

Suddenly

Joseph was imprisoned unjustly. But he maintained a great attitude. The people of Egypt wandered around the desert for 40 years because they complained and had such a bad attitude. But while Joseph must have felt the unfairness, he showed great character. We know that because the jailer promoted him to look after all the other prisons. Joseph had developed a character through God's work in his life that meant wherever he was; he was promoted and was favoured by God and by man. Even in prison where he was in charge, he wasn't a power-mad possessive nutcase, but truly was a forerunner of Jesus in that he served. In Genesis 40, we read that when Pharaoh's butler and baker arrived, *"..the captain of the guard put them in Joseph's charge, and he served them"*

Can we say the same about ourselves? Do you have such a great attitude? Would others say the same about you? Do you go the extra mile at work? Does what comes out of your mouth line up with the Word of God? Does your public performance line up with your private performance? The thing about Joseph in prison was that he couldn't escape others and develop a Christian dual personality! What you saw was who Joseph was. Do we have this kind of integrity? We have a choice to make. Are we going to obey God's Word and allow the Holy Spirit to challenge us and change us? Are we going to choose to take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ, to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit (who is described as a dove) so that we don't grieve him and can hear him?

Life is not always fair. Joyce Meyer says that you can't always control what happens to you, but you can control what happens in you. Joseph had learned this lesson.

So how can we get to this place of God's favour?

Joseph offers us a 4 step solution, found in Genesis 39.3-4:

"And his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all that he did to flourish and succeed in his hand. So Joseph pleased [Potiphar] and found favour in his sight, and he served him. And [his master] made him supervisor over his house and he put all that he had in his charge."

- The Lord was with Joseph. This speaks of Joseph's life of worship. The master saw the Lord was with him, which speaks of Joseph's humility – crediting God for his success and not himself.
- Because God was with Joseph, he made all Joseph did flourish and succeed.
- Joseph served his master. His service was such that it impacted the house.
- This favour of God and Joseph's servant heart and character was noticed by those who didn't know God, so Joseph was promoted.

Even when Joseph was imprisoned, we read in verses 21-23:

"But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy and loving-kindness and gave him favour in the sight of the warden of the prison. And the warden of the prison committed to Joseph's care all the prisoners who were in the prison; and whatsoever was done there, he was in charge of it. The prison warden paid no attention to

anything that was in [Joseph's] charge, for the Lord was with him and made whatever he did to prosper."

Then, when the chief butler forgot about Joseph, having promised to mention Joseph to the Pharaoh, we don't read anything about Joseph complaining. You think he did? I think he didn't, as there is no mention on Joseph losing God's favour or being demoted. He persevered, despite it all. The man who had been sold by his brothers had grown in God. We need to do the same.

God is with us

God is with us, even when we feel imprisoned or in a dark or difficult place. God's hand was with Joseph when things seemed to be visibly going well and when things seemed not to be going so well. God has promised never to leave us, forget or ignore us. He has promised to be with us always, even to the end of time. He is with you today, no matter where you are. God is working on your future. As you persist with the right attitude, faithfully serving God, he is going ahead of you, working things out. He has answers to things that haven't even happened yet!

Ecclesiastes talks about times and seasons.. Galatians 4.4 talks about 'when the fullness of time had come / when the proper time had fully come, God sent Jesus..' God has a timescale, even though he is outside of time (go figure that one). When the time is right, when the elements have come together, God will move.

1 Peter 5.10 (The Amplified Bible) says: "And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace [Who imparts all blessing and favour], Who has called you to His [own] eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will Himself complete and make you what you ought to be, establish and ground you securely, and strengthen, and settle you."

Genesis 41.33-44

(So now let Pharaoh seek out and provide a man discreet, understanding, proficient, and wise and set him over the land of Egypt [as governor]. Let Pharaoh do this; then let him select and appoint officers over the land, and take one-fifth [of the produce] of the [whole] land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years [year by year]. And let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming and lay up grain under the direction and authority of Pharaoh, and let them retain food [in fortified granaries] in the cities. And that food shall be put in store for the country against the seven years of hunger and famine that are to come upon the land of Egypt, so that the land may not be ruined and cut off by the famine. And the plan seemed good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said to his servants, Can we find this man's equal, a man in whom is the spirit of God? And Pharaoh said to Joseph, Forasmuch as [your] God has shown you all this, there is nobody as intelligent and discreet and understanding and wise as you are. You shall have charge over my house, and all my people shall be governed according to your word [with reverence, submission, and obedience]. Only in matters of the throne will I be greater than you are.

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his [signet] ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in [official] vestments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck; He made him to ride in the second chariot which he had, and [officials] cried before him, Bow the knee! And he set him over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without you shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphenath-paneah and he gave him Asenath daughter of Potiphara, priest of On, to be his wife. And Joseph made an [inspection] tour of all the land of Egypt. Joseph [who had been in Egypt thirteen years] was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went [about his duties] through all the land of Egypt.)

The Transformation

God has a great plan for you. 2 years after the butler left prison, Pharaoh had a dream that no-one else could interpret. All the magic, the occultic powers, the human wisdom was left floundering, useless. Only God could interpret the dream, through Joseph. Joseph was called up because he had been tested and had proved himself. God was clearly with him, God was glorified and Joseph was promoted. Years in prison were turned around in 1 moment, a moment God had been preparing Joseph for over the years. Pharaoh turned to Joseph and all of Joseph's skills and characters came to the forefront to interpret the dream, bring glory to God and create his own job! God moved suddenly, because God's training into Joseph put together with Joseph's right choices and character meant that Joseph was ready.

When God was ready, Joseph was ready and the circumstances were ready – God moved suddenly. From prisoner to the promise of God in a day. From jail to ruler over Egypt. From a life leading prisoners, to a life leading a nation. From a lonely life, to a married life. All in one day. Where is God leading you today? Remember, the greater the level, the greater the training from God.. So where are you at today?