

Joseph's God-centered Life

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[0:00] Genesis 39. Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, brought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there.

The Lord was with Joseph, and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant.

Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the Lord blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph.

The blessing of the Lord was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. So he left in Joseph's care everything he had. With Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.

Now Joseph was well built and handsome, and after a while, his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, Come to bed with me. But he refused.

[1:12] With me in charge, he told her, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house. Everything he owns, he has entrusted to my care. No one is greater in this house than I am.

My master has withheld nothing from me except you because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God? And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

One day he went into the house to attend to his duties and none of the household servants was inside. She caught him by his cloak and said, Come to bed with me.

But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house. When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, she called her household servants.

Look, she said to them, This Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us. He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house.

[2:15] She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home. Then she told him this story. That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me.

But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house. When his master heard the story, his wife told him, saying, This is how your slave treated me. He burned with anger.

Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined. But while Joseph was there in the prison, the Lord was with him, and he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden.

So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

We welcome you young people back from your ski retreat and thank God for the word of God that was sown in your heart and trust to see that word-bearing fruit in each one.

[3:22] Now I'm going to ask that everyone that's 17 years old just to stand up for a moment right where you're at. I'm not going to embarrass you. Just please stand up. Any 17-year-olds here this morning?

Okay? Alright, that's it. This is how old Joseph was when our story begins in Genesis chapter 39. Alright, thank you. You may sit down. Genesis 37.2 says, He was a young man of 17 tending his father's sheep. Now, I won't ask you 30-year-olds to stand, but would you at least hold your hand

up?

Any 30-year-olds? Well, Levant will wait on that later. Alright. That's how old Joseph was when he was finally lifted out of the dungeon and exalted to the number two position in all the land of Egypt. Now, from 17 to age 30, one difficult circumstance after another crashed in to Joseph's life.

[4:41] For 13 years, it was nearly back-to-back trials. And what we find is that just when things started to go well for Joseph, he was immediately slammed back down to the bottom.

And then back up and then back down. And this element of suffering for 13 years makes Joseph a good case study on suffering.

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope.

And so may the God who gives endurance and encouragement do so this morning. That we may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now, this is not a series of messages in the life of Joseph. It's just one message, one overview of this portion of his life, especially. We want to get the big picture and learn some lessons from it.

[5:49] You're familiar with the story. It starts out with Joseph as a 17-year-old and life was good for Joseph. He's the favored son of a wealthy shepherd.

On top of that, he's well built and handsome. Something that would not work against him or be to his detriment.

He had two dreams of being exalted over his brothers and them bowing down to him. Things were going well for Joseph, but then in one day the bottom just fell out of his life.

His jealous brothers hated him enough to kill him and that's what they were going to do. But at the last moment, they decided to sell him to some Midianite traders instead for a half a pound of silver. And they in turn took him to Egypt and no doubt made a profit on him there as they sold him to Potiphar, an official of Pharaoh.

[6:57] So at 17, Joseph finds himself all alone as a Hebrew slave, stripped from his family, far from home, in a strange land that speaks a strange language and worships strange gods.

And if I were Joseph, I can imagine saying to myself, this isn't where I envision spending the best years of my life.

Slavery was not the occupational track I chose in high school. This wasn't what I had in mind and just how long will it last?

But I'm not Joseph and so I wonder how did he process all this crud in his life? All these bad things that came his way.

What was he thinking? What was he feeling as this happened to him? And not just initially, but as things drag on year after year until 13 years had passed.

[8:07] Now we don't get to hear him speaking often during these 13 years. In fact, only three times. But when he does speak, he reveals his heart and mind.

For out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. So we're going to listen to the words that came out of his mouth in order to learn what was going on inside of Joseph during these trials and so to learn some lessons for our own lives.

Recently, someone pointed out to me that each time Joseph speaks, he speaks about God. And we'll see that he speaks well of God.

Now I think this is a key insight that we dare not miss. It's eye-opening. It tells us that God was never far from the thoughts of Joseph. And that he was thinking big thoughts about God as we'll see it.

It doesn't mean he didn't struggle. But it does mean that he related everything that he was going through to his God. He's looking to him.

[9:26] He's thinking about him. He's seeing him in the picture of everyday life and all that's happening to him. So follow me as we follow Joseph's words right into his heart this morning.

