

Series: Beginnings, Betrayal, Blessings
Title: LESSONS FROM PRISON: FROM PRISON TO PRINCE
Text: Genesis 40-41

Introduction

From the Pit to Property

From Property to Prison

- A prison of our own making
- A Prison of another's making
 - A sense that our life is going nowhere
 - A deep desire to escape

- A job
- A marriage
- A situation
- Life itself

What if it a prison of God's making?

THE STORY

Genesis 39:21-23 **Anointed to Succeed**

²¹ But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. ²² And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. ²³ The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because the Lord was with him. And whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed.

Genesis 40:1-4 **Appointed to Serve**

¹ Some time after this, the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and his baker committed an offense against their lord the king of Egypt. ² And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, ³ and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where Joseph was confined. ⁴ The captain of the guard appointed Joseph to be with them, and he attended them. They continued for some time in custody.

- Cupbearer – The butler – the wine
- Baker – the bread
 - Because these two are named, it is likely that a plot was discovered that an assassination was planned, by poisoning and the two were the key suspects.

- They were in trouble
- They had fallen from great positions
- They found themselves in the crossroads with Joseph

Genesis 40:5-8 Available to Bless

⁵ *And one night they both dreamed—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison—each his own dream, and each dream with its own interpretation.*

⁶ *When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were troubled. ⁷ So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in custody in his master's house, “Why are your faces downcast today?” ⁸ They said to him, “We have had dreams, and there is no one to interpret them.” And Joseph said to them, “Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell them to me.”*

- **Do not the interpretations belong to GOD?**
 - Possibly one of the most revealing statements in the Bible
 - OUR perspective, our opinion, our insights, our thoughts, our choice, our way, our own understanding
- **Each his own dream, and each dream with its own interpretation.**

“My ways are not your ways”

Genesis 40:9-15 – The Cupbearers Dream

- A vine with three branches clustered with grapes, pressed into the cup and offered to Pharaoh
- The Interpretation – three days he would be lifted up and restore him to his office

Genesis 40:14

¹⁴ *Only remember me, when it is well with you, and please do me the kindness to mention me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house.*

Genesis 40:16-19 – The Baker’s Dream

- Three cake baskets on his head and the top basket had all kinds of baked food for Pharaoh
- Birds were eating it out of the basket on his head
- Interpretation – Three days Pharaoh will take off your head and hang you from a tree. The birds will eat your flesh.

Genesis 40:20-23 – The Dreams Fulfilled

- Three days later there was a party for Pharaoh's birthday
- A feast for all the servants
- The cupbearer and the baker were brought up for the feast
 - The cupbearer restored
 - The baker hanged

Genesis 40:23

²³ *Yet, the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.*

Genesis 41:1-8 – Pharaoh's Dreams

- Cows
 - From the Nile seven plump and attractive cows.
 - Seven ugly and thin cows who ate the seven attractive cows.
- Ears of Grain
 - Seven plump and good ears of grain on one stalk.
 - Seven thin and blighted ears of corn swallowed up the seven good ears.
- He called for the magicians and wise men.
 - They could not interpret it.

Genesis 41:9-13 – Joseph Remembered

- The cupbearer remembered his offenses.
- Tells Pharaoh of Joseph's ability and that he had interpreted his dream and the baker's dream accurately.

Genesis 41:14-24 – Joseph before Pharaoh

¹⁴ *Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they quickly brought him out of the pit. And when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came in before Pharaoh. ¹⁵ And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." ¹⁶ Joseph answered Pharaoh, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer."*

- Pharaoh tells Joseph the dream
 - And I told it to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me."

Mike Mazzalongo, a writer for BibleTalk.TV says this:

- This could have been a great opportunity for Joseph to:
 - Be proud and flattered by this attention.
 - Try to bargain his way out of jail.
 - Exchange his power for financial reward.
- His thirteen years in captivity had taught him patience, restraint and humility.
 - He immediately acknowledged that he had no power except by God.
 - He made no conditions for the interpretation.
 - He assured Pharaoh that the situation although difficult, would end in peace.
- In the past Joseph had used his gift to try to dominate and elevate himself in front of his brothers,
 - ...but now after the painful lessons he had learned,
 - ...he managed to act in a restrained and gracious way
 - ...while in control in the king's court.

Genesis 41:25, 32 – Joseph interprets Pharaoh’s Dream

²⁵ *Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do.*

³² *And the doubling of Pharaoh's dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about.*

- The dreams of Pharaoh are ONE.
 - The good and the bad are together: Seven good years and seven bad years.
 - Both the good years and the bad years are part of one story.
 - Both give us the opportunity to bring godliness into the world and to work to help others.
- God is doing this. It is fixed, appointed, determined by God. It will happen.
- God will reveal it.

Genesis 41:33-36 – Joseph offers God’s Plan

³³ *Now therefore let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt.* ³⁴ *Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land and take one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plentiful years.* ³⁵ *And let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it.*

- Appoint a wise and discerning man
- Appoint a team to collect 20%
 - from all growers
- Appoint a saving plan

- Build storage facilities to hold the 20%

Genesis 41:37-45 – Joseph Appointed as Prince

³⁸ And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?”

