

To the Palace at Last

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[0 : 0 0] Take your Bibles and turn to Genesis chapter 41.! Genesis 41. We're going to read through from verse 1 all the way to the first part of verse 46.

! Genesis 41. When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream. He was standing by the Nile when out of the river there came up seven cows sleek and fat and they grazed among the reeds.

After them seven other cows ugly and gaunt came up out of the Nile and stood beside those on the river bank. And the cows that were ugly and gaunt ate up the seven sleek fat cows.

Then Pharaoh woke up. He fell asleep again and had a second dream. Seven heads of grain healthy and good were growing on a single stalk. After them seven other heads of grain sprouted thin and scorched by the east wind.

The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven healthy full heads. Then Pharaoh woke up. It had been a dream. In the morning his mind was troubled.

[1 : 1 4] So he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them for him. Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, Today I'm reminded of my shortcomings.

Pharaoh was once angry with his servants and he imprisoned me and the chief baker in the house of the captain of the guard. Each of us had a dream the same night and each dream had a meaning of its own.

Now a young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. We told him our dreams and he interpreted them for us, giving each man the interpretation of his dream.

And things turned out exactly as he interpreted them to us. I was restored to my position and the other man was hanged. So Pharaoh sent for Joseph and he was quickly brought from the dungeon.

When he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came before Pharaoh. Pharaoh said to Joseph, 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.

[2 : 2 1] I cannot do it. Joseph replied to Pharaoh, but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires. Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, In my dream, I was standing on the bank of the Nile.

When out of the river, there came up seven cows, fat and sleek, and they grazed among the reeds. After them, seven other cows came up scrawny and very ugly and lean. I had never seen such ugly cows in all the land of Egypt.

The lean, ugly cows ate up the seven fat cows that came up first. But even after they ate them, no one could tell that they had done so. They looked just as ugly as before.

Then I woke up. In my dreams, I also saw seven heads of grain, full and good, growing on a single stalk. After them, seven other heads sprouted, withered and thin and scorched by the east wind.

The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven good heads. I told this to the magicians, but none could explain it to me. Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, The dreams of Pharaoh are one and the same.

[3 : 27] God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads of grain are seven years.

It is one and the same dream. The seven lean, ugly cows that came up afterward are seven years, and so are the seven worthless heads of grain scorched by the east wind.

They are seven years of famine. It is just as I said to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the land of Egypt, but seven years of famine will follow them.

Then all the abundance in Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will ravage the land. The abundance in the land will not be remembered, because the famine that follows it will be so severe.

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.

[4 : 30] And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance.

They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh to be kept in the cities for food. This food should be held in reserve for the country to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt so that the country may not be ruined by the famine.

The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials. So Pharaoh asked them, Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the Spirit of God? Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, Since God has made all this known to you, there's no one so discerning and wise as you.

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 Pharaoh said to Joseph, I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt.

Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. He had him ride in a chariot as his second in command.

[5 : 52] And men shouted before him, Make way! Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, I am Pharaoh, but without your word, no one will lift hand or foot in all Egypt.

Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zephanath-Peneah and gave him Asenath, daughter of Patipharah, priest of On, to be his wife. And Joseph went throughout the land of Egypt.

Joseph was 30 years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. When we left Joseph the last time, he was still in prison, but there was some light at the end of the tunnel.

He now has a friend in high places, this cupbearer, the very one that puts the cup into the hand of Pharaoh. This was his free get-out-of-prison card.

Because surely, as he had asked, the cupbearer would mention his plight to Pharaoh, and Pharaoh would understand that he was unjustly imprisoned and get him out of prison.

[7 : 11] But then, day after day, gave way to weeks, and no change. And weeks were followed by months, and months, until at some point, it must have dawned on him that help is not coming at all.

In fact, we're told that the cupbearer did not remember Joseph. He forgot him. That's the last verse of chapter 40. Now, chapter 41 begins by telling us that when two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream.

Now, two years might not sound all that long to you, but add it to the other 11 years that he's had as a slave or a prisoner together. And that makes 13 years.

He's now 30 years old. And he's still living the best years of a young man's life from the inside of a prison, a dungeon. So, it was a long and winding road that Joseph was on.

A road of detours, of delays, of a lot of waiting on the Lord. It wasn't just a string of bad luck, nor just a bad bunch of people.