Thirteen years of suffering. Now they're divided between his years of slavery in Potiphar's house and his years in prison in the dungeon.

We're not exactly sure how long he spent in each. We know that it was at least three years in prison. Perhaps more. We know that a man doesn't go to the top from being a mere slave to being the attendant of all Potiphar's household in a moment.

That there must be the proving of his trustworthiness. And it took some time before Joseph finally was given that position in Potiphar's home.

There were harvests of crops that would take years you see and projects that he completed and his faithfulness there won him the respect of Potiphar.

[10:46] And finally he's promoted as Potiphar's attendant to take care of everything in the house and field and it was then that Potiphar's wife made solicitations to Joseph but he refused.

And here's where we hear him speaking for the first time. Verse 8 of chapter 39. But he refused. With me in charge he told her my master does not concern himself with anything in the house. Everything he owns has been entrusted to my care. No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin not against Potiphar but against God?

Against God and like a bolt out of the blue comes the word God. This isn't a religion class. This is not a discussion on theology and yet Joseph plants God right between him and Potiphar's wife.

[11:56] There he is. I cannot touch you without sinning against God. Now it is the first time we hear Joseph speaking since he was sold into slavery and what we find is that God is on his tongue.

Now this is instructive to us. Here's a young man far from home, far from religious influences around him, but he's never far from thoughts about God.

And even in this kind of temptation that would tend to make a young man forget everything else for the moment, I mean a woman is in front of him offering herself to him, and yet even in that situation, the thought of God remains a powerful influence over his behavior.

And to find God in his thoughts at this time argues that this was not a rare thing with Joseph, but that it was his habit, his regular thought.

Indeed, as we'll see, we find God in his mouth every time we hear him speak. This young man is living a Godward life, where God is front and center, in his thoughts.

[13:20] And his thoughts about God must have been as continual as her temptations, for she kept pressing him day after day, and he kept refusing day after day, because how could I do such a thing and sin against God?

So he may have been far from his father, but he was never far in his mind from his father's God.

And what we learn is that his father's God has clearly become his God.

He's not living off of his father's faith. He's not coasting on daddy's religious coattails. That won't cut it in this kind of temptation and suffering.

No, he's living before God himself. He has embraced this God as his God. He's slaving for God.

He's serving Potiphar for God.

He's maintaining his sexual purity for God. He's a God-centered man with a mind full of God. And they're good thoughts about God.

[14:33] They're thoughts about his holiness and his goodness such that he can't even fathom sinning against him. God has been the one upholding and blessing him even in this foreign land giving him favor and success.

How then could I do a wicked thing and sin against God? Do your thoughts of God make it hard to sin against him? Does the thought of God operate as a powerful deterrent to sin in your life?

Are your thoughts of him high enough? holy enough? Clear enough? Often enough to turn you away from sin and constant temptation?

Now we have some older teens and those in their early 20s with us perhaps this morning who are moving on in life and enjoying greater independence. Some going away to school, spending less time at home and more time alone.

And I wonder, do you have, what do you have in the way of a relationship with the living God that will sustain you in such trials and temptations as Joseph had?

[15:49] Do you know God for yourself? Is he your God? Not just mom and dad's God, but your God. Do you trust your whole being into his hands?

Do you trust your future to him? Do you think of him often? You know, it's not safe to go for any length of time without thinking of God.

We learn that from Joseph. And I think this God-centered focus of Joseph's life also explains other things that we see in his life, like his being elevated to the personal attendant of Potiphar.

Potiphar. When he first became a slave to Potiphar, he did not grow bitter and shut down, thinking what a raw deal he had been dealt by his brothers.

He did not become preoccupied with himself and moping around with half-hearted efforts and a bad attitude at work. You say, how do you know that? Because masters don't elevate those kind of

slaves.

[17:00] they keep them down real low and they work them hard. But Joseph was not like that. Rather, he's one who was proven diligent and trustworthy and concerned about Potiphar's welfare.

So we find this young man embracing God's providential will for his life. It's not what I would have chosen. But did not Jesus say that following him would mean laying down our wills and taking up his?

And if it is the Lord's will that I be a slave today, then let me be the best slave that I can be today. Let me serve him by being the best slave.

And so we read that the Lord was with Joseph, but we also see and read between the lines that Joseph was with the Lord. He was walking with him. And so the Lord gave him success in everything he did.

