



BAND of BROTHERS

SPRING SERIES 2023 – WEEK 7

Genesis 39-40: A Living Nightmare

*I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance,
I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.
I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*
– Philippians 4:12-13

- **Meanwhile...**

- Judah unwittingly impregnated his daughter-in-law
- She gave birth to twin boys
- Perez, the youngest, will end up in the family tree of Jesus, the Messiah
 - This is great news!
 - God will redeem their unrighteous acts
 - He has sovereignly intervened
 - But nobody knows it at the time
 - Judah and Tamar have no idea
 - They know nothing about Jesus
 - God has not told or promised them anything about the birth of Perez
 - His future is hidden to them
 - The results of God's sovereignty are not always readily apparent
 - The outcome may not be immediate
 - The blessings may not be forthcoming
 - The timing may not be to our liking

"I may not know what the future may hold, but I know who holds the future."
– Ralph Abernathy

- Belief in the sovereignty of God requires...
 - ...an eternal perspective
 - ...a trust in God's faithfulness
 - ...a hope in the unseen

*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called **according to his purpose**. – Romans 8:28 ESV*

- What is God's ultimate purpose for us?
*For those whom he **foreknew** he also **predestined** to be **conformed** to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also **called**, and those whom he called he also **justified**, and those whom he justified he also **glorified**. – Romans 8:29-30 ESV*

- Our final glorification is the goal
 - ~ The dots will all connect in the end
 - ~ God's sovereignty will become clear
 - ~ Hindsight will be 20/20

...we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. – Romans 8:23-25 ESV

- **The invisible presence of God**

*Now Joseph had been **brought down** to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him from the Ishmaelites who had **brought him down there**. – Genesis 39:1 ESV*

- Joseph's life is on a downward trajectory
 - He appears to be abandoned and alone
 - He's gone from favored-son to slave
 - He has no rights
 - His future looks dark and foreboding
 - But he is not alone or on his own
 - God is right there with him
 - But how is God's presence revealed?
 - The visible signs of God's presence:
he became a successful man... – vs 2
the Lord caused all that he did to succeed... – vs 3
Joseph found favor in his sight... – vs 4
he made him overseer... – vs 4
and put him in charge of all that he had... – vs 4
he left all that he had in Joseph's charge... – vs 6
 - Irrefutable proof of God's presence:

*The Lord was with Joseph, so he succeeded in everything he did as he served in the home of his Egyptian master. **Potiphar noticed this and realized that the Lord was with Joseph**, giving him success in everything he did. – Genesis 39:2-3 NLT*

- Potiphar recognized the hand of YHWH

LORD – Jehovah (*Yehōvâ*) – “the existing one”

- He embraced divine intervention
- He saw what Jacob failed to see
- He believed what Joseph’s brothers did not

The Lord was with Joseph – vs 2

- **Too good to be true**

Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. And after a time his master’s wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, “Lie with me.” – Genesis 39:6-7 ESV

*So Joseph found favor in **his sight** – vs 4*

- Potiphar saw the hand of God on Joseph

*his master’s wife cast **her eyes** on Joseph – vs 7*

- His wife was blinded by lust

Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death. – James 1:14-15 NLT

For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. – 1 John 2:16 ESV

- Right response – wrong result
...as soon as she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled out of the house... – vs 13

...she called to the men of her household... – vs 14

- She falsely accuses Joseph of attempted rape
- He gets thrown in prison

*But **the LORD was with Joseph** and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. – Genesis 39:21 ESV*

“...the name Yahweh occurs here at what is the most uncertain moment in the life of Joseph. His future hangs in the balance. He is alone in Egypt, separated from family, vulnerable, with a cloud over his future. Or is he alone? Only the narrator, never any of the characters, uses the name Yahweh. Thus, it is the narrator who tells us, no less than five times, that in a very precarious situation, Joseph is not really alone. Yahweh is with him.” – Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*

- **Things are not always as they seem**

- Joseph has been wrongly and falsely accused
- He has fallen from Potiphar’s favor

- He has been confined to prison
- He faces a possible death sentence

*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 39:23 ESV*

“...why did God allow this woman to put Joseph in this compromising and potentially catastrophic situation? Could He not have prevented it? Why did faithful Joseph have to endure yet another case of undeserved and premeditated vengeance? He had done nothing to deserve being sold into slavery. And now, he had done nothing to deserve being falsely accused of attempted rape. But it is important to remember what Moses points out four different times in this chapter. The Lord was with Joseph...” – Ken Miller, *Devotionary™ on Genesis*

