

Joseph 06 - With the Transgressors - Genesis 40:1-23 - 2017-05-28

Call to Worship: Psalm 116:1-2

Scripture Reading: Luke 23:32-43

Sermon: With the Transgressors - Genesis 40:1-23

Benediction: Psalm 116:5-6

INTRODUCTION

Last week, after the sermon, one of the older children spoke to me and suggested something. He said something like this: “Doesn’t Joseph being with the two men in prison remind you of Jesus being with the two thieves on the cross?”

Some of the brothers talked that over after lunch, and we agreed there was something to that. As soon as I got to the study on Monday morning, and I started reading and thinking and praying about it. I was helped tremendously by a preacher named John Greer, in Ireland, whose sermons are available to listen to. He preached on this chapter of Genesis with that concept in mind. I didn’t then follow his sermon very closely, but I am preaching this passage from that same general approach I learned from him.

So, in comparing the history of Joseph in prison with the two servants of Pharaoh, and the history of our Lord Jesus on the cross between to criminals, let us consider the beloved Son numbered with the transgressors.

TEXT

Genesis 40:1-23

BODY

I. All of Us Alike Are Transgressors

A. The butler and the baker

1. the bible tells us that these two men had offended their lord; they had displeased him in some way

B. The thief on Christ’s right and the one on His left

1. the bible tells us these men were thieves, but it also tells us what variety of thieves; they were not the kind who sneak in when no one is home; they were the kind who assault someone to steal from him; the word is *lestes*; hear it used in a context that defines the word for you:

- a) Luke 10:30 Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

C. All mankind

1. Isa 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray
2. Rom 3:23 all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God
3. Rom 5:12 through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned

D. Every one of us here

1. Psalm 51:3-5 For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. (4) Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight-- That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge. (5) Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.
2. 1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

II. We Transgressors Are Suffering for Our Transgressions

A. The butler and the baker

1. both were thrown out of Pharaoh's palace
2. both were thrown into the prison

B. The thief on Christ's right and the one on His left

1. both had been judged guilty by the government authorities
2. both were being punished by crucifixion

C. All mankind

1. we all suffer the death that God warned of, when he said, "On the day you eat of it, dying you shall surely die."
 - a) every health problem
 - b) every injury
 - c) every terminal illness
 - d) every death
 - (1) by accident
 - (2) by illness
 - (3) by effects of old age
 - (4) by war
 - (5) by murder
2. the man suffers what God pronounced for him: Genesis 3:17-19 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. (18) Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. (19) In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return."
3. the woman suffers with the man what God pronounced for him: Think of all the trouble the woman has because of the man's trouble in earning his living

4. the woman suffers what God pronounced for her: Genesis 3:16 To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you."
5. the man suffers with the woman what God pronounced for her:
 - a) Think of all the trouble the man has because of the woman's greatly multiplied sorrow and pain in childbearing.
 - b) think of all the trouble the man has because he is placed in the position of ruling over the woman, but she resists that rule so strongly

D. Every one of us here

1. all of your troubles, all your distress, all your grief, all your loss, your eventual death, all because of your sin

III. This Present Suffering for Our Transgressions Will Give Way to a Final Judgment

A. The butler and the baker

1. they had undergone an initial judgment, where they were removed from their favored position
2. they were facing a future judgment, where things
 - a) could get better for them, or
 - b) could get much worse for them

B. The thief on Christ's right and the one on His left

1. they had undergone an initial judgment, by the government officials
2. they were facing a future judgment by God, where things
 - a) could get better for them, or
 - b) could get much worse for them

C. All mankind

1. have undergone an initial judgment by God, when we were driven out of the Garden of Eden
2. are facing the final judgment, where
 - a) some will be raised to everlasting life
 - b) some will be raised to everlasting punishment

D. Every one of us here

1. you feel the effects on you individually of being thrown out of the Garden of Eden
2. you are facing the final judgment, where the Lord Jesus will deal with each one individually, and say to each either
 - a) enter into the joy of the Lord; or
 - b) away from me, I never knew you

IV. Before That Final Judgment, We Find the Beloved Son Numbered With the Transgressors

A. Joseph was imprisoned with the butler and the baker

1. the history is about Joseph, the beloved son, whom God sent to save His people from the coming famine