He gave him favor in Pharaoh's eyes such that he put him in charge of everything that he owned in the house and in the field. A God-centered focus will affect your attitude when your chosen way has been frustrated and denied and your path lies straight up the hill difficulty.

[18:30] Well, as you know, Joseph's stand for holiness and his unwillingness to give in to Potiphar's wife caused him to be falsely accused and slammed into prison.

Just as things were looking up, he's put down. But though he's put down, he's not shutting down again. We don't find Joseph shutting down in self-pity.

We don't find him preoccupied with his bad circumstances. He's not moping, thinking of self. But again, he's serving helpfully in the dungeon now.

Here, let me get that, sir. And he's doing work for the warden. And he's showing himself helpful and willing and trustworthy such that this warden finally says, okay, you can run the whole show.

Just like Potiphar had said to him. Again, the Lord was with him and gave him success in whatever he did and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden such that he paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care.

[19:47] Now, it's in prison then that we get to hear Joseph speaking the second time. Now, when a man is consumed with his own woes, as we heard in the adult Sunday school class this morning, he's so taken up with himself that he's no good to anyone else.

He's not concerned about others because he's preoccupied with the wrong that's been done to him. Woe is me. But Joseph is not that man.

His God-centered focus frees him from being self-centered. I say it frees him because it's bondage to be self-centered. But he's set free to have his eyes looking out on others and how he can serve them.

We see that in his way of serving the warden and now we see it in the way that he serves two other prisoners. One day, two new prisoners show up straight from Pharaoh's house. The chief cupbearer and the chief baker somehow offended Pharaoh.

You can imagine different ways that they might have done that. But the result was they were slammed into prison with Joseph. And the guard assigned them to Joseph.

[21:06] to take care of. And it's here that we read that after some time both men had a dream on the same night that troubled them. And the instructive thing was that in the morning Joseph saw that they were dejected and showed concern for them.

Now if anybody ought to have been dejected and their face hanging sad, it was Joseph sold into slavery by his brothers, lied about and falsely accused by his master's wife, slammed into prison. He should have been dejected and thinking only of himself such that he didn't even notice the attitude in the prisoner's face. But no, he's embraced God's will for his life.

he's centered upon God and so he's set free from self-preoccupation and he walks in that morning and says, boy, something's wrong with you. What is it?

He takes interest in them and wants to help them. Why are your faces so sad today? Well, we both had dreams and there's no one to interpret them.

[22:23] And then Joseph said to them, do not interpretations belong to God. Tell me your dreams. Again, as he opens his mouth, he speaks of God and he speaks of how God could help them.

Two pagans and Joseph is willing to talk about God and how God could help them in their situation. He's in a foreign land with foreign religions where they don't even know his God and yet he speaks up for him as the God who knows everything, even what passes through a man's mind during his

dreams.

He's thinking about his God and so he's quick to acknowledge him. And so the cupbearer's dream meant that he was going to be restored to his position in three days.

And he says to him, now, Mr. Cupbearer, when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness. Verses 14 and 15, remember me and show me kindness.

Mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison, for I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon.

[23 : 45] And then the baker's dream, as you remember, meant that his head was going to be taken off after three days. And in three days it all happened, just as Joseph had said. Those hopes might have risen as the chief cupbearer headed back to Pharaoh's palace.

Those hopes would have soon been dashed as chapter 40 ends with these words. The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph.

He forgot him. And then the chapter 41, the first words in chapter 41 tells us how long he forgot him. When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream. Mistreated and now forgotten. He's just helped a cupbearer, cupbearer's back in Pharaoh's palace.

He's waiting the next day. Maybe he'll get word. And the day starts and the day ends and nothing changes. And the next day, 365 days go by like that.

[24 : 51] And another 365 days. Waiting, waiting, and then waiting some more. It's been 13 years of slavery and imprisonment, but now at last, God's purposes ripen fast.

And it's his time for lifting Joseph from the dungeon to the palace. God caused a dream to pass through the mind of Pharaoh in the night. They must have been some ugly cows that he saw swallowing up those fat cows.

And it was so startling that it woke him from his sleep. And when he fell back to sleep, he had another dream on the same night. And again, it was the skinny heads of grain swallowing up the seven fat heads of grain.

