

Law of Continuance - Joseph

What if you were confident that God was with you?

Icebreaker: Can you remember a good event that was so vivid that it burned its way into your mind permanently?

Sermon Point 1: JOSEPH DID EXACTLY WHAT ANYONE WOULD DO WHEN YOU ARE CONFIDENT THAT GOD IS WITH YOU.

Genesis 39:1-5 *1 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there. 2 The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. 3 When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, 4 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. 5 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.*

1. What happened to the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph? (v. 5)

2. What in the Genesis passage shows that God is not done with Joseph, that indeed his hand of restoration will yet work? How is Joseph's life both good and bad?

3. How is the Christian life generally reflective of Romans 8:28? (the law of continuance)

Romans 8:28 reminds us: *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”*

4. Can you remember a dark time of your life when you became aware that God was in charge after all?

Genesis 39:6-10 6 Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, 7 and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, “Come to bed with me!” 8 But he refused. “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. 9 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?” 10 And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

5. What are the four things Joseph explains to his master's wife?

6. How does this behavior reflect a life of faith in God?

7. Given that Joseph's objection had no effect on Potipher's wife, can you describe a time when you stood for principles only to see others discount them?

Genesis 39:20-22 *20 But while Joseph was there in the prison, 21 the Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. 22 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.*

Genesis 40:5 *each of the two men—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were being held in prison—had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own.*

Genesis 40:8 *“We both had dreams,” they answered, “but there is no one to interpret them.” Then Joseph said to them, “Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams.”*

Genesis 40:12-14 (Cupbearer's interpretation) *12 “This is what it means,” Joseph said to him. “The three branches are three days. 13 Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your position, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand, just as you used to do when you were his cupbearer. 14 But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison.”*

Genesis 40:23 *The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.*

8. Note that for the third time, we are told that “the Lord was with him” (v. 2,3,21). What reasons were there for him to be encouraged or discouraged? What made Joseph rise above his discouraging events?

9. How ought this encourage us when we go through troublesome times?
Or those times when it seems as if God is not there? (Psalm 23:4)

Psalms 23:4 *Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

Sermon Point 2: GOD WAS SILENT, BUT HE WAS NOT ABSENT.

Genesis 41:1,8-9,14-16 *1When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream: ...8 In the morning his mind was troubled, 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. 9 Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, “Today I am reminded of my shortcomings.... 14 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. 15 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.” 16 “I cannot do it,” Joseph replied to Pharaoh, “but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires.”*

Genesis 41:28-38 **28** *“It is just as I said to Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. 29 Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the land of Egypt, 30 but seven years of famine will follow them. Then all the abundance in Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will ravage the land. 31 The abundance in the land*

*will not be remembered, because the famine that follows it will be so severe. **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. **33** “And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt. **34** Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. **35** 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. **36** 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.” **37** The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials. **38** So Pharaoh asked them, “Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?”*

Genesis 41:41 *So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt.”*

10. Through all his experiences, Joseph had lessons to learn. How did God prepare him to be a leader in Egypt? (Hint: leadership skills, dependence on God, etc.)

11. How has God used your early experiences in life to prepare you for later times? (law of continuance)

Note: Joseph’s brothers came to Egypt to buy food from Pharaoh and were surprised to realize that Joseph was now in charge. When they appeared concerned about retaliation, Joseph reassured them twice in Genesis 45:5 and 50:20.

Genesis 45:5 *And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.*

Genesis 50:20 *You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.*

12. How were the problems similar with David, Elijah, and Joseph? How did God show himself faithful to each?

13. How does the life of Joseph call upon us to show patience for the promises of God?

Pastor Dave says: His law of continuance *overwrites* the evil, to fit His plan and for our good. What if *you* believed that?