

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Afternoon

Date 14th August 2022

Preacher Rev Philip Knowles, Ps/Hymns Palm 105v15-19 Tune New Britain. 371

Read: Genesis 39:20-21 Text Genesis 39:20

Series: Joseph (31) Title: Joseph's Time In Prison (2)

Joseph is one of many of God's servants who experienced a time of prison for obeying God rather than man. For waking in the Spirit rather than the flesh.

Joseph is in prison because he called sin for what was, great wickedness against God.

Therefore, in the Christian life, while some believers will find themselves in a literal prison for honouring God, yet all believers will find themselves in a prison experience, that is expressed by the terms, down in the valley, or the troubles of life, for many are the afflictions of the righteous.

Such prison experiences are emotional, physical, mental, medical, and financial. They are times of depression, where one walks a way they have not passed before.

However, we learn from Joseph's prison experience that God was with Him and working through him according to the counsel of His own will.

Every prison experience God leads His People through, He does so according to His own eternal redemptive purposes in Christ for the saving of sinners, the sanctification of saints, and the summoning of straying believers.

Your prison experience and your response to it and through it, will either be a witness to the unsaved or an example and encouragement to believers. **Sometimes both.**

God permits prison experiences to take place to teach us, the Christ who saves from sin's power also, sustains, supports,

strengthens, succours, and gives success in every prison experience, and comfort in the storms, sufferings and sorrows of life.

All to see the goodness, greatness and glory of God and know His delivering power.

With that in mind, having considered **Joseph's time in prison was a Painful time**, as seen by **the SHAME he ENDURED, the SUFFERINGS he EXPERIENCED and the SORROWS he EXPRESSED**

Please notice with me,

II SECOND, JOSEPH'S TIME IN PRISON WAS A PROLONGED TIME

In putting the verses together, it will be seen that Joseph was in prison for two years or more, but certainly no less than two years.

I understand among preachers there are different time scales to how long Joseph was in prison, which ranges from 2-13 years, however all agree his prison sentence was no less than two years.

Notice, **Genesis 39:20** *“and Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.”*

Genesis 41:1 *“And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed...”* **Genesis 41:14** *“Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon.”*

The point is Joseph had been in the dungeon for no less than two full years. His time in prison was prolonged. His time of dullness and darkness seemed unending. It appeared as if he was never getting out.

At some point Pharaoh's butler and Baker were also cast into prison. But in conversation with the chief butler, he said in **Gen 40:14** *I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house, verse 23 Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.*

The time was long for Joseph, but for this reason Joseph has the assurance, the Lord was with him.

It could be believer your prison experience feels prolonged.

Whatever it is that you are going through it has lasted longer than you thought it would.

A particular diagnoses, illness, for some time, may be a few days, weeks, months, yeah years.

You have endured this prison experience such as health issues, attending to family matters, battling with bereavement, still coming to terms of the loss of a loved one.

Troubles at home, trouble with children, problems at work, trials of life pressures in general. More keeps getting added.

Your circumstances have not changed in a long time.

It may be your disliked because of your faith in Christ. You're the last person asked to do something and last to be considered for something.

Oh if you had partaken in the sin, or done that thing or taken that thing which was great wickedness against God, you would have been in there with everyone else, up at the front, your profile would be popular, your living environment comfortable, that promotion might have been yours.

There may have been a good paying job and you meet the requirements on paper, yet if that job, means that you must do great wickedness against God, let me say according to God's word you meet none of the requirements. It's not for you.

God knows all about you, and He knows how long your dungeon experience will last.

He sees the end of from the beginning. He is the Alpha and Omega. Known unto Him are all His works.

Ecc 3:1 *To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven, that include all from verses 2-10, then verse 11 “He hath made every thing beautiful in his time:*

God does everything in His time, at the right time, in the fullness of time.

Remember when the Apostle Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 12**, concerning his thorn in the flesh, he made the point in **verse 2** he had endured it so far for 14 years.

But God gave Paul a unending and unchangeable promise that God’s grace would be sufficient for Paul, as long as there was a need there was grace.

Acts 7:23-30, The children of Israel were treated as prisoners bound in Egypt for over 80 years until Moses came to deliver.

When the children of Judah were taken as prisoners to Babylon, they were there 70 years, read **Jeremiah 29-33**, but God gave hope for the future.

Think of the prison experience of Christ, including his trials lasting hours as He was held a prisoner.

The trials of Christ were both Jewish (before Annas, then Caiaphas then the Sanhedrin, the Jewish council) also the Roman trials (courts of Pilate and Herod). **Matthew 27:15** “*Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would*

Look at the timing of Christ's arrest, and crucifixion. Christ was arrested at night, **John 18:3** *cometh thither with lanterns and torches*, **Matthew 27:1** "*When the morning was come...*"

At early hours in the morning between 6am-8am, He was sentenced. **Mark 15:25** "*And it was the third hour, and they crucified Him.*" The third hour was nine in the morning.

John 19:45 says "*Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.*"

The 6th hour was *12 noon*, midday, and then the 9th hour was *3pm*. He prayed *My God My God why hast thou forsaken me*. Then He spoke *I thirst*, it is finished.