And in the morning he was troubled about the dreams, so he sought an interpretation from all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. But no one could interpret the dreams for him.

And it was then that the Lord rang the bell in the chief cupbearer's mind. Oh, I remember there's a Hebrew slave down in the dungeon who can interpret dreams.

[26 : 14] In fact, when I was there and your chief baker were there, we had dreams and he interpreted them and everything happened just as he had said. And so Pharaoh sends for Joseph at once.

And he said to Joseph, verse 15, I had a dream and no one can interpret it, but I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream, you can interpret it.

And Joseph is about to speak to the king of Egypt. What will he say? Verse 16, I cannot do it, but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires.

He's standing before the king now, and he's just been paid a compliment and praise for his ability at interpreting dreams, and Joseph refuses to let the praise stick to himself, himself, but he immediately deflects it.

I cannot do it, but God will, but God will. And he gives credit to God both for the past interpretations and for this present one.

[27 : 24] Joseph is living so near to God that God is never far from his mind and lips, and it's the God centered man that is very jealous for the glory of God, and he's not afraid to praise his God in front of kings.

Tells us a little bit what was going through his mind back in the dungeon when he interpreted the dreams for the two men there, and it all happened just as he said, and Joseph said in his devotions, God, that was not me, that was you.

And there must have been many days that Joseph said, Lord, that was not me, that was you. The favor I've received, the grace to be joyful in tribulation and suffering, that was not me, that was you. Because now when he's given praise for interpreting, it's the same, it was not me, it was God. I say his words give us insight into his heart.

The crucible is for silver and the furnace is for gold, but man is tested by the praise he receives.

And Joseph is tested by the praise he receives, and he passes the test.

[28 : 40] He listens to Pharaoh's dream and then gives the interpretation, and he keeps God front and center the whole while. In verse 25, he tells Pharaoh, the dreams of Pharaoh are one and the

same.

God has revealed to Pharaoh what he's about to do. verse 28, God has shown Pharaoh what he's about to do. Seven years of plenty followed by seven years of severe famine. Verse 31, the years of famine will be so severe that the years of abundance will not be remembered.

Verse 32, the reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God and God will do it soon. he speaks of God to the mighty king.

There's one above you, Pharaoh. And he tells Pharaoh to appoint a discerning and wise man to be in charge of taking a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the years of plenty, that they might store that grain and have food to give to their people during the years of famine.

And Pharaoh just says, since God, now we hear God in Pharaoh's mouth, he's heard it, where? From Joseph. And now he says, since God has made all this known to you, there's no one so discerning and wise as you.

[29:58] You shall be in charge of my palace and all my people are to submit to your orders only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you. So we've seen this same pattern.

Joseph, the slave, elevated in Potiphar's house to where he cared for nothing but the food that was put on his plate. Everything else was safe in Joseph's hands.

Then wham, into prison and elevated to where the jailer gives all the responsibility to Joseph. He doesn't care for anything in the prison because Joseph has it in hand.

Then brought into Pharaoh's court and Pharaoh again elevates him to the place where he cares for nothing but the throne. Everything else is in Joseph's hand.

Now, the years of his suffering are over. It ends the period of his suffering and trials. And during these 13 years, we've only heard him speak three times, but every time he spoke, he spoke of God.

[31:07] Now, he no doubt spoke more often than that. He's not a man of few words. That's not what we're to draw from this. But we're just to say that when samplings are given at key points in his life of what he did say, we see what was going on in his heart.

God was in his heart. God was on his mind, and he spoke freely of him. I want you to see two other times after this when his words are recorded for us, when his two sons were born, and then when he revealed his identity to his brothers.

He's now 30 years old. As he enters the service of Pharaoh, chapter 41 and verse 46, he gets married, and during the seven years of plenty, he has two sons.

In verse 51 of Genesis 41, it says, Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh. And in Hebrew, that sounds like the word for forget.

And he says, as he says, his name is Manasseh, he said, it is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household.

[32:23] Again, we find Joseph thinking about God, even at the birth of his firstborn son. He's relating everything to God, isn't he?

That's what we begin to see, this pattern emerging. Whatever's happening, there's a connection to God immediately in his heart and mind. He's thinking of his God.