[8 : 38] No, it was the good providence of God who was working out his good purpose for this young man, Joseph, and for his family, for the world, and yes, for you, and for I, for me.

Let's pause and remember what Joseph didn't have, and then what he did have during those 13 years since being sold as a slave by his brothers.

He didn't have any idea why he was a slave and prisoner in Egypt. He didn't know when or even if he would ever get out of prison.

He simply didn't know. Those were some of the secret things of God that he would only reveal later on. But for now, those were secrets kept from Joseph.

This is why we speak of the mystery of God's providence as we're looking at this case study on the providence of God. We speak of the mystery of God's providence.

[9 : 43] How unsearchable his judgments and his ways past finding out who has known the mind of the Lord. Who can understand him? Why is this trouble in my life?

Why this detour, that delay, this long wait? Well, that's why the scriptures tell us we must walk by faith and not by sight because God hides these reasons from us.

And as the song says, when you cannot trace his hand, we must trust his heart. His heart. And that heart of God has been proven to you.

That heart of love has been proven to you on Calvary's middle cross where the son of God was damned in your place that you might have eternal life with him in heaven.

You can safely trust such a God, can't you? With your whole life. God bless you on Calvary's And when you do, he's glorified. He is put on display as a wonderful God, as a God who is trustworthy, as a God who is worthy of my faith because he is faithful in all that he does.

[11 : 01] So when you're content not to know why and when and where, he's honored. glory comes to him. As Luther said, it's the glory of faith not to know and it is the glory of God to have a people who trust him even in the dark.

So Joseph didn't have a clue as to why all this was happening in his life. What else did Joseph not have? Well, he didn't have nearly the amount of scriptures that we have on the providence of God.

We spent about seven weeks studying the teaching of the Bible on the providence of God and we went from Genesis to Revelation, I believe, and we found all kinds of verses.

You have memory packs that you're memorizing of the providence of God. This is Genesis 41. Think how thin the scriptures that Joseph had about the providence of God.

And then think of the far greater knowledge that we have of the providence of God. I'm not suggesting that Joseph knew nothing of the providence of God, not at all.

[12 : 14] But compared to us, he had very little. We have the full story of Joseph. We have the end of the story. He didn't have that. We have the story of Esther, a book about God's providence, of Ruth.

What a providence. What a book on providence, of Job. We have the Psalms. We have the whole history of the nation of Israel. We have the New Testament.

And Joseph had none of those verses to read, to encourage him, to trust in the God of providence, to wait on him as he worked out his goodwill.

But he did have that truth. And if he could trust God with the little that he knew about God's providence, how much more should we, who have the whole Bible's teaching on this wonderful reality that God is the one who is controlling all his creatures and all their actions all the time to work out his good purposes and to fulfill his plan for me.

Are we living up to what we have in the word of God? So Joseph didn't have the reasons why, he didn't have the full scriptures that you and I have, but he did have, what he did have was the Lord with him.

[13 : 39] And that's emphasized both in his years of servitude in Potiphar's house and in his years of servitude as a prisoner. The Lord was with him. And that became everything to Joseph.

Though his friend in high places, the cupbearer forgot him, Joseph had the best friend in even higher places who always remembered him.

God Most High was ruling and reigning over all to fulfill his purpose, his good purpose for Joseph. As Rutherford said, it's better to be in prison with the Lord than to be in a palace without him.

And Luther would not be outdone, said, I'd rather be in hell with Christ than in heaven without him. Both are simply saying, it is the treasure of the believer to have the Lord with us, with us and for us in whatever circumstances we're in.

And there in the prison schoolhouse of affliction, Joseph came to know his God better. so that when he graduated and emerged from prison, he had dozens of more reasons to trust and to love and to serve his great God.

[14 : 58] So Joseph had no way of knowing when he rose that morning that before the day was out, he'd not only be a free man out of his dungeon prison, but that he'd also be prime minister, second in command over all of Egypt.

it started out just like any other day, cleaning the prison, caring for the prisoners, but what a difference just one day can make.

Now we don't know what kind of a night Joseph had, but across town in the palace we know what kind of a night Pharaoh had. It was a troubling night. He had had two dreams that woke him up in the middle of the night and left him troubled and fearful in the morning.

