

Readings

Scripture

³⁷ This proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants. 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 Potiphara priest of On. So Joseph went out over the land of Egypt.

- Genesis 41:37-45 (English Standard Version)

Reflection

Joseph prefigures Moses at the founding of Israel and Daniel at the end of Israel's monarchy. All three, oppressed captives in a hostile land, come to power by pitting God's wisdom against the wise of this world and displaying the superiority of God's wisdom and his rule over the nations. They prefigure Jesus Christ, God's wisdom, who astonishingly is raised from the cross to rule the world (1 Corinthians 1:18-2:16; Revelation 12:1-5). As all were commanded to bow before Joseph (Genesis 41:43), so "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Philippians 2:10).

- Bruce K. Waltke with Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (p. 537)

Sermon Outline

Hardships, Afflictions and Fruitfulness

Genesis 41

Intended for Good

Brad Anderson

God uses suffering in our lives to bring about fruitfulness through our lives.
(Genesis 41:1, 46a)

What has Joseph learned about the fruitfulness of God's love through a season of suffering?

Priceless lesson #1: Forgotten by man never means forgotten by God...

(Genesis 41:9-13)

Priceless lesson #2: "It is not in me," ever... (Genesis 41:15-16)

Priceless lesson #3: Name according to God's faithfulness... (Genesis 41:50-52)

Reflection Questions (taken in part from the Serendipity Study Bible for Groups)

- Why do you think we tend to forget pain? How would you describe the differences between forgetting painful situations that have happened to you and incorporating those painful situations as part of God's story in your life? Joseph clearly remembered what his brothers had done to him, but what was happening in Joseph's account of those memories as we proceed to Genesis 50:20?
- How does God use the hardship of prison and injustice as a mercy in Joseph's life? What sort of things has Joseph learned about love and walking in faithfulness with God? Read Psalm 131. How does the image of a weaned child describe what has happened in Joseph through suffering hardship and affliction?
- In Genesis 41:46 we learn that Joseph was 30 years of age when he entered into the service of Pharaoh, King of Egypt. His brothers sold Joseph into slavery when he was 17 years of age according to Genesis 37:2. The last two years in prison were simply stated as "whole" years in Genesis 41:1. What do you make of the years Joseph spent in prison? How does his response to Pharaoh in Genesis 41:16 indicate how Joseph has been changed by those years between 17 and 30? What sort of refining effect have those years had on Joseph?
- How do the names of Joseph's sons speak to his contentment before God in all things?
- How would you characterize Joseph's reaction to each changing circumstance?
- What do you see as God's role in all this? Why do you think God chooses to work with Joseph in this manner?
- When was the last time you wondered if God had forgotten about you? How did he show you he hadn't? How might this story help you remember that God is always there?