

INTRODUCTION: GENESIS 40

- We are in a series called Living The Good Life and it's taken from Genesis 50:20 where Joseph says to his brothers what you meant for evil... God meant for good
- Last time we looked at how God is working all things in our lives... good and bad... together, synergistically to reveal the good which is Christ in us the hope of glory
- Thus living the good life comes down to a decision on our part on how we are going to see the circumstances we experience through life
- We will either see them as working together for our good or evil people working to get us
- As we are going through the story of Joseph we are deriving principles from his life on Living The Good Life and the first one we looked at is life is unfair, but God is always good.
- I would encourage you to go back and listen to last week's message
- This week we are going to look at another principle from Joseph's life... the principle is this... the way up is down
- To say it plainly... if you want to rise above your circumstances you need to learn how to serve in your circumstances
- Or as I like to look at it... If you're a servant in your circumstances, you can't be a slave to your circumstances
- Serving is a choice, slavery is a violation
- Unfortunately, many people complain and act as if they are being violated when asked to serve... because they have not made the decision to be a servant in their circumstances

Jesus said it like this...

Matthew 20:26–28 (NKJV)

**26 Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.
27 And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."**

When you consider who Jesus is

- Jesus is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords
- Jesus is the Creator of all things
- Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father
- Jesus is the righteous Judge of the Earth

- If there is anyone who could demand that others serve Him, it would be Jesus
- And yet Jesus didn't come to be served but to serve
- Not only did He come to serve, but He took it a step further in that He laid down His life as the ultimate act of service
- Thus serving others is truly an act of love
- And any act of love is never coerced – that's slavery
- Any act of love is never an obligation – that's legalism
- An act of love is always a choice... it's something you choose to do, to willingly lay down your life for another to serve them
- God honors us when we willingly lay down our lives and make the decision to serve one another and it's only from this position that we are able to serve with joy

Jesus addressing the Pharisees said...

John 10:17–18 (NKJV)

17 “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. 18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”

- When you choose to lay down your life, no one can take advantage of you
- No one can disappoint you
- No one can play you because you have made a decision to serve
- I'm laying my life down for you by my own decision which means I have the power to take it back... so it's a choice

In Genesis 40 Joseph is in prison

- The chief butler and the chief baker of the King of Egypt are thrown into prison and Joseph is given the responsibility of taking care of them

But I want to call you attention to vs. 4

Genesis 40:4 (NKJV)

4 And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them;

- It's the same word that is used when serving in the tabernacle

- It's used in reference to serving a person of extreme importance like a King
- It's also used in reference to the ministry of worship as the Priests would minister to or serve the Lord
- Thus Joseph served the chief butler and chief baker as an act of worship to the Lord
- This is an important distinction because it reveals to us Joseph's mental state
- Although he was sold as a slave, falsely accused and thrown into prison, he didn't have a slave mentality
- He didn't have a hostage mentality
- He didn't see himself as being a prisoner of circumstances
- He saw himself as a servant of God and this gave him the ability to serve as unto the Lord
- It would have been easy for him to think... I have no choice... I have to do this... and allow the slave mentality to trap him
- It would have been easy for him to think... I'm obligated and if I don't do this I'll lose my privileges and thus fall into a hostage mentality
- I just need to keep my head down and do what I'm told
- It would have been easy for him to take on a sense of obligation... I have to do this, it's my job and fall into a legalistic mentality
- But Joseph never lost his sense of identity... he knew he was a Hebrew son, the son of a freeman and a servant of God
- This allowed Joseph to serve with freedom and joy, even showing compassion on the chief butler and the chief baker

There are # principles we will discover about serving

- The first is when you choose to serve, you are free to love

Notice vs. 7... we'll pick it up at verse 5

Genesis 40:5–7 (NKJV)

⁵ Then the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who *were* confined in the prison, had a dream, both of them, each man's dream in one night *and* each man's dream with its *own* interpretation. ⁶ And Joseph came in to them in the morning and looked at them, and saw that they *were* sad. ⁷ So he asked Pharaoh's officers who *were* with him in the custody of his lord's house, saying, "Why do you look so sad today?"

- Joseph asks... why do you look so sad today?
- The language supports the idea that Joseph was truly concerned, he wanted to know
- Because he cared they opened up and shared what was troubling them
- This brings us to our second principle

When you choose to serve, others are free to be vulnerable

Genesis 40:8 (NKJV)

8 And they said to him, "We each have had a dream, and *there is* no interpreter of it." So Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell *them* to me, please."