They were weird dreams. with a foreboding of disaster that seemed to loom over him. There were first the dream of seven fat cows coming out of the Nile River, this is Egypt, followed by seven skinny and ugly cows.

I think it's interesting, he tells Joseph, I'd never seen any cows uglier than those in all of Egypt. Then they proceeded to eat up the fat cows, but still looked as skinny and ugly.

[16 : 16] No wonder he woke up. Cows don't eat cows, do they? But then he dozed off again and he had a rerun with a twist because the second dream was much like it, only this time it was a stalk with seven good heads of grain on that stalk.

And then on the same stalk sprouted seven skinny heads. And then it happened again. The skinny heads ate up the fat heads of grain on the stalk.

Now these are the kinds of things that happen only in their dreams. But these were supernatural dreams as God was revealing the future to Pharaoh.

And again it proves to us God's providential rule over the whole earth includes what passes through the mind of a king as he's asleep in bed.

The king's heart really is in the hand of the Lord and even as he sleeps he directs it like a water course wherever he wants.

[17 : 27] So these dreams in the morning set the whole palace astir and they set into motion the next chain of events that lead to the exaltation of Joseph. And each link is in the hand of the God of providence.

Let's see what God did. First of all the first thing is that all the magicians and wise men of Egypt were sent for to give the interpretation but not one of them could do it.

It's amazing that not one of them even gave a good stab at it. some kind of a convincing explanation of this these two dreams.

Because if Pharaoh had been convinced by just one of them well that would have been the end of it and Joseph would have been left to rot in his dungeon prison unsought for. It seems that God's providence was confounding the wisdom of the wise and silencing them all.

they had nothing to say before Pharaoh when it surely would have been to their prophet to tell him something something good is going to happen.

[18 : 40] Secondly we see the providence of God in the fact that only now after the failure of all the wise men only now does the cupbearer remember Joseph.

His memory is jarred. it's like he's shaken out of a deep mode a sleep mode broken synapses were reconnected in his brain and what he forgot after just three days he now remembers after two full years.

Now we noted last week how the timing was everything and often is with God's providence that if the cupbearer had remembered Joseph immediately coming out of prison to the to the Pharaoh Pharaoh would not have been interested.

He had no need for an interpreter of dreams. If he had had mercy and got him out of prison some commentators say he might have headed back to Canaan to the family.

And that would have done no good for saving the family later during famine. So the providence of God behind the jarring of the memory of this cupbearer at just the right time.

[19 : 54] Now when Pharaoh is desperate to find out the meaning of his dreams Joseph becomes the most wanted man in all the palace in just a matter of minutes.

Now I'm not sure how the Lord does that. How he makes those connections in the mind so a man remembers what he had forgotten for two years. But he did it. And it's clearly the providence of God.

One cell passing on the information to the next cell to the next cell and to the next cell until the nickel drops and oh that's right Joseph. I remember when I was in prison a couple years ago that the baker and I had dreams and and we we told it to this Hebrew slave in prison there a servant of the of the guard that and he told us the interpretations of our dreams and you know Pharaoh it happened exactly as he said.

The baker was hanged and I was returned to put the cup into your hands. Well that's all Pharaoh needed to hear. He sent his chariot to the prison in a hurry to fetch Joseph.

Joseph barely has time to shave to put on new clothes to appear presentable for the Pharaoh and we wonder what's going on in his mind. What's he thinking of now as he's being hurried off to the palace?

[21 : 16] And now he steps in to the presence of Pharaoh and Pharaoh gets right to the point. You can see the desperateness of the man. I've had a dream no one can interpret it but I've heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.

I cannot do it. Can you imagine the frustration of a job coach if he had prepared Joseph for this interview with Pharaoh?

Dude if you ever had a chance to make yourself look good this was it but you blew it. You had Pharaoh eating out of your hand. He was mesmerized as a little child talking with Mickey Mouse at Disney World and you blew it.

You told him I can't do it. I cannot do it. I can't but God can and God will give Pharaoh the answer that he desires.

When have you last said I can't do it. I can't do it. I can't take another day of it. I can't do this.

[22 : 35] I can't do that but God can and he will help me. When have you last said it to God? God I can't do it but there is grace in you to enable me to do what I can't do on my own.