³⁹ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. ⁴⁰ You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you.”

⁴¹ And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.” ⁴² Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck. ⁴³ And he made him ride in his second chariot. And they called out before him, “Bow the knee!” Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁴ Moreover, Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no one shall lift up hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.” ⁴⁵ And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphenath-paneah. And he gave him in marriage Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On. So Joseph went out over the land of Egypt.

Genesis 41: 51-52, 57

⁵¹ Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh. “For,” he said, “God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house. ⁵² The name of the second he called Ephraim, “For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.”

⁵⁷ Moreover, all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe over all the earth.

- He was raised to the highest from the lowest
- He fulfilled the task before him
- Was given the daughter of Pharaoh for marriage
- Blessed with sons
- Built granaries in all the cities
- 49 And Joseph stored up grain in great abundance, like the sand of the sea, until he ceased to measure it, for it could not be measured.

Genesis 41:55

⁵⁵ When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph. What he says to you, do.”

DREAMS

I have to stop here and deal with the topic of dreams. They play a major role in the entire story of Joseph.

- His dream as a youth and its final fulfillment at the end of Genesis
- The dream interpretation of the butler and the baker
- The dream interpretation of Pharaoh

God Speaks Through Dreams

“Potter” (פּוֹתֵר) = to solve a riddle

- The Hebrew word for “(dream) interpreter” is “Potter” (פּוֹתֵר), (which means to solve, as in solving a riddle).

“Tofer” (תּוֹפֵר) = to sew.

- The same letters rearranged spell the word “Tofer” (תּוֹפֵר) which means to sew.

The Hebrew Vocabularic does not have vowels, therefore many Jewish teachings from before Christ to after Christ look at the letters of the word.

- The word has meaning and the letters have meaning.
- Every letter has meaning.
- And each letter can be seen in different orders to reveal other mysteries.
 - One can hold to this or not... I only suggest that this is a known practice for Jewish theologians and rabbis.

Chabad Lubavitch of Greenwich – Hassidic philosophy focusing on God, the soul, and the meaning of the Jewish commandments.

- Joseph was able to solve the dreams as well as solve the challenges of life, by realizing that he must serve as the needle that would sew together all of the fragments and create unity.
- To Joseph every experience, both positive and negative, was part of the tapestry of a single story.
- **From Joseph we learn that every soul is like a sewing needle.**
 - Like the needle's point, we possess the ability to penetrate the fabric and sew things together.

- We have the ability to penetrate the material and connect it to the divine, to pierce through the outer shell and discover that all of creation is but an expression of the one G-d.
- The negative moments in life, the challenges one faces, are confusing until one sews them all together to achieve the big picture.
- The ability to solve and “interpret” the dream comes from infusing every moment and every experience with meaning.
- No matter where a person is, he is always able to ask:
 - What can I accomplish this moment? Who can I help? How can I advance the cause of goodness and kindness?

List of Dreams in the Bible

- God spoke to the pagan ruler Abimelech in a dream ([Genesis 20:3](#)).
- God spoke to Jacob in dreams ([Genesis 28:12](#), [31:11](#)).
- God spoke to Laban in a dream ([Genesis 31:24](#)).
- God spoke to the Midianite in a dream ([Judges 7:13](#)).
- God spoke to Solomon in a dream ([1 Kings 3:5](#)).
- God spoke to Nebuchadnezzar in a dream ([Daniel 2:1](#)).
- God spoke to Daniel in a dream ([Daniel 7:1](#)).
- God spoke to Joseph in dreams ([Matthew 1:20](#), [2:13](#), [2:22](#)).
- Wise men (Matthew 2:11, 12)
- God spoke to Pilate’s wife in a dream ([Matthew 27:19](#)).
- In the last days (Acts 2:17)

Revelations in the Night

God speaks

Job 33:14-15 NIV

For God does speak—now one way, now another— though no one perceives it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on people as they slumber in their beds, –

Prophets –

Numbers 12:6 NIV

he said, “Listen to my words: “When there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, reveal myself to them in visions, I speak to them in dreams. –

Daniel –

Daniel 1:17 NIV

“And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.”

Paul –

Acts 16:9 NIV

During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” –

Not all dreams come from God.

- **Here are verses that talk about false dreams (coming from the enemy) and dreams of the soul.**
- **Or what many like to call pizza dreams.**

FALSE DREAMS

Jeremiah 23:25-28 ESV

²⁵ I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, ‘I have dreamed, I have dreamed!’ ²⁶ How long shall there be lies in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart, ²⁷ who think to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, even as their fathers forgot my name for Baal? ²⁸ Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the Lord.

Jude 1:8

In the very same way, on the strength of their dreams these ungodly people pollute their own bodies, reject authority and heap abuse on celestial beings. –

DREAMS OF THE SOUL

Too much on your mind, restless, bad pizza

Ecclesiastes 5:3

A dream comes when there are many cares, and many words mark the speech of a fool.