- Both the chief butler and the chief baker share their dreams with Joseph
- But I want to point out Joseph's response... he is somewhat aggressive with them... he says Tell them to me please.
- He wasn't going to let them leave without ministering to them
- This is what I've learned about people in need... most when asked will tell you everything is fine
- Especially if they are embarrassed or feel hopeless

EX: When we lived in Escondido, a family in our home group was struggling financially. The husband was out of work and they couldn't pay their rent and no one knew because they were too embarrassed to talk about it. He was doing everything he knew to do, but just wasn't having success on getting another job. One day someone noticed they were down and insisted on knowing and found out their situation and brought it to me. We prayed about it and sensed the Lord leading us to do something about it. We discreetly called everyone in our small group, to not embarrass them, and were able to raise enough money to pay their rent. We actually did it a couple of times. That little act of service gave them the boost they needed to get back on their feet.

- True compassion will insist on knowing what is really going on
- Please tell me... let me serve you
- Pride will keep you from receiving a blessing
- I want you to know... Calvary Chapel is a safe place to share what you're really going through

- We may not be able to pay your rent, but we can pray and I know God answers prayer and I've seen God provide and meet people's needs in extraordinary means
- Sometimes he pays their rent, sometimes he delivers them from the things that are keeping them from creating wealth... and thus He always answers prayer
- This brings us to a 3rd principle

When you choose to serve, you are free to hear God

- Notice in vs. 8 Joseph says... do not interpretations belong to God?
- He knew his place and he knew God's place and that's the mindset of a servant
- When you start thinking that the work of the Spirit depends on you, you are now placing yourself on equal ground with God
- When someone asks you to pray for healing and you are hesitant to pray, it's because you think the power to heal resides with you
- It's true for all the gifts... whenever you take on the pressure of having to perform... to give a word of knowledge, a word of wisdom, a word of prophecy, a teaching and you think I can't do this
- It's because you think you're the teacher, you're the prophet, you're the evangelist and you think I can't do this
- But a servant never thinks they are more than their master
- They are just a servant and they do what they're told

Joseph understood this... do not interpretations belong to God?

- The chief butler tells Joseph his dream and Joseph says to him... (Vs. 12) this is the interpretation of it
- (Vs. 16) we read the chief baker saw the interpretation was good
- In other words, it's a favorable one with a good outcome
- So he shared his dream and in (vs. 18) Joseph says this is the interpretation of your dream and of course it wasn't a good outcome
- Which goes to show you, a true prophet doesn't always have good news and I'm always suspicious of self-proclaimed prophets who only give good news to people
- God has given me a word that you're to stand before kings
- I rarely hear one of these guys in a meeting say... God has given me a word you're going to be the head of an army of brooms and you will sweep large rooms clean and polish floors hallelujah!

- They give home on the range prophecies... where seldom is heard a discouraging word and the skies are not cloudy all day
- In vs. 22 we read both dreams came true just as Joseph had interpreted them
- Now we don't read of Joseph taking his dream interpretation experience on the road
- He doesn't write a book, start an online course teaching Joseph's Amazing Technicolor Dream Interpretation Workshop for \$ 50.00 a person
- He doesn't start headlining conferences
- In fact, he never even acknowledges his gift
- Pharaoh is the one who changes his name and calls him the "Revealer of Mysteries"
- But Joseph only sees himself as a servant of God and thus he isn't affected by the praise or the thanklessness of man
- This brings us to our 4th principle

When you choose to serve, you are free from disappointment

- When Joseph gives the chief baker the interpretation of his dream, he says to him...

Genesis 40:14–15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. ¹⁵ For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon."

But then we read in vs. 22

Genesis 40:22–23 (NKJV)

²² But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. ²³ Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

- Now if I were Joseph, I would have been depressed
- I would have thought to myself... that's the last time I'm helping anyone
- It never gets me anywhere... I serve, I get taken advantage of and then I'm forgotten
- Being a servant of God doesn't pay off... I'm done!

- But that's not what Joseph does... he keeps serving because Joseph knows the favor on his life, the blessing on his life is not because of his talents or giftedness

It's because the Lord is with him

Genesis 39:23 (NKJV)

²³ The keeper of the prison did not look into anything *that was* under *Joseph's* authority, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made *it* prosper.

- 2 years later God gives Pharaoh a dream that none of his magicians or wise men can interpret
- The chief butler remembers his promise to Joseph and recommends him to Pharaoh which Joseph interprets and as a result is made the 2nd in command over all of Egypt next to Pharaoh
- In 13 years, Joseph goes from the pit to the palace and for 13 years he served those who oppressed him, who afflicted him, who enslaved and imprisoned him... because he wasn't their slave, their prisoner
- He was a servant of God

Philippians 2:5–11 (NKJV)

⁵ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross. ⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- You can choose to be a victim of circumstances, doing the hard thing, serving out of obligation... which is really legalism
- Or you can take on the attitude of Jesus... to choose to humble yourself and be a servant out of love for God and others
- When you do God will exalt you
- The way up is down