When have you last acknowledged it to people around you? That you are not self-sufficient but you depend completely upon God in your life. Here we see what kind of man Joseph has become in affliction.

That by the good result, we see the good result of trials by which God has been chiseling and shaping Joseph's character. That's why trials come, James tells us, to chisel on our character.

You know, there might have been an edge of pride in Joseph as a 17-year-old favorite son before his brothers.

Did being daddy's favorite go to his head? Just a bit perhaps. All the perks that went with it. Was he proud of that coat of many colors and proud and just vaunted a bit maybe in front of his brothers?

[23 : 48] His dreams on two separate occasions. Did he enjoy telling his brothers how they were going to bow down to him one day as he saw in his dreams? Well, perhaps.

But the man that emerges from the school of affliction 13 years later is humble. He is humble. He's concerned with the glory of God even in front of Pharaoh who holds his freedom in his hands.

Again, he's not grandstanding before Pharaoh when he has his greatest opportunity to impress, but rather he's openly renouncing all claims to any superior knowledge.

There's no bragging over the, you mean your magician, your wise man? Couldn't figure that one out? It's easy. None of that. This is as much beyond me, Pharaoh, as it's beyond your wise men and magicians.

This is something only God can do. He secures the glory to God alone, and then he tells him the interpretation of his dream. Well, first, Pharaoh then tells him his two dreams, and having told him the two dreams, he again confesses the absolute failure of his wise men to explain the meaning.

[25 : 03] So, with man's failure completely demonstrated before all in the court, Joseph now reveals the interpretation from God to a Pharaoh who has all ears to hear it.

And again, Joseph speaks at once of his God. God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. That's what this is all about, Pharaoh. The God of heaven is telling, giving you information about what he is going to do.

notice, this is not just something that God knows ahead of time. Sometimes people think, John, no, the providence of God is just that God knows what's going to happen before it happens.

Well, of course he does, but that's not what we have here. He knows because he's made the plan to do it, and it's what he's fixing to do. That's what Joseph said. This is what God is going to do.

Not just that God knows what's going to happen by chance. No, this is what God is going to do. And so Joseph preaches the providence of God to Pharaoh that his God rules over famine.

[26 : 14] His God rules over plenty. Seven years of great abundance throughout Egypt will be followed by seven years of famine. So severe that the years of plenty will be forgotten.

And we notice that both prosperity and famine are the works of God's providence. It's what he is about to do. Isaiah 45 8. I bring prosperity. This is God speaking.

I bring prosperity and I create disaster. I the Lord do all these things. Many times the Lord does what he does.

Most often I would say he does what he does through second causes, through what we call natural laws. And usually the crops of Egypt depended much upon the annual flooding of the Nile River.

And if it flooded a lot and went way over its banks, well then it led to richer harvests. If it only overflowed a little, it led to smaller harvests.

[27 : 17] And so perhaps that's how the seven years of plenty, for seven years, each year it flooded greatly. And then for seven years it did not flood.

And I say if that's the normal means by which God worked this prosperous period and then the famine, this flooding may have been the result of a cycle of climate change that may have been years in the making.

But all of it, you see, is part of God's providence of fulfilling his purpose. It's his purposes. he's providentially ruling over all of nature.

Climate change, flooding, blessing the earth, causing the earth's scarcity. But then don't miss the goodness of God in his providence.

That he sends seven years of a bumper crop before seven years of famine. Isn't God good? wasn't he good to Egypt?

[28 : 27] Idol worshipping Egypt. Enemies of God Egypt. And notice the goodness of God to tell Pharaoh about it. And when God told him, not just before the famine started, it would be too late to do anything about it.

He tells him just before the seven bumper years, that at that critical point, something might be done and setting aside, saving up grain for the time of need.

And again, we see providence working in exactly the right time. And the reason the dream was given twice, Pharaoh was just to stress that this has been firmly decided by God.

God is a God of purposes, and then a God who fulfills his purposes. This is going to happen, Pharaoh. And furthermore, God is going to do it soon, he said.

So there's need to act quickly. Now, Pharaoh got more than he asked for. What did he ask for? He asked for an interpretation of his dreams.

[29 : 35] And Joseph is no sooner finished giving him the interpretation, than he goes right on ahead and offers him some advice. Some advice as to what he ought to do with the new realities that he would be dealing with.