And always seeing him in the picture. And so he acknowledges God is the one who has so blessed him that all of his trouble has been swallowed up and buried and forgotten under his present blessings from God.

God. Now, that's a lot to swallow up. That's 13 years of hard knocks and raw deals and injustices and being lied about and falsely accused and God's blessings have made me forget all my troubles. And it even made him forget his father's household under the blessing of giving him his own household. He's got a wife and a son now. And we don't hear anything of his complaining about those 13 years of waiting as a slave and holed up in a dungeon.

[33:42] All we hear is praise to God from whom all blessings flow. Blessings so great that they've made me forget all my troubles.

This is the God-centered man. He's a praising man who is amazed at God's goodness and blessing not miffed over God's trials brought in his life.

Sadly we too often remember our troubles and forget God's blessings. Here's a man who is God-centered and he's amazed at how many blessings God has given him.

Well he has a second son. Sometime later he had a second son. And verse 52 says the second son he named Ephraim and in Hebrew that sounds like twice fruitful.

And he said it is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering. Notice God is front and center again. What was it? A year? Two years?

[34 : 46] We don't know but when he opens his mouth it's God. God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering.

Now that's not where we expect to find fruitfulness is it? It seems bleak and barren but God is able to make the desert blossom like a rose like we heard in the Sunday school hour to make our lives bear fruit like a well-watered garden in a sun-scorched land.

And under God's blessing suffering can prove to be some of the most fruitful soil of all. He has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering.

I heard a man say recently that his trials had made him grow closer to his wife. I've heard others tell me that their trials have brought them closer to God.

I've heard David say it was good for me to be afflicted that I might learn your decrees. What's that worth? That's being made fruitful in the land of your suffering.

[36 : 08] John Payton was a missionary to the cannibals of New Hebrides in the South Sea Islands. And one night the savage cannibals were out to kill him and to escape.

He went into the bush and climbed up a big chestnut tree. And he later wrote about those long hours spent hiding up in that tree that night.

He says, I heard the frequent discharging of muskets and the yells of the savages. Yet I sat there among the branches as safe in the arms of Jesus.

Never in all my sorrows did my Lord draw nearer to me and speak more soothingly in my soul than when the moonlight flickered among those chestnut leaves and the night air played on my throbbing brow as I told all my heart to Jesus.

Alone, yet not alone. And if it be to glorify my God, I will not grudge to spend many nights alone in such a tree to feel again my Savior's spiritual presence and to enjoy his consoling fellowship.

[37 : 25] There are even fruits to be found in the desert. There is fruitfulness in the land of my suffering.

Who would have thought such joys were possible in the land of suffering? And so his two sons, forget and fruitful, grow up in Joseph's home as living monuments and reminders of God's blessing. Well, the seven fruitful years passed and after two years of famine, Joseph is now 39 years old. And his own brothers have come down to Egypt to buy grain as the famine was severe in Canaan. And now his two dreams about his brothers bowing down to him come true, though they don't understand and realize that it's Joseph they're bowing before. There's a lot of tension and high drama that we don't have time for here in chapters 42 through 45, but we come at last to the point when Joseph reveals himself to his brothers saying, I am Joseph.

And they're speechless, they're terrified, and listen to what comes out of Joseph's mouth at this important juncture father in his life. Chapter 45, verses 4 through 9.

[38 : 50] Then Joseph said to his brothers, come close to me. When they had done so, he said, I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourself for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.

For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will not be plowing and reaping. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

So then it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. Now hurry back to my father and say to him, this is what your son Joseph says, God has made me lord of all Egypt, come down to me, don't delay.

And by now we're not surprised to hear God, God, God, God, coming out of Joseph's mouth, taking us into his heart and revealing what's on his mind, that a God centered man believes in the sovereignty of God, that God is active in all aspects of our lives, behind all events, working out his sovereign will.

And Joseph now sees the hand of God behind his brother selling him as a slave. He honors God and sees his hand behind Pharaoh making him the lord of all Egypt. It was all a part of God's great plan of saving many lives and especially the lives of Jacob's family, the chosen family of God to whom such great covenant promises had been made that from this family was promised one who would come, who would bring blessing to all the nations of the earth.

[40:50] And so this family does not die out in famine. It doesn't wither and die out for lack of food, but it lives on and multiplies until finally the promised Messiah Jesus is born.

who by his life and death and resurrection brings saving blessings, eternal life to all the nations of the earth, indeed to all who trust in him.

