

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Afternoon

Date 25th September 2022

Preacher Rev Philip Knowles, Psalms Hymns Ps 72v1-3,18-19 T- Belmont, 561 T Psalm 100th, 437 Read: Genesis 39:20-23 Text Genesis 39:20-23 39:

Series: Joseph Title: Joseph's Time In Prison (4)

At the end of Genesis 39, Joseph has been cast into the prison having been falsely accused.

Potiphar's wife tempted Joseph to lie with her and be with her, However, Joseph a spirit filled man, who lived to honour God, said **how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?**

While the masters wife viewed this scene as secret pleasure, Joseph viewed it as sin against God, breaking God's law, dishonouring God.

When Joseph refused and rejected her wicked ways, Potiphar's wife turned against Joseph, lied against him and falsely accused Joseph of coming unto her in a sexual manner.

Joseph was then cast into prison, a literal dungeon, where he was forgotten by others, yet the Lord remembered Joseph and with was Him.

God is sovereign in all matters, even this one. He permitted such events to take place for His purpose as the only way to save the nation.

In other words, Joseph had to experience suffering and sorrow, in order to deliver the nation from death, and preserve the promised seed line, the tribe of Judah, to which the promised Saviour would be born.

There is a direct line to Christ, for Christ was born of the house of Judah. God permitted His sufferings and sorrows as the only way to save sinners from eternal death.

But also, believer, like Joseph we too will encounter prison experiences in life, for some it may be a literal prison behind bars, for most it will be physical, medical, emotional, financial and spiritual.

But literal or spiritual, such prison experiences can be dark, dull, discouraging, dreary. There are times we may feel alone, feel like giving up.

But the Lord shows you as He did Joseph, **the prison experiences He sovereignly permits, He also provides and promises His presence**. He goes with us and stays with us in prison experiences of life.

Having considered that Joseph's time in prison was a Painful, Prolonged, Purposeful Preparing and Providential time, Please also consider with me.

VI SIXTH, JOSEPH'S TIME IN PRISON WAS A PROVING TIME

Joseph proved the Lord in his life.

1. Joseph proved the PERFECTIONS of the Lord in prison.

Verse 20 ***“But the LORD was with Joseph...”***

Joseph knew there was none to be compared like unto the Lord.

Joseph knew God to be the only true and living God. Even Job who lived in those early times after the fall of man, said in **Job 19:25** ***For I know that my redeemer liveth.***

The name **LORD** is the title Jehovah. The name Jehovah reveals everything that God is in and of Himself.

The name speaks of His very perfections that mark His character, or what is also termed as God attributes.

God's attributes mean God's perfections. To find a summary of God's perfections, The **Shorter Catechism Q.4**, *What is God?* **Answer:** ***“God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable,***

in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

He is the LORD JEHOVAH, eternal, infinite and unchangeable, one who is not conditioned by anything outside of Himself, He does not depend upon any other being.

He asks permission of none, He needs support from none. He does not make progress, increase, or decrease, He never grows in knowledge or power, He never changes.

Otherwise, He would not be Almighty God.

While Joseph was in prison, we clearly see the Lord's perfections comforting him, working for him. The LORD ***shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.***

Keep that before you believer, when God permits His people to go through various prisons it is because He will show them His perfections.

You will see through the whole prison experiences of life, the LORD's person, His perfections of love, His wisdom to know He's in control, His faithfulness, His goodness, the sufficiency of grace.

When all seems to be against you, learn the LORD is for you, and He cares and comforts you by His perfections.

If it had not been for that trial, health situation, bereavement, setback, discouragement, heartbreak, re-route, delay, postponement, bills, price rises, we would not have known a fresh view of the perfections of the Lord.

That is why Paul said as he experienced an ongoing prison experience that he called a thorn in the flesh. **2 Corinthians 12:9** ***"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."***

The words **made perfect** mean **more clearly seen or revealed**. It was only through Paul's weakness, and inability was the LORD's grace and strength clearly seen.

Joseph is in prison, bound, without a familiar friend, yet he knew the LORD was with Him.

Believer, be assured in your prison experience, or we could say, it by going through your prison experience the LORD's perfections be clearly seen.

2 Joseph proved the PRESENCE of the Lord in prison.

Verse 21 "**But the LORD was with Joseph...**" the same words used in **verse 2, 3, 21, & 23.**

These words mean everything to any believer going through prison experiences of life.

"... **the LORD was with Joseph...**" is not just an intellectual knowledge, it's not to ignore or lesson the prison experience, awkward the Lords with Joseph never worry move on.

No, rather it's to experience the presence of the Lord in real way, to sense His nearness.

To know the Lord with is with Joseph means Joseph is not in prison because of sinful living. To know the Lord is with Joseph means, whatever comes next, He will give peace that passeth all understanding.

He will keep Joseph in perfect rest for his mind in stayed on the Lord.

To know the Lord with is with Joseph means he will not be alone.

Joseph did not have a human friend with him, his family was absent, in fact they didn't even know he was in prison, going through what he went through.

In prison Joseph knew the Lord's Omnipresence, which means **God is everywhere present.**

_(While God is everywhere present, yet God is not everything.

It is not that the presence of God is all things, **but rather all things are in the presence of God**, as He is present everywhere.)

There was no dungeon deep enough where the presence of God could not enter. There are no prison bars and locks so secure that would stop the Lord from entering.

Joseph proved the presence of the Lord.