The guts of the guy. a nobody drug out of prison, now giving advice and counsel to the Pharaoh of Egypt. But it was advice marked by the wisdom of his all-wise God.

Let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the whole land. You need one guy, Pharaoh, that this is cabinet position. He needs to have nothing else on his mind but this problem and this solution.

And then put commissioners under him to collect a fifth of the harvest during the seven years of plenty to store the grain in each city so that when the famine comes there will be food for all right at hand, saving your country from starvation and ruin.

Do you see the loving boldness of Joseph for Pharaoh and his nation? But then consider the next amazing work of providence.

[30 : 49] is it not this that God gave Joseph favor with Pharaoh and all his officials? That they actually listened to this guy? They all liked his plan without an exception.

So Pharaoh asked his officials, can we find anyone like this man? Who would we find for this position that could compare with this man?

one in whom is the spirit of God or the spirits of the gods? One in whom there is such wisdom and discernment. I don't know if it was kind of a very quick question and then he went right on.

There was not a peep out of the officials' mouths recorded. it's as if God was silencing men that his man might be selected.

And so Pharaoh goes on and now it's all Pharaoh's choice to make Joseph the one in charge of his palace, all his people, and these officials included whatever they must have thought about that.

[31 : 59] So that without Joseph's word, no one could lift hand or foot in all Egypt. I say that's the providence of God, a stranger that Pharaoh had never met until an hour ago.

A foreign slave, a prisoner, and on the spot he makes him ruler over the whole of the land. Favor with man is God's to give.

And you read your Bible and you see that that's exactly what God does. And the Lord honors those who honor him. So Pharaoh exalts Joseph to the highest position under himself.

And he gives him, he takes off his own signet ring and he puts it on Joseph. That means that whatever Joseph does is backed by the authority of the Pharaoh himself. And then he dressed him in fine robes, robes of fine linen.

At last, Joseph's got a wardrobe that works for him. You remember the two robes before got him in trouble with his brothers so that they hated him. And the other got him in trouble with Potiphar because Potiphar's wife held on to it as evidence of his accused rape of her.

[33 : 17] But now he's wearing robes of fine linen to distinguish himself as the highest position in the land. And then he put a gold chain around his neck in his own chariot with men shouting out in front of him, make way, clear the boulevard.

Now, one further application for today and we'll be done. I want you to notice the pattern of Joseph's life. The pattern of Joseph's life.

He moves from humiliation to exaltation. He's humbled as a servant, as a lowly prisoner in Egypt, a forgotten prisoner.

For 13 years, and then he's exalted to such a high position of honor to rule over all the land. Do you see the pattern? It's important. Because in this, Joseph is a type of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For this is the way our Savior went. The same pattern for his life. Humbled for a season to receive a crown. It was humiliation for Jesus before exaltation.

[34 : 32] It was suffering before glory. It was the cross before the crown. Philippians chapter 2, Paul speaks of the eternal Son of God who being in very nature, God made himself nothing, a nobody.

Jesus who? Jesus of where? Nazareth? Can anything good come out of Nazareth? He who is God became a nobody. He took on the nature of a servant, a slave, and the nature of a man.

A man made of dust. And on this mission, he was despised and rejected by men. he was made considered by the leaders of his own nation to be a fool and a madman, a blaspheming phony.

He says, I offered my back to those who beat me. My cheeks to those who pulled out my beard. I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.

But he went far lower because Paul says he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.

[35 : 48] Now that's low. That's humiliation. Capital punishment. Crucifixion devised for the lowest of the low, for the scum of the earth, where he bore the worst of men and also bore the worst of God's wrath.

Indeed, all of God's wrath that stood against us for our sins. He bore it and then he died. He died. Death, the ultimate indignity.

Death, the disgrace of all mankind. Death, the proof of sin. Death, the wages of sin. Death, the undoing of the created glory of our humanity that was meant to image God in his glory.

He died. He died. our Lord suffered the greatest humiliation ever and he did it for us. He did it for us. So great his love.

And Paul says, therefore, therefore, because he humbled himself so low, therefore, God has exalted him to the highest position.

[36 : 57] It should be ringing bells. We once knew somebody that was down low and was exalted high. Yes, Joseph. But here's the antitype, Christ. Lower than man, any man has ever sunk, lifted higher than any man has ever been raised.

