

Midweek Study

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TRUSTING GOD IN THE DARKNESS

Genesis 37-50

God is Still with You

(Genesis 40:1-23)

V. Raymond Edman once wrote, "Delay never thwarts God's purposes; it only polishes his instrument."¹

Joseph is 28 years old, and it has been 11 years since Joseph was sold into slavery. Two years after this chapter, at age 30, he will help Pharaoh with the impending famine that lay ahead (see [Genesis 37:2; 41:1, 46](#)). Though Joseph's dreams seem delayed, they are not denied. God is simply "polishing his instrument."

1. The Characters (Genesis 40:1-4)

- a. Royal Cupbearer [Or, Chief Butler]
- b. Royal Baker

v.1 – "offended" literally "sinned against"

v.3 - "the captain of the guard" is the same title that Potiphar had ([Genesis 39:1](#)).

Tony Evans writes, "It just so happened that the cupbearer and baker **were put in custody in the house ... where Joseph was confined (40:3)**. But what at first looks like a strange coincidence might have been intentional. It was the captain of the guards who assigned Joseph to these two men ([40:4](#)), and this term, "captain of the guards," is different than the one used for the warden running the prison (see [39:21](#)). That means it could refer to Potiphar. If that is the case, it's possible Potiphar did not believe the charge his wife had brought against Joseph. Not only would that mean that he refrained from executing Joseph but also that he, knowing well Joseph's managerial skills, personally placed other prisoners under Joseph's control."²

2. Joseph's Compassion (Genesis 40:5-8)

- a. His observation ("he saw that they were troubled")

¹ V. Raymond Edman, *The Disciplines of Life* (Wheaton, IL: Scripture Press Foundation, 1972), 80.

² Tony Evans, *The Tony Evans Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2019), 92.

- b. His question (“Why are your faces downcast today?”)
- c. His help (He interpreted their dreams) – his offer to help was totally dependent on the Lord (v.8)
- d. His request (remember me when you get out) – Joseph tried to use his connections for leniency. Proverbs 19:21 says, “Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.”

3. Joseph’s Confidence (Genesis 40:9-15)

The favorable interpretation of cupbearer’s dream “when it is well with you” (v.14) shows his supreme confidence in the interpretation.

4. Joseph’s Courage (Genesis 40:16-19)

Hughes observes, “Likely, in addition to interpreting the dream, Joseph was convinced of the baker’s murderous culpability because he gave the interpretation a terrifying ironic twist. ‘And Joseph answered and said, “This is its interpretation: 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”’ (vv. 18, 19). The baker would have his head lifted up all right—right off his body!”³

Boice writes, “Although it was difficult, particularly in a case where the interpretation concerned the life of one who had become his friend, he was not afraid to deliver the whole counsel of God. I wish all believers had this courage. In fact, I will narrow my concern and say that I wish all ministers had it. **How many there are who are willing to preach the cupbearer’s sermon but are unwilling to preach the baker’s sermon!**”⁴

5. The Conclusion (Genesis 40:20-23)

Applications:

1)

2)

3)

³ R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 472.

⁴ James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 952–953.