2. God sent Joseph there to that prison
 3. when the butler and the baker found themselves in prison, there was Joseph with them, assigned to serve them
- B. The Lord Jesus Christ was crucified between two robbers
1. Mark 15:25-28 Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him. (26) And the inscription of His accusation was written above: THE KING OF THE JEWS. (27) With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left. (28) So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH THE TRANSGRESSORS."
- C. He bore our sins on the cross
1. He became the curse for us
 2. He endured the punishment that we transgressors deserve, for our sake
 3. He took the cup of the wrath of God for our transgressions, and drank it Himself on our behalf
- V. By the Beloved Son Being With the Transgressors, God Makes a Distinction Between One Transgressor and Another
- A. The butler and the baker
1. Joseph spoke the word of God to the butler, telling him that he would be raised up out of the prison to be blessed in the presence of his Lord
 2. Joseph spoke the word of God to the baker, telling him that he would be raised up out of the prison only to be executed
 3. In the case of the two servants of Pharaoh, we see what determines the fate of people deserving punishment - God determines it for nothing about them, but only by His will.
 - a) who will be exalted
 - b) who will be executed
 4. You are not normally allowed to see this. This is a very unusual event.
 5. God knows what's going to happen. How does He know?
 - a) Is He a very good guesser?
 - b) Did He find out by supernatural ability?
 - c) Did He look to see? Was there something to see, so He looked to see? Did He look before He ever created the universe? If so, what did He look at?
- B. The thief on Christ's right and the one on His left
1. Luke 23:39 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."
 2. Luke 23:40-43 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? (41) And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." (42) Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." (43) And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

3. In the case of the two thieves on the cross, we see that how God's determination of the fate of sinners is worked out is that He grants repentance of sin and faith in Christ to some, but not to others.

C. All mankind

1. Jesus said that some would be saved by God's love:
 - a) John 3:16-18a For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (17) For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (18) He that believeth on him is not condemned
 - b) repentance and forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus Christ is preached to all nations; God commands all men everywhere to repent; those who repent of sin, turning to God, and trust themselves to Christ, will be saved, and enjoy all the blessings of being in the presence of Christ forever;
2. Jesus said that some would be condemned for their sins:
 - a) John 3:18b he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
 - b) for all who stay in their sins, trusting in themselves or in something else, anything else besides Jesus Christ, there is no salvation, but, instead, a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour them.

D. Every one of us here

1. if we were learning this lesson only from the history of Joseph, we could think that because God is in control of all this . . .
2. but we are learning this lesson not only from that history, but also the rest of the bible
3. so we learn from Joseph that God knows and determines the salvation or condemnation of sinners
4. but we also learn that the way God does this is the to grant to some that they may repent of sins and trust in Christ, calling out to Him to remember them, while leaving others to suffer the punishment they deserve for their sins

VI. APPLICATION

- A. So, believer in Christ, in the midst of your sufferings, which can feel to you as if you are in prison, or even sometimes as if you are being crucified,
 1. take heart, because
 - a) although you have to be in this prison, it is only for three more days, then God will raise you up, just as Jesus has said
 - b) although you have to be crucified daily, soon it will all be over, and you will then immediately be with the Lord Jesus in paradise
 2. follow the example set for you
 - a) if in hard service, serve well as Joseph did Potiphar

- b) if even in prison, serve and trust the Lord in the prison, as Joseph did
 - c) if even suffering a kind of crucifixion, trust the Lord as Jesus did, calling for forgiveness even of your tormentors
 - 3. All that God is doing in this universe is about Jesus Christ, not about you. This history is about Jesus, not about the butler or the baker. The gospel is about Jesus, not about the robbers on the crosses next to Him. God is working BIG things, and your part in them may require you to perform a function that is difficult or painful or dull; be of good courage, knowing that God has placed you where you are, and He is with you, and has not forgotten you.
- B. And you, who have up until now had a misplaced faith in yourself or in something that will not save, look to the Lord Jesus
 - 1. He is God's beloved Son, sent down here to be with the transgressors
 - 2. He pronounces forgiveness of sins and eternal life with Him for all who turn from sins and believe in Him
 - 3. So repent, and believe the good news of Jesus Christ; be baptized in His name
 - a) in three days you will be lifted from your prison
 - b) today you will be with Him in paradise

CONCLUSION

All of us alike are transgressors.

We transgressors are suffering for our transgressions

This present suffering for our transgressions will give way to a final judgment

Before that final judgment, we find the beloved Son numbered with the transgressors

By the beloved son being with the transgressors, God makes a distinction between one transgressor and another

So, let the sinner hear the gospel and believe in Christ.

And let the disciple of Jesus Christ be encouraged, and follow the example of Joseph and of Christ until the time when you are lifted up.

How is God going to deal with sinners?
How is He going to save sinners?
How is He going to condemn sinners?

God sent His beloved Son to be with the transgressors.

UNITY

PURPOSE - FALLEN CONDITION FOCUS

Romans 15:4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

We all have offended God and are deserving of punishment.

We have all, whether butler or baker, you or me, man or woman, adult or child, rich or poor, slave or free.

But there is one Beloved Son who is not guilty as we are.

We deserve to be in prison awaiting judgment.

