

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION

- 1 What are you waiting on God? What is this time of waiting, teaching you about God and His promises?
- 2 Being grateful while waiting is important. What are some of the things that God has blessed you with?
- 2 Why is waiting on God difficult? How have you benefited from the trials and tests you've encountered?

WE DO LIFE TOGETHER!

If you haven't been involved in a LIFE Group yet, send us a message us thru Fb, and we will get you connected to a small group.



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SUNDAY WORD

JUNE 25, 2023

FROM ORDINARY TO
EXTRAORDINARY!
PART 2 EMBRACING GOD'S TIMING

Joseph is far from home, a slave in Egypt, abandoned. But, there is one fact that gives Joseph a touch of hope. In Genesis 39:4, it says: "The Lord was with Joseph." This makes all the difference. For Joseph, it doesn't matter how difficult life must have been. The certainty that the Lord is with you makes all the difference.

This is a short summary of Genesis 40: Joseph is in jail along with other two men - the cupbearer and chief baker, who have two dreams, with two different interpretations. One lives and one dies. Then, one man forgets, and Joseph is still in jail. In the meantime, Joseph waits to see what will happen next.

In Genesis 40, Joseph is waiting because there is nothing else he can do. He can't get out of prison, he can't appeal his sentence, and he can't escape. He's stuck in an Egyptian prison, far from home where they think he's dead. You don't have too many friends in that situation. So he waits. There is no hint of what the future might hold for him.

THE DISCIPLINE OF WAITING

Waiting is perhaps the hardest discipline of the Christian life. Most of us hate to wait. We all have to wait whether we like it or not. The truth is, most of life is waiting. We will all spend a lot of time waiting for something to happen. The question then becomes, what do you do while you wait? These are the three answers from Joseph's prison time in Genesis 40.

WHAT DO YOU DO WHILE YOU WAIT?

1. Be Faithful (Genesis 40:1-4)

We don't know how long Joseph had been in prison when the cupbearer and baker arrived. Maybe he had been in prison for a few months when suddenly these two new inmates showed up. In thinking about this story, it's important that we view it from Joseph's perspective. As far as he is concerned, this is just another day in prison. Even though he may be the leader of the prisoners, he is still imprisoned, with no hope of getting out. He could not see into the future. The cupbearer would eventually be his ticket to his freedom, but he had no way to know that at the time, and it wouldn't come to pass for two more years.

What do you do when you are unjustly accused? What do you do when people you trusted turn against you? What do you do when your dreams turn to ashes? Joseph remained faithful to God and to his duties. Mike Murdock said: "The secret of your future is found in your daily routine." The things you do every day, especially the little things that make up the routine of life, are the seeds of your future that you sow every day. It reminds me of Ecclesiastes 9:10, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom." (NIV)

Remain faithful to God even when things are not going according to your plans. Folks, when your future seems uncertain and hopeless, cling to God's plan for you because He will undoubtedly bring it to pass. What happened to Joseph emphasizes the unpredictable nature of life. No matter how well-planned your day may be, something unexpected is always bound to "turn up."

Because God's hand was upon Joseph, he was promoted by the captain of the prison to be in charge of all the other prisoners. Because he was faithful, he did not neglect his duty when these two new men entered the prison. Little did he know that by taking care of them, he was advancing the cause of his own freedom. Faithfulness is its own reward. Friends, everyday tasks in our life must be carried out as if they were a service to God. Then, we shall see how He will honor and reward us.

2. Be Ready (Genesis 40:5-8)

Joseph's willingness to interpret their dreams means that he has not yet given up on his own dreams. Even though many years have passed, and he has endured the pain of rejection, enslavement, false accusation, and imprisonment, deep inside he still believes that one day God will someday cause those early dreams to come true.

Joseph stood out among his own generation because he saw God's hand everywhere! He had a big God, and therefore he knew that being in prison was no hindrance to the Almighty. We serve a God who cannot be stopped by barbed wires and high walls. Prison doors can never keep Him out.

We serve a God who can't be stopped by problems in life. Joseph's example leads me to ask this question: Are you ready to serve God right where you are, even when you'd rather be somewhere else?

3. Be Bold (Genesis 40:12-13)

In Genesis 40:12-13, Joseph tells the cupbearer that he will be released in three days and restored to his former position. No doubt, the cupbearer was happy to hear the news. Then Joseph adds a personal request: Genesis 40:14 - "But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison." (NIV) Joseph didn't settle. Joseph said to the cupbearer, "Remember me." It made perfect sense. He was faithful in prison. He was ready in prison. He was bold in prison.

Verse 23 gives us the end of the story: Genesis 40:23 - "The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him." (NIV) After all that, the cupbearer forgets Joseph. But that happens all the time in life. People make promises they don't keep. We intend to stay in touch but we don't. The "what ifs" of life will kill you. When the cupbearer got out, he promptly left the prison far behind. Joseph must have had many questions: What if the cupbearer never remembers? What if I die in prison? What if I never get to clear my name? The "What ifs" of life will kill you.

God is never in a hurry. Joseph's experience in prison reminds us that God doesn't keep time the same way we do. God is bigger than the clock. He's never in a hurry. He's never late. He's never behind schedule. Even though the cupbearer forgot Joseph, God didn't. What do you do while you wait? Wait on the Lord because Isaiah 40:31 says, "But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." (ESV)

Your Redeemer is on the way. He's just not working on your schedule. Let me ask the key question one more time: Are you willing to wait for God? This message ends where it began - with Joseph in prison: Falsely accused; unjustly imprisoned; alone and forgotten. Apparently, he's hit a dead end. This story is over, or so it seems. As long as we are alive, hope persists. If the conclusion remains unsure, bear in mind that our God is faithful.

God could end your waiting season. Even though you have been waiting for so long, and don't know when the answer to your prayer comes, God can turn your situation around very suddenly.

When God's perfect timing comes, it's like giving birth. That is why it is also referred to as a "breakthrough" - God breaks through into our situation. It is like the birth of something new.

Whatever situation you find yourself in, if you feel stuck or feel left on a side track, God can turn your situation around, from one moment to another, without strife or frustration. When his appointed time comes, God will lift you to a new level and throw you into something entirely new.