

Full Circle

(Genesis 41:37-57)

Yearly Theme: *“Love Does...”*

Series Title: *Hard Knock Life*

September 15th, 2019

Something to think about:

Sold into slavery, accused of rape, and thrown into a jail in Egypt, Joseph struggled with some of the most difficult circumstances. Other than being a brat of a brother at times, and annoying to his older brothers, Joseph had not done anything worth being treated the way he had been treated. However, as we continue Joseph’s story today, we see the significant difference in Joseph’s countenance versus most people’s countenance when suffering a similar fate. Joseph remained faithful and hopeful in God in spite of the grief he had suffered. And this made all the difference in the world. Let’s take a closer look...

Turn in your Bibles to: **Genesis 41:37-57**

Of these 20 verses, what’s the key point this morning?...

Key Point: *“Faithfulness, not bitterness, is always rewarded.”*

Here’s what we can learn about Joseph’s faithfulness:

1. **Joseph’s faithfulness in prison was rewarded by the jailer placing him in charge of all the other prisoners.**

Joseph could have soured and become bitter and resentful not only toward his brothers who started this whole mess in the first place, but also with God who wasn’t bailing him out of his current circumstances. Instead, Joseph leaned into God and continued to hold fast to his faith and trust in God no matter what happened to him. The result? Joseph prospered in all he did because God was with him.

2. **Joseph’s faithfulness to Pharaoh was rewarded by being placed second in command in Egypt.**

Having interpreted Pharaoh’s dreams, Pharaoh does something so amazing; a true rags-to-riches story. Joseph goes from being a prisoner one moment to second in command over all of Egypt; only Pharaoh would be more powerful than him. Joseph’s testimony is just like the Psalmist’s: Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil because God is with me! So, I will remain all the more hopeful and all the more faithful to Him.

3. **Joseph’s faithfulness to God was rewarded by fruitfulness in “the land of his grief.”**

Finally, Joseph (now second in command in Egypt), takes a wife and has two children. Joseph’s sons were named Manasseh and Ephraim. Joseph, now much older than 17, looks back over his life up to this point, and stands amazed that God has made him so fruitful in the land of his grief. What his brothers had meant for evil, God had truly meant for good.

Something to take home:

Today, how is your faith? How is your faithfulness?

Are you at the breaking point? Can you relate to the story of Joseph? Can you relate to continually being knocked down? Is your hope and faithfulness as strong as Joseph’s? Is God making you fruitful in the land of your grief?

Don’t give up! Press on! Lean into God! And remember,...

Key Point: *“Faithfulness, not bitterness, is always rewarded.”*

The Plot Thickens

(Genesis 39:1-23)

Series Title: "Hard Knock Life"

KICK STARTERS:

- ⇒ What is "faithfulness?"
- ⇒ Has their ever been a time when you lost (or, were close to losing) your faith? Explain...

SCRIPTURE: (Before studying this material, consider listening to the corresponding message online at: <http://www.northmaincog.org/media/sermon-media>)

Genesis 41:37-57 (NLT)

³⁷ Joseph's suggestions were well received by Pharaoh and his officials. ³⁸ So Pharaoh asked his officials, "Can we find anyone else like this man so obviously filled with the spirit of God?" ³⁹ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has revealed the meaning of the dreams to you, clearly no one else is as intelligent or wise as you are. ⁴⁰ You will be in charge of my court, and all my people will take orders from you. Only I, sitting on my throne, will have a rank higher than yours."

⁴¹ Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I hereby put you in charge of the entire land of Egypt." ⁴² Then Pharaoh removed his signet ring from his hand and placed it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in fine linen clothing and hung a gold chain around his neck. ⁴³ Then he had Joseph ride in the chariot reserved for his second-in-command. And wherever Joseph went, the command was shouted, "Kneel down!" So Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of all Egypt. ⁴⁴ And Pharaoh said to him, "I am Pharaoh, but no one will lift a hand or foot in the entire land of Egypt without your approval."

⁴⁵ Then Pharaoh gave Joseph a new Egyptian name, Zaphenath-paneah. He also gave him a wife, whose name was Asenath. She was the daughter of Potiphera, the priest of On. So Joseph took charge of the entire land of Egypt. ⁴⁶ He was thirty years old when he began serving in the court of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. And when Joseph left Pharaoh's presence, he inspected the entire land of Egypt.

⁴⁷ As predicted, for seven years the land produced bumper crops. ⁴⁸ During those years, Joseph gathered all the crops grown in Egypt and stored the grain from the surrounding fields in the cities.

⁴⁹ He piled up huge amounts of grain like sand on the seashore. Finally, he stopped keeping records because there was too much to measure.

⁵⁰ During this time, before the first of the famine years, two sons were born to Joseph and his wife, Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, the priest of On. ⁵¹ Joseph named his older son Manasseh, for he said, "God has made me forget all my troubles and everyone in my father's family." ⁵² Joseph named his second son Ephraim, for he said, "God has made me fruitful in this land of my grief."

⁵³ At last the seven years of bumper crops throughout the land of Egypt came to an end. ⁵⁴ Then the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had predicted. The famine also struck all the surrounding countries, but throughout Egypt there was plenty of food. ⁵⁵ Eventually, however, the famine spread throughout the land of Egypt as well. And when the people cried out to Pharaoh for food, he told them, "Go to Joseph, and do whatever he tells you." ⁵⁶ So with severe famine everywhere, Joseph opened up the storehouses and distributed grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout the land of Egypt. ⁵⁷ And people from all around came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph because the famine was severe throughout the world.

GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. In a couple sentences, describe what's going on in this passage of Scripture (to gain context, read the whole chapter of Genesis 41):

2. After interpreting Pharaoh's dreams, what does Pharaoh do for/to Joseph (vv. 37-44)?

3. Once in power, Joseph was also given in marriage to Asenath. She bore two sons and they were named Manasseh and Ephraim. After the birth of his second son, what was Joseph's response (v. 52b)?

4. Did Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams come true? What happened (vv. 53-57)?

5. As we look back over Joseph's life in captivity/slavery (refer back to Genesis 37-41), what all has he come through to be second in command over all of Egypt? What would have happened if he had given up hope and faith in God to see him through everything?

6. Why is it so hard to keep the faith and maintain hope in God when difficult times come?

6. How is a person supposed to stay strong in the face of hardships? How should we respond when life/people treat us unfairly? How did Joseph respond?

7. What do you think would have become of Joseph had he given up in the midst of all the hardships he faced? Have you ever wanted to give up when you faced hardships? How did you overcome; or did you?

8. Read Galatians 6:7-9. What does Paul write to the church of Galatia about staying strong and not giving up? How can we live like this?

SELF-EVALUATION/APPLICATION:

- ⇒ **TODAY, HOW IS YOUR FAITH?** How is your faithfulness? Are you at the breaking point? Can you relate to the story of Joseph? Can you relate to continually being knocked down? Is your hope and faithfulness as strong as Joseph's? Is God making you fruitful in the land of your grief?
- ⇒ **DON'T GIVE UP!** Press on! Lean into God!
- ⇒ **MEMORY VERSES:** *Genesis 41:53b* and *Galatians 6:9*