He does not deserve to be here, but He is here with us!

While He is here with us, between two criminals, God pronounces who will be with Him in glory, and who will go to destruction.

The situation of these two men is bad, because of their offense, but it stands to get either better or worse.

We think too much in terms of human beings determining their own eternal destiny.

In the case of the two servants of Pharaoh, we see what determines the fate of people deserving punishment - God determines it for nothing about them, but only by His will.

who will be exalted

who will be executed

You are not normally allowed to see this. This is a very unusual event.

God knows what's going to happen. How does He know?

Is He a very good guesser?

Did He find out by supernatural ability?

Did He look to see? Was there something to see, so He looked to see? Did He look before He ever created the universe? If so, what did He look at?

In the case of the two thieves on the cross, we see that how God's determination of the fate of sinners is worked out is that He grants repentance of sin and faith in Christ to some, but not to others.

Sometimes we are sent by God to serve in unpleasant conditions.

The captain of the guard put Joseph in charge of the two special prisoners.

This is either Potiphar, or the man who has succeeded him.

What? You know I am trustworthy, but you are leaving me here in prison? Joseph is capable of running a large household expertly and faithfully, but he is serving in prison. He is capable of running a whole large country's government!

Sometimes God does not deliver us from a bad situation, even when we ask Him.

Joseph clearly acted exemplary.

Joseph surely must have prayed.

There was one opportunity, clearly God-given, but even that did not work out.

Our minds have difficulty receiving salvation for some and destruction for others.

APPLICATION

God is working BIG things, and your part in them may require you to perform a function that is difficult or painful or dull; take heart, knowing that God has placed you where you are, and He is with you, and has not forgotten you.

JRY:

Through Joseph, God says to one that he will find grace in the eyes of his lord, and to the other that he will receive the death penalty.

God teaches us here that He knows what will become of every person, and He can communicate it through His servant.

JRY:

God knows what is happening, and what is going to happen.

He is in control of everything, and is working it all for the glory of His name and the good of His people.

Hawker (on Genesis 40:23):

But even here in Joseph's history, let me not lose sight of the LORD JESUS, who was taken from prison and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation? Blessed LORD! let me never forget the afflictions of my spiritual and almighty Joseph, nor the cause of them; but in all events of life as well prosperous as distressing, cease not to remember thee!

Cupbearer/butler

note this was the office of Nehemiah, who was sent from there to being the governor of Judea

Genesis 41

verse 13

Trapp:

Similiarly: as Christ foretold the two thieves with whom he suffered, so it happened; the one went to heaven, the other to hell. And so it shall fare with all men at the last day, according to Isa_3:10-11.

Silversides [paraphrasing]:

God determines who will be exalted and who will be destroyed.

Henry:

It was typical of the exaltation of Christ, that great revealer of secrets (Joh_1:18), or, as some translate Joseph's new name, the Saviour of the world. The brightest glories of the upper world are put upon him, the highest trust is lodged in his hand, and all power is given to him both in heaven and earth. He is gatherer, keeper, and disposer, of all the stores of divine grace, and chief ruler of the kingdom of God among men. The work of minsters is to cry before him, "Bow the knee; kiss the Son."

James 5:10-11 My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. (11) Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord--that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

Greer:

Christ is seen as the suffering savior.

These two clearly remind us of the two thieves

Most certainly there is a parallel

There is a message for sinners.

Two men represent every unconverted person

1. Their Condemnation - both are condemned
2. Their Wrongdoing
 - a. offended - Hebrew "sinned"
 - b. in custody - man believes that he's at liberty

Clarke:

Many commentators have seen in every circumstance in the history of Joseph a parallel between him and our blessed Lord. So, "Joseph in prison represents Christ in the custody of the Jews; the chief butler and the chief baker represent the two thieves which were crucified with our Lord; and as one thief was pardoned, and the other left to perish, so the chief butler was restored to his office, and the chief baker hanged." I believe God never designed such parallels; and I am astonished to find comparatively grave and judicious men trifling in this way, and forcing the features of truth into the most distorted anamorphosis, so that even her friends blush to acknowledge her. This is not a light matter; we should beware how we attribute designs to God that he never had, and employ the Holy Spirit in forming trifling and unimportant similitudes. Of plain, direct truth we shall find as much in the sacred writings as we can receive and comprehend; let us not therefore hew out unto ourselves broken cisterns that can hold no water.

Interpretations of this kind only tend to render the sacred writings uncertain; to expose to ridicule all the solemn types and figures which it really contains; and to furnish pretexts to infidels and irreligious people to scoff at all spirituality, and lead them to reject the word of God entirely, as incapable of being interpreted on any fixed or rational plan. The mischief done by this system is really incalculable.