- **God’s impeccable timing**

Some time after this, the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and his baker committed an offense against their lord the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where Joseph was confined. – Genesis 40:1-3 ESV

- Joseph has been in Egypt 11 years
 - He is now 28 years old
 - He’s in prison for attempted rape
- But he’s right where God wants him to be
 - None of this has been a mistake
 - His suffering has a divinely-ordained purpose
- It just so happens...
 - Pharaoh’s baker and cupbearer are arrested
 - They end up in the same prison as Joseph
 - And they’re placed under his care

*They continued **for some time** in custody. 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. – Genesis 40:4-5 ESV*

- As luck would have it...
 - They both had a dream
 - On the very same night
 - And their dreams were very similar, but different

Cupbearer

3 branches
On a grapevine
Covered in grapes
Pressed into wine

Baker

3 baskets
On my head
Full of cakes
Baked for Pharaoh

- Served to Pharaoh Eaten by birds
- Joseph offered to interpret their dreams
"Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell them to me." – vs 8
- They each shared their dream
- And Joseph disclosed their meaning

Cupbearer

"In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office, and you shall place Pharaoh's cup in his hand as formerly, when you were his cupbearer." (13)

Baker

"the three baskets are three days. In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head – from you! – and hang you on a tree. And the birds will eat the flesh from you." (18-19)

*On the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast for all his servants and lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants. **He restored the chief cupbearer** to his position, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. **But he hanged the chief baker.*** – Genesis 40:20-22 ESV

- **Forgotten, but not forsaken**

Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him. – Genesis 40:23 ESV

- To the cupbearer, Joseph was out-of-sight, out-of-mind
- But God was **still** with Joseph
- His circumstances were not **proof of abandonment**
- They would be the **portal to divine advancement**

Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me."

*"Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. **Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.**"* – Isaiah 49:14-16 ESV

- **Discussion questions**

Why are current circumstances not a reliable tool for measuring God's presence and future plans for us?

Read Philippians 4:12-13. Why is it essential that we develop the same attitude that Paul had?

How does knowing that God will never leave or forsake you provide courage to face whatever life may hold?



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SPRING SERIES 2023 – WEEK 8 HOMEWORK

WEEK 8 – Genesis 41: Well Worth the Wait

After two years of obscurity, suffering unjust imprisonment for a crime he didn't commit, Joseph will find himself standing before the most powerful man in the nation of Egypt. Through a sequence of divinely orchestrated events, Joseph will experience a meteoric change in his circumstances that will leave him second only to Pharaoh in power and influence. This formerly despised younger brother who had been left-for-dead and all but forgotten ends up right where God had always planned for him to be. God equipped him with the ability to interpret dreams and the opportunity to put his unique gift set to work on behalf of the all-powerful Pharaoh. God placed Joseph right where he was supposed to be so that he could help bring about the future blessing of Jacob's descendants.

- Read chapter 41. Look for all the instances of what some might describe as fate or luck in Joseph's life. Look for anything that might complete this sentence: It just so happened that... Write down anything that you find.
- Now read pages 141-150 of Ken's Devotional™ on Genesis Part II.
- Look at the opening verse of chapter 41. What do you think was going through Joseph's mind as he continued to wait for an opportunity to defend himself before Pharaoh? Go back and look at Genesis 40:14-15 to see what he hoped to accomplish with this encounter.
- In verses 1-8, Pharaoh describes the two bizarre dreams he had. Do you see any similarities between his dreams and those that Joseph had in Genesis 37:5-9?

How does verse 8 telegraph the concept of the doctrine of God's sovereignty? How is Moses establishing the scene so that God's sovereign will is revealed at just the right moment?

- Read 9-14 again. Why could have prompted the cupbearer to suddenly recall the Hebrew slave he met in prison? How is this another example of God's sovereign will at work?

In verses 15-16, we see Joseph getting his long-delayed appointment with Pharaoh. How does Joseph's response to this powerful monarch reveal that he believes and trusts in God?

- Read Genesis 41:25-28 again. As far as the book of Genesis is concerned, while Joseph has had dreams, he has never actually interpreted any. So, how is his quick response an indication that God was working behind the scenes to equip him with this unique gift at just this moment?
- What about Joseph's recommendation in verses 29-36 reveals that this was a God-ordained idea and not just something Joseph "dreamed up" on his own?
- Look at verses 37-45 and summarize what happened to Joseph as a result of his divinely inspired famine preparation plan.
- In verses 46-52, Moses records how Joseph began to implement his plan. But he also chronicles the births of Joseph's two sons. What do the names Joseph gave these boys reveal about their father's belief in God?
- How do verses 53-57 support the idea of the sovereign will of God?