This was the plan of God being worked out in Joseph's troubles. Out of Joseph's suffering, life came to the nations. And out of the suffering of our Savior, eternal life comes to all the nations. It's found its way to the shores of this land, to your heart and mine, who are trusting in Christ. Later, when father Jacob died, his brothers were so afraid that Jacob would now hold a grudge against them and starve them out.

They throw themselves down before him and say, we're your slaves. And Joseph says, oh, don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? God, you intended to harm me, but God intended it for good, to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

[42:09] Now, because you and I have read the end of the story, we know what God is up to at each point in his life, but we have to remember that Joseph didn't have a clue what was going on during his painful trials.

It's only at the end that he looks back and he says, oh, yes, now I see it. I see that sovereign plan of God. But when he was first sold into slavery, he didn't understand where he was going or why.

Well, God was taking him to Egypt, wasn't he, to put him in a position to save his family and others. And then he's unjustly slammed into the prison and he didn't understand why.

He didn't know that God was just maneuvering him into position. Where he would meet someone in Pharaoh's court who could mention his name to Pharaoh. He's going to meet him in the dungeon. Isn't that something God's mysterious plans have? The dungeon is the way to the palace. And then when he's forgotten for two more years, this too was a blessing.

[43:18] All part of God's plan for had the cupbearer mentioned Joseph to Pharaoh at once upon getting out of prison. Pharaoh wouldn't have given two hoots about a Hebrew slave in some dungeon.

Oh, but let two years pass and let Pharaoh have a couple dreams of his own in which he's troubled and wants an interpretation. And now a Hebrew slave in a dungeon who interprets dreams will be just what he wants and so he sends for him at once.

Yes, even two years of waiting was all absolutely necessary for the outworking of God's good plan. So with perfect timing, God weaves together his good plans for Joseph, for his family, for the nations, for you and I, that this Christ might come and bring us eternal life.

And not one day of those 13 years of waiting were unnecessary. They were all essential to God's plan. Known unto him from the beginning, but only made clear to Joseph at the end.

And do we expect to understand all that God is doing in our trials? I don't even understand how there can be DNA strands in me enough to get to the sun and back one time, let alone 140 times.

[44:46] And do I expect to understand why this and why that is happening in my world, in my life? By and by. When the morning comes, when all the saints of God are gathered home, we will tell the story how we've overcome and we'll understand it better by and by.

There's so much that we don't know now and faith can rest where reason cannot go. It's enough now for us to know that he knows. That's what Job said. He didn't have a clue why all this was happening to him.

The loss of his family, his health, his wealth. But he knows the way that I take. I don't have a clue where I'm going in all this. But he knows the way that I take.

And when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold. Enough now to know that he knows. Enough now to know that he is working something good for us in all our troubles.

Enough now for us to count it pure joy whenever we face troubles of various kinds because we know that the trial of our faith develops perseverance.

[45:58] Perseverance must have its perfect work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. Enough for us now to know that he loves me.

And he has my best in mind. Behind a frowning providence, he hides a smiling face.

He loves us. Whatever the cloudy, frowning providence in your life, he loves us. Nothing can separate us from his love. May we bask upon that.

We've met a man who lives before God. We've met a God-centered man, a man who's thinking about God all the time. And we met him not to become in awe of Joseph, but of Joseph's God.

What must that God be who is so great, so glorious and majestic that you never exhaust him, though you think about him all the time?

[47:02] He doesn't get old and boring like every other thing on this earth. No, the more you think about him, the more you see there is to know and will spend all of eternity plowing into further layers of the knowledge of God and enjoying who he is.

May we even now cause our thoughts often to run toward him and live before him, to attach him to everything going on in our lives, living to his praise and glory.

way. Let's make our response to his word this morning. That hymn that speaks about mysterious ways that God moves. Number 21, God moves in a mysterious way.

That means there are times that we just don't understand and we sing in this hymn, he plants his footsteps in the sea. kids, if he's planting his footsteps on the shoreline, you can follow them and you know where you're going.

You can see his footsteps on the sand, but if he's planting his footsteps in the sea, you don't know where he's leading you. That's the way God mysteriously works in our lives, but we still hold on to him and we'll not be disappointed.