- Stress and struggle will produce dreams

Nebuchadnezzar - “I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means.”

WHAT ABOUT DREAMS TODAY?

- We don’t want to give a dream too much attention when it’s just a soul dream and we don’t want to neglect a dream when it is God trying to speak to us.

Acts 2:17

In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

Be Grounded in the Word

- Being a prophetic individual you MUST be grounded in the word. You must understand it, know it, and live it.... You can't pick and choose but understands The Word as a whole.

Write it down and pray

- This takes time and practice. One of the best things you can do is simply write down your dream and pray. Ask God for clarity and insight. Ask Him if this is from Him or not.

Trust God and Test with Scripture

- Trust that God will guide you and always put your dream to the test with the Bible. And I hope these scriptures about dreams helps.

LESSONS

Lessons from Prison

TRUST IN THE LORD

- The Lord was with Joseph in Potiphar's House 39:2
- The Lord was with him in prison 39:21, 23
- He was with the Lord before Pharaoh 41:28, 32

Proverbs 3:5-6 ESV

⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Psalms 112:7 ESV

He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm, trusting in the LORD.

"To be trusted is a greater compliment than being loved."

- George MacDonald

"Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God."

- Corrie Ten Boom

DO WHAT YOU DO

- Your skills will come in handy
 - Don't be something you are not
 - Be who you are and serve how you can

Colossians 3:23-24 ESV

²³ *Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ*

Romans 14:12 ESV

So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Experiencing God by Henry Blackaby:

- “The Holy Spirit doesn't need to equip you for what you're not going to do.”
- “The fact that God can bring character development and personal growth out of any situation is conditional on people's willingness to submit to God's will. God is sovereign over every life, but those who yield their will to him will be shaped according to his purposes. When God directs a life for his purposes, all of life is a school. No experience, good or bad, is ever wasted (Rom. 8:28). God doesn't squander people's time. He doesn't ignore their pain. He brings not only healing but growth out of even the worst experiences. Every relationship can be God's instrument to mature a person's character.”
- “Many people want God to call them to a big assignment. However, they try to bypass the love relationship...the love relationship is why God created you. That is far more important to Him than what you do.”
- “Right now, God is working all around you.”

He was a dreamer and an interpreter of dreams

- His own dreams
- The Dreams of the two Prisoners
- Pharaoh's dreams

“Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers. It may not be difficult to store up in the mind a vast quantity of facts within a comparatively short time, but the ability to form judgments requires the severe discipline of hard work and the tempering heat of experience and maturity.”

- Calvin Coolidge

BE THE BLESSING

- “Second and Satisfied”
 - John Maxwell did a lesson on this, and I learned it early on in ministry
- Every world is a stage and we are all mere players
 - Star of our own story
 - Be the Best supporting actor on another’s stage
- Get Along with Others: You Never Know

Proverbs 19:17 ESV

Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed.

- He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord,
- ...And He will pay back what he has given.

Proverbs 11:25-26 ESV

Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.

Another translation:

The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself.

“The thing to do, it seems to me, is to prepare yourself so you can be a rainbow in somebody else's cloud. Somebody who may not look like you. May not call God the same name you call God - if they call God at all. I may not dance your dances or speak your language. But be a blessing to somebody.”

- Maya Angelou

BE PREPARED

- Do the Work
 - Get up, clean up, dress up, show up
- Faithful admin in Potiphar’s house
- Faith Admin in Prison
- Faithful Admin of the Nation

1 Peter 1:13 ESV

Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 27:12 ESV

The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.

“The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today.”

- American Author, H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

“One important key to success is self-confidence. An important key to self-confidence is preparation.”

- Tennis Great Arthur Ashe

“Success is where preparation and opportunity meet.”

- The Great Racecar Driver Bobby Unser

HAVE PATIENCE

- 13 years

“We could never learn to be brave and patient, if there were only joy in the world.”

- Helen Keller

- Handle what is before you
 - A house
 - A jail system
 - A nation
- God will reveal His plan in HIS timing.

It is a FRUIT of the SPIRIT

It is in the definition of LOVE

Proverbs 14:29

Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.

“Patience is not simply the ability to wait - it's how we behave while we're waiting.”

- Joyce Meyer

- He pointed to God the entire time.
- It was God who was doing this.
- It was God who was revealing this.
- It was God who let him forget his hardships.
- It was God who had made him fruitful.

Conclusion and Challenge

As we compare our lives to the lessons we learn from this passage, let's assess where we are in this journey.

- A place of favor in the Father's house

- Abandoned by others and in a deep pit
- Accused by others in a prison
- Ascended from prison to the purpose God has for you

From the Pit to the Prince

In each of those stations and struggles of our life we have to ask the following questions and seek the Lord to be able to answer each one in the affirmative.

Are you trusting in the Lord?

Are you using your skills for his glory?

Are you being the blessing to others?

Are you preparing for God's purpose for you?

Are you being patient, knowing God is in charge?

Prayer