

Rejecting Temptation to Become Bitter through Puzzling Providence Gen 40: 9-15, 20-23

- The interpretation of the baker & cup bearer's dreams encouraged Joseph's faith
- Perhaps now he would leave this place & fulfil the purpose God had for him
- Days turned into months & no change, the wheels of government turn slowly
- But after much waiting, nothing, the effects of this could have been disastrous
- Joseph could have given in to bitterness & taken matters into his own hands

1. The Cupbearer's Absent Mindedness

- Joseph comforted & encouraged the cupbearer but the cupbearer forgot (40:23)
- Joseph continued to suffer the drudgeries, hardship & difficulties of prison life
- He gave no room for bitterness but knew God was able to remind the cupbearer
- The delay did not mean God forgot, & 41:16 shows Joseph was not bitter
- In God's strength Joseph was handling this well, but he was certainly puzzled

2. How Do We Define Perplexing or Strange Providences?

- Every Christian faces times when God's dealings with us seem to be uncaring
- It could be that the events unfolding in our lives are at odds with God promises
- How do we cope with these strange providences: three truths from Joseph
 - 1) The path God has called us to is a narrow path, & there is no guarantee of ease
 - 2) God's purposes are specific in these strange providences (Is 55:8-9)
 - 3) God's delays are not denials, strange providences don't mean God forgets

3. Follow Providence Only as Far as Scripture Allows

- Christians need two books open before them: God's providence & Scripture
- The book of providence is extremely difficult with complete understanding
- One of God's promises is that He will finally interpret His providence for us.
- In the midst of strange providences God promised us His presence (Isa 41: 10)
- Guard yourself against understanding strange providences with reason not faith
- To try in our own strength to work it out will guarantee strife & even hardness
- If Joseph had become bitter it would not have jogged the cupbearer's memory
- Bitterness does not remove God's strange providences but it does remove our ability to receive God's mercy & comfort in the midst of them.
- Remember Christ, "unless a kernel fall to the ground & die it will bear no fruit."