Therefore, God has highly exalted him. He lifted him. He raised him up from the dead, from the earth, to his own right hand on the very throne of God, where Jesus now rules over all creation, heaven and earth, the whole universe, and where he must rule until he is put all his enemies under his feet.

And God has given him a name that's above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. So just as Joseph's path to the palace led through humbling slavery and a dark dungeon, so our Lord's path to his glorious reign led through humbling rejection, hellish cross, the dark grave.

And the pattern is clear then. The pattern is clear in both Joseph and Jesus lives. It is suffering before glory. The Old Testament prophets laid out this pattern for the coming Messiah.

And the New Testament is emphatic in pointing out this pattern to us. This is something we're not to miss. there are other things that are not emphasized so much as this is.

[38 : 34] Jesus himself on the day of his resurrection, the very beginning of his being raised up. He's been raised from the dead. And on that day he met two men with downcast faces on the road to Emmaus.

And he said, how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter into his glory?

He pointed out the same pattern to the twelve disciples later that evening when he gathered them together and suddenly appeared before them. Hebrews chapter two and verse nine.

We see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death. It was suffering before his present glory.

Peter says in first Peter one eleven that the spirit of Christ that was in the Old Testament prophets predicted the sufferings of the Christ and the glories that would follow.

[39 : 39] Mark the order, the pattern, the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. First Peter five one, Peter writes to the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who will also share in the glory to be revealed.

So the pattern of suffering before glory is clear in Joseph the type and in Jesus, our and his anti type. And it's not just a coincidence of unimportance.

It's providence making an important statement. It's important for you and for me to see this because this pattern does not end with Christ. rather his pattern is our pattern.

This pattern holds true for all of Christ's disciples, for all who had followed Jesus. It will be suffering before glory, humiliation before exaltation, your cross before your crown, the bitter before the sweet.

the apostle Peter understood this from his Lord Jesus and says in first Peter 5:10 and the grace of the God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory in Christ.

[40 : 58] After you have suffered a little while will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. We're destined for his eternal glory, but only after you have suffered a little while.

The apostle Paul 2nd Timothy 2 to 12. Here's a faithful saying. This is worthy of everyone's acceptance. If we endure, we will also reign with him.

Well, what do you endure? Do you endure rest and ease? No, you don't endure that. You enjoy that. You endure suffering. And that's why the King James has it.

If we suffer, we will reign with him. If we endure, you see, it's the cross before the crown. And that's why Jesus says, if anybody wants to be my disciple, get it straight right up front.

You've got to deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me. If you're following me to the glory that shall be, you're going to need a cross. You're going to need that cross and a willingness to suffer for my sake and the sake of my word.

[42 : 03] And so the pattern is important. And it needs to shape our expectations of life. We're not meant to expect a pain-free life of ease and rest.

Not that way went the crucified. We're not meant to expect a life without bitterness and sorrow and suffering and humiliation, sorrow, pain, loss, mockery, slander, injustice, persecution.

Too many Christians are surprised by suffering today. This Christian is too often surprised by suffering today.

We've not gotten it. I've not gotten it. We've somehow missed the pattern of Joseph and of Jesus, our Lord, our forerunner, the one who went before us, the one who we are following through the same world through which he traveled.

And we've missed it. Peter got it. He says in 1 Peter 4, 12, dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial. You are suffering as though something strange were happening to you.

[43 : 22] Isn't that often what we say? I can't believe what she did to me. She just cut me off in traffic. Can you believe it? I'm suffering. It's strange.

It's surprising what he said about me. The way he looked at me when I spoke of Jesus. The way I was treated in my job just because they knew I was a Christian and were surprised at that.

Now, perhaps it's because for so long we've been sheltered from it in this land. But we need to see the pattern. It's not strange. It's the same pattern for us that it was for Jesus.

It's par for the course. We're to expect it. It's the father's curriculum for all his children. He has one son without sin, but no sons without suffering. The Puritan said.

It's written into the script by the God of Providence who then brings it to pass. So don't be surprised by suffering. Don't think it's something strange. Peter says instead, rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

[44 : 34] Suffering, glory. I think it's this faulty expectation that the Christian life ought to be without real suffering that is a rock upon which many professing Christians are now shipwrecking their faith.

