

# Midweek Study

Dr. Josh Franklin • Senior Pastor

# TRUSTING GOD IN THE DARKNESS

Genesis 37-50

## Stepping Into Greatness

(Genesis 41:1-57)

*Zig Ziglar once said, "Success is when preparation meets opportunity."*

### 1. The Timely **Direction** (Genesis 41:1-16)

*Psalm 105:17-19, "He sent a man before them – Joseph – who was sold as a slave. They hurt his feet with fetters, He was laid in irons. Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him."*

v.18 – he was laid in irons – this describes an iron collar placed around his neck.

v.19 – Until the time that his word came to pass – that is, Joseph's dream came to pass.

v.19 – "until the time his prediction came true, as the word of the LORD refined him." (ISV)

"Trials may be viewed from two standpoints, and it will make all the difference to our spiritual life and peace which of these two points of view we take. From the human side Joseph's suffering was due to injustice on the part of Potiphar, and ingratitude on the part of the butler. From the Divine side these years were permitted for the purpose of training and preparing Joseph for the great work that lay before him. If we look only at the human side of trial we shall become discouraged, and it may be irritated and angered, but as we turn to look at it from the Divine side we shall see God in everything and all things working together for our good. How truly all this was realized in Joseph's case we are now to see."<sup>1</sup>

Proverbs 21:1 - The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.

41:15-16 – "I don't have the answer, but God does!" (His humility on display)

"Observe carefully that he told Pharaoh (who himself was considered to be a god incarnate) that God (*ha Elohim*, 'the God') would explain his dream. Thus, to Pharaoh's face Joseph asserted that his God was superior to and sovereign over the gods of Egypt. Joseph's theological knowledge rose high against the face of worldly power."<sup>2</sup>

### 2. The Future **Difficulties** (Genesis 41:17-36)

Swindoll writes, "So Joseph said, 'You need to have a man who can take responsibility for managing those seven years of fruitfulness, a man who will oversee the building of granaries and make certain that a portion of the grain

<sup>1</sup> W.H. Griffith Thomas, *Genesis: A Devotional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1953), 389.

<sup>2</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 479.

is put into storage. ... a man of discipline and foresight who can be trusted to handle the job. You need a good manager.' **But never once did he say, 'I'd like the job. I've interpreted your dreams; I deserve the position.'**"<sup>3</sup>

### 3. The Humble **Dependence** (*Genesis 41:37-40*)

v.38 – “in whom is the Spirit of God”

v.39 – “God has shown you all this”

1 Samuel 2:30 – “Therefore the Lord God of Israel says: ‘...those who honor Me I will honor...’”

### 4. The Wise **Discipline** (*Genesis 41:41-49*)

v.45 - **Zaphenath-Paneah** - The name has been variously translated as “Abundance of Life,” “Revealer of Secrets,” “God’s Word Speaking Life”, but should more accurately be translated “God Speaks and He Lives [or ‘Came into Being’].”<sup>4</sup>

Thomas writes, “There is no necessary contradiction between Christianity and genuine business powers. To be clear-headed does not mean to be soft-hearted. Christianity gives clearness, far-sightedness, mental perception and balance.”<sup>5</sup>

### 5. The Divine **Destiny** (*Genesis 41:50-57*)

v.51 – **Manasseh** – making forgetful (*Illustration: Think of the mother holding the new baby.*)

v.52 – **Ephraim** – doubly fruitful

#### Applications:

**1) Be ready for God’s promotion.** It had been 2 years since Joseph had told the butler to remember him as unjustly imprisoned. God’s timing is perfect, but the only thing that Joseph had to do was shave, change clothes and be ready to meet Pharaoh. Are you prepared for the opportunity when it comes?

**2) Stay faithful to God.** Though Joseph is given an Egyptian name, an Egyptian wardrobe, and an Egyptian wife – he gives his sons Hebrew names! He followed God in the prison, and now he follows God in the palace. We must learn to be in the world, but not of the world (See **John 15:19, 17:14-16; Romans 12:2**). Would those around you be surprised to discover that you are a Christian or does your life stand out for Christ in this world?

**3) Stop living in the past.** Boice writes, “Joseph named his first son Manasseh (‘forgetting’) and his second son Ephraim (‘doubly fruitful’), rather than doing it the other way around. **For no one can really be fruitful until the past is forgotten in the proper sense.** If we are living in the past, whether that is the past of unconfessed sin, hurts, suffering, or even old blessings, we will never be completely fruitful in the present. We must let the past be the past, forgetting it, and go on with God.”<sup>6</sup> Manasseh’s name meant Joseph would move forward. He would forget all the wrongs of his brothers, Potiphar, Potiphar’s wife, the prison, the cupbearer, etc. He was living in today. Are you hanging on to hurts from the past or have you released them and moving forward?

**Philippians 3:13–14 (NKJV) - <sup>13</sup>Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**

<sup>3</sup> Charles R. Swindoll, *Joseph: A Man of Integrity and Forgiveness* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998).

<sup>4</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 974.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas, 392.

<sup>6</sup> Boice, 982–983.