poison Pharaoh, or so it seemed, and Pharaoh could not determine immediately which of the two men were responsible. The chief jailer was in charge of the prison, under Potiphar's authority. Therefore, Joseph was put in charge of caring for their needs by the captain of the guard.

Joseph still had a servant's heart. "*The greatest among you shall be your servant*" (Matthew 23:11-12). Joseph became stronger through serving and observing those in need. He learned to care and to be kind. There was a need that arose where the butler and baker both had dreams. Joseph acknowledged God's power and interpreted the dreams.

As he interprets the butler's dream, he says that there would be restoration for him in three days. The butler was the cupbearer who supplied the wine after tasting it for Pharaoh. Joseph asked the butler to remember him; show kindness to him; and make mention of him to Pharaoh that he would bring him out of the prison. Now as far as the baker's dream, the interpretation was not good. The baker would be hanged on a tree and birds would eat his flesh in three days. "*And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants*" that all of the interpretations came to pass just as God had given them to Joseph to interpret.

It ends with the butler forgetting all about Joseph in prison. Joseph spent about 2 years in Potiphar's household. He will spend about 2 full years in prison. Joseph became stronger through disappointment. He learned to wait patiently on God! Joseph was tested by forgotten promises.

Chapter 41:1-36 At the end of two years in prison, Pharaoh was disturbed with a dream by God. He slept and dreamed the second time. His spirit was troubled and he sent forth for his magicians and wise men to interpret the

dream. However, when he told it, they could not interpret the dream. God has power to strengthen and trouble men and He has power to make men ineffective. The butler now remembers when he was in prison and dreamed a dream in which a young Hebrew interpreted his dream which restored him to his office with Pharaoh.

Pharaoh sends for him and prepares him to come before royalty by shaving and changing his raiment. God has power to make men remember and He has power to deliver His servant Joseph. Now, Joseph, still being a servant was needed to help others! Joseph lets Pharaoh know from the start that it is not himself that will do it, but God would give an answer of peace. He tells Pharaoh that God has showed Pharaoh the future; there will be plenty and there will be famine. The basic truth is a warning. God gave Pharaoh two dreams because God has determined it and God will bring it to pass. Joseph tells Pharaoh to look out and find a discreet and wise man to place over the land of Egypt. He was to save and store up; centralize authority; store food in major cities; and keep food in reserve against the bad years that were coming. God has power to give counsel and wisdom and to speak through His servant Joseph showing how the need could be met.

LESSON:

Genesis 41:37- 45 Joseph Interpreted Pharaoh's Dreams

41:37 And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. The wise counsel God inspired Joseph to give was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and the eyes of all his servants. The dreams and the interpretation made sense. In fact, even if the famine never came, the government couldn't lose. They would own all the grain in storage, and they could export it to other nations. All of these thoughts were running through the minds of Pharaoh and his officials and they recognized it as sound wise advice.

41:38 And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is? God used Joseph to cause men to acknowledge His Spirit, to acknowledge that He works in His servants and in the world. Pharaoh and the other governmental officials had no more understanding about the Spirit of God and His workings than any other unbeliever does. But they did believe one thing: it took some supernatural power to enable Joseph to interpret the dream. In addition, his advice was very wise and sound. Consequently, they could do no less than acknowledge that the Spirit of God dwelt in Joseph. His God had the power to control nature and to live in His servant.

41:39 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: Pharaoh told Joseph just what he thought of him: there is no one as discerning and wise as Joseph. But note why: because God was with him; God had revealed all this to Joseph.

41:40 Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. By accepting Joseph's interpretation of his dreams, Pharaoh chose to place himself under Joseph's God for now. Joseph was exalted over all the people of Egypt. He was put in charge of the entire palace, everywhere except the throne of Pharaoh himself. Joseph was second in command—like the secretary of state. God rewarded his humility by preserving the land of Egypt in the coming famine.

V41 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh had declared unto Joseph his position and authority. It could not be denied. Pharaoh had spoken!

41:42 And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; Now he makes it official by taking off his hand his own royal signet ring and placing it upon Joseph; dressing him in beautiful clothing of fine linen; and placing his royal gold chain around his neck. All of these were symbols of full authority.

