

D25. Joseph in Prison

Genesis 40:1-41:57

Memory Verse

"The Lord will do what is good in His sight."

--2 Samuel 10:12

Bible Lesson

Message:

God will provide in His time.

While Joseph was in prison, two of Pharaoh's officers were also put in jail. They were a man who served wine and the king's baker. Then each of the two men had a dream. The men were the Egyptian king's baker and wine taster. They were being held in prison. Both of them had dreams the same night with its own meaning.

Joseph came to them the next morning and saw that they looked worried. So he asked them, "Why do you look so unhappy today?" "We both had dreams last night but no one can explain to us what they mean," they answered. Then Joseph said to them, "Only God can explain the meaning of your dreams. Tell me about your dreams."

So the man who served wine told Joseph about his dream. He said to him, "In my dream I saw a vine in front of me. There were three branches on the vine. I watched the branches bud and blossom and then the grapes ripened. I was holding the Pharaoh's cup was in my hand. So I took the grapes, squeezed the juice into the cup and gave it to the Pharaoh.

Joseph said: "I will explain the dream to you. The three branches stand for three days. Before the end of three days Pharaoh will let you out of prison. He'll give your position back to you and you will serve him wine just as you did before. But when you are free, remember me and be kind to me. Talk to the Pharaoh about me so I can get out of prison because I have done nothing wrong and don't deserve to be here.

The chief baker saw that Joseph had given a good explanation of the dream, so he said to Joseph, "I had a dream too. There were three baskets of bread on my head. All kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh were in the basket, but the birds were eating them out of the basket."

"I will tell you what the dream means," Joseph said. "The three baskets stand for three days. Before the end of three days the Pharaoh will have you killed."

The third day was Pharaoh's birthday. He had a big dinner prepared for all of his officials. He brought the chief wine taster and the chief baker out of prison. Everything happened exactly as Joseph had told them when he explained their dreams. But the chief wine taster didn't remember Joseph. In fact, he forgot all about him.

Two full years had passed, and Pharaoh had a dream. In his dream, he was standing by the Nile River. Seven healthy and fat cows came up out of the river and they were eating some of the tall grass that was growing along the river. After them, seven ugly and skinny cows came up out of the Nile. They were standing beside the other cows on the riverbank. The ugly, skinny cows ate up the seven cows that looked healthy and fat. Then Pharaoh woke up.

He fell asleep again and had a second dream. In that dream, seven heads of grain were growing on one stem. They were healthy and good. After them, seven other heads of grain came up. They were thin and dried up by the east wind. The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven healthy, full heads. Then Pharaoh woke up and realized it had only been a dream.

In the morning he was worried. So he sent for all of the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told these men his dreams. But no one could tell him what they meant. Then the wine server spoke up. He said to

Pharaoh, "Now I remember something that I promised and have forgotten about." He then told the Pharaoh about what happened long ago and how Joseph was able to explain his and the baker's dreams.

So Pharaoh sent for Joseph. He was quickly brought out of the prison. Joseph shaved himself and changed his clothes. Then he came to Pharaoh. Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream. No one can tell me what it means. But I've heard that when you hear a dream you can explain it."

"I am not able to explain the meaning of your dreams, but God can do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh.

Then Pharaoh told Joseph about his dreams of the cows and the grain.

Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "Both of your dreams have the same meaning. God has shown you what He is about to do. The seven good cows and the seven good heads of grain represent seven years. The seven thin, ugly cows that came up later and the seven worthless heads of grain represent seven years when there won't be enough food. Seven years with plenty of food are coming to the whole land of Egypt. But seven years when there won't be enough food will follow them. Then everyone will forget about all of the food Egypt had. Terrible hunger will destroy the land. There won't be anything left to remind people of the years when there was plenty of food in the land. That's how bad the hunger that is coming will be. God gave the Pharaoh two dreams that mean the same thing. God has firmly decided that will happen, and it will happen soon.

Joseph told Pharaoh that he should look for a wise and understanding man. He should put him in charge of the land of Egypt. Pharaoh should appoint officers to be in charge of the land and they should take 1/5 of the harvest in Egypt during the seven years when there's plenty of food and store this food for later. It will be needed during the seven years when there isn't enough food in Egypt. Then the country won't be destroyed just because it doesn't have enough food.

The plan seemed like a good one to Pharaoh and all of his officials. So Pharaoh said to them, "The spirit of God is in this man. We can't find anyone else like him who can do this job, can we?" Then Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of the palace. All of the people had to obey Joseph's orders. Pharaoh was the only one greater than Joseph.

So Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of the whole land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh took his ring off his finger. It was the ring he used to stamp all of the official papers. He put it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in robes that were made out of fine linen. He put a gold chain around his neck. He also had him ride in a chariot and men walked in front of the chariot telling the people to "bow down."

Joseph gathered the food over the next seven years and stored it just as the Pharaoh had asked. In the meantime, he also married and had children of his own. When the seven years of bad crops came, the only people in the land that had food to eat were those who lived in Egypt where Joseph had stored the food from the seven good years. When the time came, Joseph opened up the store houses and sold the food to those who were hungry.

Talk About It

In today's story, God gave Joseph a very special ability. He was able to help the people of Egypt by telling the Pharaoh what his dreams meant. Did you know that God has also given each one of us special abilities to help others? Talk with your child. Tell him that God made him just the way He wanted him to be. Each person is different and unique and has their own special abilities to help others, just like Joseph.

Explain to your child that God also generously gives talents to all of His children. Your special talent may be playing an instrument or singing, or it might be caring for others, praying, or being a good friend. We have a choice whether or not we will use our talent or waste the gifts God gave us by passing up opportunities to use them. We need to use our abilities and talents and gifts for GOOD. When we do this and remember to bring praise and honor to God by our actions, then God can bless us.

Pray together and ask our Heavenly Father to help you to see your talents, and find ways to use them for good. Remember to also thank Him for the talents He will give you. Talk about it.