By that point He had suffered on the cross from 9am- 3pm lasting, for six hours

From His capture to the cross, the time was long, but God's timing was perfect, **Romans 5:6** "*in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*"

God was working providently, putting all things together for the salvation of His people, buried to rise, notice the timing on the third day for them, not the same, or second.

Learn believer, God works to His timing. He will give you an expected end. He always leaves the assurance He is with His people, as He was with Joseph.

You have not slipped through His fingers.

The first part of **Deuteronomy 33:29** "*The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms...*"

since His presence and power as symbolised by His everlasting arms that are underneath, then you can never fall lower, or through His arms.

He eternally holds you up. He eternally secures you.

Unsaved God permits situations in your life to teach you Ecc 3:2 a time to die.

Are you prepared meet your creator? Will you meet Him as Saviour to welcome into heaven, or judge to cast into hell.

III THIRD, JOSEPH'S TIME IN PRISON WAS A PURPOSEFUL TIME

Genesis 41:1 “And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed...” Genesis 41:14 “Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon.”

The key words I want us to focus upon are the words in **Genesis 41:1** “***And it came to pass...***” The strength of these words mean “***at the end of days***”.

Those words are striking, for they indicate that at a particular time God's purpose was fulfilled for Joseph to be in jail.

The lesson taught was learned. God's purpose was fulfilled.

When God had fulfilled His purpose with Joseph in prison or God had fulfilled His purposes with Joseph's time at prison for those years, only then did God bring him out and move him on.

God moved Joseph from the prison to the Palace when God's own perfect time was full. Joseph was seated on the throne at just the right time—not one second too early or one second too late.

We don't always understand God's timing, but we can rest assured that He is always on schedule.

The same phrase and meaning ***And it came to pass...***” is used in the life of the Prophet Elijah. God brought Elijah to dwell at the brook Cherith for a prolonged period of time.

While there, God sustained His servant by water from the brook but also the ravens which brought food day by day.

However, after a long time dwelling at this brook, the time had come for it to dry up.

Then we read in **1 Kings 17:7-9** ***“And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. ⁸ And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, ⁹ Arise, get thee to Zarephath...”***

When “It came to pass,” or “at the end of days” that is God had fulfilled His purpose for that part of Elijah’s life. God brought Elijah out of brook Cherith.

There were still more lessons to learn. Never think we have arrived and there is nothing else to learn.

But God leads and guides continually, and when He brings us to a certain point in life of which we are alone and tested, then once He has accomplished His divine purpose in our life, He providently leads on to another place. He gives another assignment to glory Him.

Keep in mind Elijah is a man of like passions as we are. He is human. Put yourself in Elijah’s place, all you have is the promise of God to hold unto and that is all you need.

God has kept His word, and each day you have seen the ravens come and go, the brook’s water has been flowing, until a certain time, you notice its beginning to dry up, but still, you depend upon the promise of God.

But then it completely dries up.

Elijah’s faith was pushed to the very end. Remember It was God who told him to go to Cherith. He was in the will of God.

God had not told him to move. So the right thing to do was still to remain at Cherith and wait because God will work in His own

time. **Ps 37:5** “***Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.***

Unknown to Elijah, God was working providently behind the scenes. The brook drying up was not a surprise to God, but all part of His purpose.

May I say when all you have is the promise of God to hold to, and your situation seems to go against that promise or does not match that promise. Still hold on to the promise. His word will not fail you.

Still take God at His word. Never allow your circumstances, to cause doubt, dictate or re-direct from God’s word. Our circumstances change, but the counsel of the Lord stands true.

When God had fulfilled the reason why He sent Joseph into prison, only then He brought him out.

Keep in mind God’s purpose for Joseph centred upon the first coming of Christ. God’s purpose for Joseph in jail was promotion to a position where He could provide and preserve the nation, and protect the tribe of Judah, the seed line to which Christ will born, . **Rev 5:5** ***behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David.***

In **Acts 12:5** when Peter was kept in prison, “***prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him God used Peter time in jail to gather God’s people to pray.***

In considering Christ viewed and treated as prisoner the phrase it came to pass in reference to Christ are seen by the words repeated many times ***that the Scripture might be fulfilled*** **John 19:28** “***After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.***” When God’s purpose was fulfilled only then could Christ victorious say in **John 19:30** ***it is finished.***

Believer, God has a purpose for your life. Part of that purpose or the path in that purpose will include life's prison experiences.

Each person's prison experience will be different in pressure, and time, than some one else.

As a Church family or a family in the church, may go through a prison experience, which may be long, but God is working with each person accomplishing His purpose through that one trial.

You have to pass through it so it can come to pass.

God's timing is always right. God is always on time. God's time is always the best time.

Later Joseph could look back and see that God's time had been exactly right. everything had worked out.

Dear believer be assured today, God was working in your life. It was God's purpose for Joseph to experience such times.

The path may be hard, the tears flow, but God is in control. As we travel this path with a tears and afflictions, we see the hand of God, He is working. He has a plan and purpose for your life.

Every setback, trail, affliction, God works all to our good and His glory. The ways of God are past finding out. This ought to encourage us to know God is working out His purpose for me.

Nothing can happen to me that He has not purposed, but what He has purposed for me will come to pass.