41:43 And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. Joseph had to be publically accepted by the people, therefore, he was displayed before the people in the second chariot (the one behind Pharaoh) and the people cried before him; commanding all to bow their knee in honor of Joseph. This was his great introduction to the people and to let them know that he was second in command!

41:44 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. Joseph was given the very protection by Pharaoh himself. Pharaoh made it plain that Joseph was the one to go to. No person would be able to lift a hand or foot in Egypt without the approval of Joseph. What authority! God has the power to use His servants as He wills. In Joseph's case, it was to serve God and men by saving Egypt and Israel from utter devastation. In our case, it may be to simply help a person here and there as we minister to them. But no matter our call in life, we are to allow God to use us. What if Joseph had not followed God?

What if he had not allowed God to use him? What if he had turned from God during the terrible trials he had to suffer? Thank God for those that hears, believes and follows!

41:45 And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt. The more he was accepted and appreciated, the easier his task would be. Therefore, there were two things Joseph needed.

1. Joseph needed a new name; Pharaoh knew this, so he gave Joseph an Egyptian name: Zaphnath-paaneah. The meaning of the name is unknown, but various suggestions have been made, such as, "*abundance of life*," "*the god speaks and he lives*" (H.C. Leupold, *Genesis*, Vol.2, p.1035), or "*Savior of the world*," "*Revealer of Secrets*," and "*God's Word Speaking Life*" (Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record*, p.587). The Egyptian name would, of course, make it easier for Joseph and the people to identify with one another.
2. Joseph needed a wife and family to help him become more socially acceptable to the Egyptians. Therefore, Pharaoh gave him Asenath, the daughter of an Egyptian priest. Most likely Joseph would never have agreed to marry her unless he had witnessed to her and led her to believe in the true God of heaven and earth. He was too close and too dependent upon the Lord to enter a worldly marriage. She was, after all, to become the mother of his children, children who were to become part of the great people Israel. God had the power to meet our needs, both personal and social needs.

Joseph had declared one basic truth: God was revealing to Pharaoh what God was about to do and it elevated him to whole new status. Joseph lived for God and trusted Him at every step.

Genesis 41:50-52 Joseph's New Position

41:50 And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him. God has the power to bless his servant's personal life. Joseph was now blessed with two sons who were destined to become two of the most important tribes of the nation Israel.

41:51 And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. The first son was named "*Manasseh*", which means "*forgetting*" or "*making to forget*." God was making Joseph forget the terrible trials and suffering he had gone through. God was removing the bitterness, the sting, and sorrow of those days. Note: even the suffering caused by his brothers (in his father's household) was being removed from his heart and memory.

41:52 And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction. The second son was named "*Ephraim*", which means "*double fruit*." God was blessing his life so much that he wanted to declare the fact in the very name of his son. God was making his life abundantly fruitful, just overflowing with blessing after blessings even in the land of his affliction.

SUMMARY:

After interpreting Pharaoh's dream, doors began to open for Joseph. "*The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water, He turns it wherever He wishes*" *Pro.21:1*. God moved Pharaoh to choose to hear and accept Joseph's interpretation of his dream. After interpreting Pharaoh's dream, Pharaoh put him in charge of his whole kingdom; gave him all power and authority. He was second in command. You know what it's like—given the company car, spending company money, keys to the building, can hire and fire, abundant of fine clothing, even a new executive name and companion. What more can you ask for? Joseph was living the favored life and given everything he desired and more than he could even ever think of, but he was still God's servant! God gave him children and through their names, he did forget his pain and suffering. And he was doubly fruitful.

It's a wonderful thing when we can come through times of trial with the kind of attitude Joseph had, burying past hurts and rejoicing in present blessings, being forgetful and fruitful at the same time. What a tragedy when people remember the painful things others have done to them, and all their lives carry bitterness that robs them of peace, joy and, real success. Just as Joseph laid aside his prison clothes and made a new beginning because of God's favor, so we frequently need to take off the old hurts and put on a new attitude of faith and love for the success God has in store for us. God will show us His timing for real success because He does not forget a promise.

APPLICATION:

Stay humble and you will find yourself in positions you hadn't dreamed of because of God's favor.