Think of other scriptural examples of believers in prison experiences who know the Lord's presence, where seemed they would be alone.

In **Acts 12**, as Peter lay in prison sleeping, the angel of the Lord came into that very cell. The bars, the locks, the guards and the walls proved to be no barrier to the Lord! He came right in and did as He pleased. Prison bars did not keep the Lord out.

In **Daniel 3:25**, the three Hebrew men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were thrown into the fiery furnace heated hotter just for them, yet the Lord was present with them and they did not get burned.

Daniel himself in **Daniel 6:22** was thrown into the den of lions, but the LORD was with him. In **Acts 27:23** When Paul was on the ship in the stormy sea, he found the Lord was there with him.

Isaiah 43:2 ***"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee***

Therefore, believer in your time of prison experience, when you feel shut in, unable to escape your present situation, you may go

through a certain trial and feel alone, it seems there is a dark cloud over your head, it may seem, you walk alone, as no else knows what you are going through.

Even in this room right now, there may be prison experiences of worry, about certain matters, issues that you try to hide from family, from husband, wife, children, or parents.

But I encourage you, not to live apart or separately from one another, rather get together and as a family and prove the Lord's presence.

The family that prays together comes through together!

The Hymn writer wrote.

I do not know what lies ahead,
The way I cannot see;
Yet One stands near to be my guide,
He'll show the way to me:

Chorus

I know Who holds the future, And He'll guide me with his hand.
With God things don't just happen; Everything by Him is
planned.

So as I face tomorrow, With its problems large and small,
I'll trust the God of miracles, Give to Him my all.

Believer you will never be alone. The Lord will be with you in every trial and along every mile. He will never let you down!

Hebrew 13:5 *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.*

3. Joseph proved the PROMISE of the Lord

The LORD... shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

Joseph depended upon the promises of the Lord while in prison. The word **mercy** means ***goodness, loving kindness***, whereas the word **favour** means ***grace***.

Grace and Mercy flow from the Lord's perfections, but they are promised by the Lord to His people upon the basis of the blood of the everlasting covenant.

For that reason, the word **shewed** means **to extend, to stretch out**, it is used in, **Gen 12:8, 33:19** pitch or spread a tent, **Ex 6:6** redeemed with an outstretched arm. The idea is **to cover an area, setting up a tent you spread it out, so that more and more is covered.**

In redemption it is heaven coming to earth, it is Christ extending mercy to sinners.

This is why the LORD will be with Joseph, He never forsake His people, He extends His mercy, His goodness and loving kindness, throughout all the days of his life.

Because Joseph had Favour with the LORD, the LORD gave Him favour with man, the keeper of the prison.

Just as it was said of Jacob in **Gen 32:28** ***hast thou power with God and with men.*** **1 Sam 2:26** ***“And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men.***

In **Luke 2:52** ***“Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man***

Grace is God giving what sinners do not deserve, SUCH AS forgiveness, peace, eternal life.

whereas Mercy is God withholding, not giving sinners what that do deserve, SUCH AS wrath and condemnation.

The promise of redemption centres upon a covenant relationship. God enters into covenant agreement with Christ who represents all His people within that covenant.

The Lord says, "...**they shall be my people, and I will be their God...**"

(All that the Lord does through Joseph centres upon redemption, the saving of nation, the preservation of the seed line to which the promises would be born in the fulness of time, and this took place. Also, furthering His cause, building His church.)

Joseph knows through His time in prison, He is a child of faith, he rests by faith upon the blood of Christ. He depends upon Christ as His substitute.

Notice again the words **Isa 43:9** "**I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.**"

The word **cast away** means **to reject to despise**, this is what He will never do for all who trust and Know Him as Saviour.

You see when we go through prison experiences, we often wander and question, has the Lord cast us away. Is this prison experience, Him passing me by.

See how important it is to trace the steps, when we learn of the LORD's perfections, His presence and His promises toward His people,

However long the prison experience may be, His grace is given, and mercy extended.

Grace and mercy for every situation. This is seen throughout the pages of Scripture, **1 Kings 17:2-7**, Elijah and the ravens, **1 Kings 17:8-16** the widow and her meal and oil, ; **Ex. 14**, The children of Israel and the Red Sea, **Ex. 16** the Manna, **Ex 17** the water from the rock. **Deut. 29:5** the shoes and clothes that did not wear out for 40 years; **Mark 6:45-51** the Disciples in the storm; **John 6:1-13** food for the hungry multitudes, **John 11:1-45** Mary, Martha and Lazarus.

Believer He loves us too much to cast us off, and not meet the need, we are bought with a price, therefore glorify God.

He uses our lives to further His redemptive purposes.

4. Joseph proved the PROSPERITY of the Lord

Verses 23 the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.

It was the LORD who gave Joseph success, in prison. The Lord kept His hand upon Joseph. He guards Him the whole time. The Lord brought him through.

In prison, Joseph lived for God, he performed his duties in the sight of men, but unto the Lord, and the Lord prospered it.

1 Sam 12:6 It is the LORD that advanced Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt.

The Lord prospered Joseph for His glory, working out His eternal redemptive purposes in Christ.

Believer, as we pass through the prisons experiences of life, God is prospering in many ways.

When we are found faithful in these valleys, He permits us to experience greater levels of blessing. God uses the difficulties of life to mature us so that He might use our lives in a more wonderful way.

The prison lead the way to the palace, burdens and bonds gave way to blessing.