They get the idea that Jesus came to give us our best life now and they want heaven's glories and blessings here and now. And they wrongly think that Jesus shields us from all that is bitter, all that is suffering, all that is sorrow, all that is evil, all that is loss.

So when trouble comes, they fall away. Do you know, Jesus told a parable once about the sower going out to sow the seed.

It's Jesus. And he's still sowing the seed today through his ministers, through his witnesses. And some of that seed falls upon stony ground.

There's just a little layer of dirt on top of the stony ground. So when it lands, it sprouts up real quick. And that person's all excited to become a Christian can't believe the good news that you've just shared with me.

[45 : 44] I'm in. I'll be baptized. Let's go. Let's serve Jesus. And then the sun of persecution rises. And the plant withers and dies.

What happened? It's going to cost me to stay true to Jesus Christ. If I stay true to what he teaches and what he is, then I'm not going to be treated well in this world.

I might get laughed at. I might be considered as a fool, as an old-fashioned bumpkin by this world. I'm not ready for that. I thought I'd become more popular, not less.

And they're off as fast as they got on. There was no root in them. But what was it? They bought into this idea that it's glory now and it's glory later.

That's not the pattern that our Savior left us. It's suffering followed by glory. So disciples of Jesus living in a materialistic bubble of the American dream, we need to remember that the pattern for our lives is suffering before glory.

[46 : 56] But before we leave, I want to remind you as well that we also need to know that there is glory after suffering. Our Bibles are written in a way to not let us forget that truth.

In other words, God knows where we live right now. We're right in the thick of it. How does he? Well, he was here, remember? He was up to his chin in evil.

And he knows that's where we're at. And he sees us and he sympathizes with us in our weakness and in our troubles. He knows where we're at. And he knows we're still tasting the bitter.

And lest we get tired and give up and turn back, he's ever reminding us. But child, remember that suffering is followed by glory. Remember, the suffering is followed by glory. First Peter 1, 6 and 7.

You may have had to suffer grief and all kinds of trials, but these have come so that your faith of greater value than gold that perishes, even though it's refined by fire and it's pure gold, your faith is worth far more.

[48 : 06] And these trials come so that your faith might be proved genuine and might result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Suffering and trials now to prepare you for glory then. Amen. Brothers and sisters, glory is coming.

Suffering does not lead to more suffering, to more suffering, to more suffering for the child of God. You know, that's a that's a tenant of Buddhism and of Hinduism. The problem is that you're just born, you're reborn, reincarnated into this world full of suffering.

That's the that's the big bugbear, the big problem that must be overcome. And the gospel of Jesus shouts, no. No, this is the Christian, the one with faith in the Lord Jesus.

It's not somehow just got just more suffering to look forward to. It's it's suffering followed by glory. That's the path of Jesus is our path.

[49 : 06] He's there before us. He's our forerunner. Did he just have suffering that just was followed by more suffering? No, it ended in glory. And it will be so for all of us who follow after our forerunner.

He's there for us and he's our guarantee that we will be there with him in glory. Believers, listen to what Paul says in Romans 8, 17.

Now, if we are children, then we're heirs, heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ. If indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

You know, our enemy would hide from us the coming glory. He would have us so buried in our sufferings that we forget glory is coming. And that's a dangerous condition for anyone to be in where it's just all suffering without the sight of glory.

To only have the present bitter without the living hope of the sweet. We must remind one another in dark providences of suffering in suffering that glory is coming.

[50 : 13] And that's what Paul does in the very next verse, Romans 8, 18. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

Do you think much about the coming glory? The glory that will be revealed in us? Do you think about the first time you will meet the Lord Jesus Christ and look straight into his eyes and have his eyes looking back at you?

Do you think about the glorious freedom that you will immediately enter? No more temptation to sin, either from within or from without.

Do you think much about the end of all your sufferings and trials? That the things that cause you to sigh and to cry will be chased away in a moment?

Faster than than Joseph's elevation to the top and be followed by joy and gladness forever. Do you think about the perfection of your body and of your soul and of the new heavens and the new earth?

[51 : 25] Do you visit heaven? Oh, we ought to get there every day. That's where we're going. It's the glory. Think of Joseph. What if we don't think about what's coming, we can easily fall prey for the enemy's temptations.

What's coming. Is meant to so outweigh what is that Paul says it's not even worth comparing. Think of Joseph and what what were those extra two years of waiting in prison because of the memory slip in the.

The cupbearer now that he's exalted. What are those two years? You think Joseph's just pine. Oh, man. Can you believe it? I had you think he had words with the cupbearer? You think he was all upset?

I think those two years are just forgotten by his elevation. In fact, I would say venture to say the whole 13 years spent away from Canaan in prison and servitude were forgotten for the joy.

Of God's unfolding plan. And he hasn't got to the top of it yet. He he doesn't realize that the famine has reached is going to reach the other lands and is going to endanger his own brothers and father and their family and.

[52 : 42] And from his brother, Judah would come the savior to be his savior, to forgive his sins when he comes to see this. What will 13 years be eternity with the Lord?

What will those 13 years? What what will your life be? A life of suffering, of bitterness, of of trouble? What will it be the whole life compared to what you're headed for?

Paul says, this is why we don't lose heart. Why not? Because of what we know that are momentary, our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us.

They're producing for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. And you say, John, my troubles are not light and they're not momentary. They're heavy. They weigh me down.

I wake up to them every morning. It makes all of life hard. It's hard to love my husband. It's hard to love my my wife. It's hard to raise our children. It's hard to go to everything's made hard because of this trouble in my life.

[53 : 47] Don't tell me it's light. You're light and momentary troubles. No, it's not momentary. I've had this problem for years and it's not going away and it may not go away for the rest of my life.

This person in my life, this this problem in my body, this whatever it is, this dead, uncare. It's it's not going away in this life. Yes, you're you're light and momentary trials are achieving for you an eternal weight of glory that far outweighs them all.

You see, when when do your heavy and long lasting troubles appear light and momentary? It's when you put it into the balance and there's all your troubles.

And if that's all you put into the scales, well, it sends the other thing flying, doesn't it? You're heavy and long trials. But Paul says those heavy and long trials are working something for you.

They're producing something in you, Christian. An eternal glory for your momentary trials. And a far greater weight of glory for your light trials.

[55 : 04] And as soon as you put glory in the balance, your trials become feather like and are shot into nothing.

Not worth comparing. So what do we do? Paul says, so we fix our eyes. You see, that reality won't do you a bit of good in your suffering unless you do this.

So we fix our eyes, the eyes of your heart, your mind. Not upon what is seen, my troubles. But on what is unseen, the coming glory.

For what is seen is temporary. What is unseen is eternal. And that's why Paul can say, we don't lose heart though the outward man is perishing. The inward man is being held up, uplifted, strengthened every day by that reality of the coming glory.

So may the Lord encourage our hearts from this example that we see in Joseph, the reality that we see in Jesus Christ and that the New Testament tells us is true of everyone who follows him.

[56 : 12] I just have a word with you that aren't in Christ. Suffering is followed by glory for those who are in Jesus Christ. For those who are outside of Christ, who've never bowed the knee, have never repented of going your way and just put the reins of your horse into the hands of Jesus and said, you're the one calling the shots.

And that goes for my salvation. I must receive salvation freely as a gift with nothing to contribute. And that goes for your commands and your laws. It's whatever you say from here on out.

You've never come to that point of decision to where you gave your life to Christ, where you received him. The Bible is very clear that your sufferings in this life will be followed by far worse sufferings in the next.

There's no glory except in Jesus. So you've got to get into Jesus to have life, everlasting life. He who has the Son has life.

He who has not the Son does not have life. He's separated forever from the glory, the presence of God. Oh, come to Jesus today. He's got glory in store for all who do.

[57 : 29] Let's pray. Thank you, Jesus, for what you bore when you humbled yourself and took on yourself the form of a servant, a man, a criminal, one to die the death, the hellish death of the cross.

And that for me, for each one that comes to you, how thankful we are that the Father saw that humiliation and said, you deserve to be exalted to my own right hand.

And thank you that you're with us as we follow this same pattern. Thank you that you know where we live, right in the midst of troubles, of the bitter. Yes, you even give us sprinkles of the sweet and of the glory to come as we fix our eyes on you.

But what we are going to enjoy five minutes in heaven will make us forget all the sufferings of earth. Help us. Save people from the lie of the devil.

Bring them, set them free by the truth of the gospel today, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.