

## VALLEYS // Trusted with Much

Today, we are picking up in Genesis 41.

**Genesis 41:1**, “After two whole years...”

That’s two more years in a dungeon, two more years repeating the same menial tasks day after day wondering where God is, feeling forsaken and forgotten and begging God for justice. Two more years alone with your questions, and doubts, and wrestling with no resolution but doing your best to remain faithful in the little things.

**Genesis 41:1-14**, “After two whole years, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile, and behold, there came up out of the Nile seven cows, attractive and plump, and they fed in the reed grass. And behold, seven other cows, ugly and thin, came up out of the Nile after them, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile. And the ugly, thin cows ate up the seven attractive, plump cows. And Pharaoh awoke. And he fell asleep and dreamed a second time. And behold, seven ears of grain, plump and good, were growing on one stalk. And behold, after them sprouted seven ears, thin and blighted by the east wind. And the thin ears swallowed up the seven plump, full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and behold, it was a dream. So in the morning his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was none who could interpret them to Pharaoh. Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, ‘I remember my offenses today. When Pharaoh was angry with his servants and put me and the chief baker in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, we dreamed on the same night, he and I, each having a dream with its own interpretation. A young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. When we told him, he interpreted our dreams to us, giving an interpretation to each man according to his dream. And as he interpreted to us, so it came about. I was restored to my office, and the baker was hanged.’ Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they quickly brought him out of the pit.”

Joseph’s diligence and faithfulness in the prison for all those years— his interpretation of this cupbearer and baker, all those years ago, paved the way for this moment. We never know who will prove to be significant in our lives. We have no clue. Often, those we think will make all the difference turn out to be dead ends, and instead, God frequently uses unexpected people as catalysts for significant transitions in life.

If you really want to know someone’s character, pay attention to how they treat the little people. The people who have nothing of value to offer them in the moment.

Now, Joseph is about to get out of prison, but doesn’t know any of this is going on. He’s still in the dungeon, in the pit, doing the same tasks he’s done thousands of times. And all of a sudden, he hears a commotion coming his way, then guards fumbling with the keys to open the prison

door. The cupbearer says, "That's him," pointing at Joseph. They loose his shackles and for the first time in roughly 15 years, Joseph was no longer in chains.

They get him all cleaned up, and in moments, Joseph is going to be standing in front of one of the most powerful men in the world. Everything in his life, all the pain, all the betrayal, all the heartache, all the doubt, all the questions, all the loneliness and confusion, and disappointments, and character refining circumstances... all of it is leading to this one conversation with Pharaoh.

**Genesis 41:15**, "And Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.'"

Have you ever found yourself in front of someone influential and you become hyper aware of yourself? Self-conscious, nervous, and you find yourself changing what you would normally say trying not to blow the moment with that person?

There was a time in Joseph's life where he likely would have done this, but Joseph doesn't cave under the pressure, he doesn't compromise at all!

**Genesis 41:16**, "Joseph answered Pharaoh, 'It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.'"

This is amazing! Do you realize who Joseph is talking to? Pharaoh is the most powerful man in the most powerful nation on earth and he thinks he is God. And this measly little insignificant prisoner is brought up from the dungeon and placed before him. Can you imagine what Pharaoh's advisors were thinking? Imagine what the cupbearer is thinking. He must have been mortified! But notice, Joseph is not being arrogant, but he is honest. And He's confident. He's not changing who he is to appease Pharaoh. He's confident that God is with him in this moment.

Joseph's character has been so refined, so sharpened, that he has a new boldness about him. He's going into this moment knowing, *God was with me in the pit. God was with me in the prison, and God is with me in the palace. And I care far more about pleasing Him than pleasing you.*

**Proverbs 29:25**, "The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe."

The way the fear of man plays itself out in our lives is constant anxiety, this need for those around us to affirm and approve of us. It drives us to be controlled by people's opinions of us. We end up compromising who we are and what we value. The fear of man influences our decision making and cripples our ability to be vulnerable or courageous. Rather than obeying God, or following through on what God has put in us to do, we buckle under the weight of other's expectations and opinions.

I love what Paul says in Galatians 1,

**Galatians 1:10**, "For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ."

In other words, we can't live under the fear of man and serve God at the same time. And what we see in Joseph's moment of truth is that he doesn't compromise, he doesn't waiver, he doesn't fumble over his words, he's not even a little bit concerned about what Pharaoh might do to him. He just simply says what's true and lets the chips fall where they may. He's humble, yet bold. Confident but not arrogant. He's courageous but not cruel. There's no pretense or bluster about him. I love that Joseph just says it. It's not politically correct, it's not socially acceptable, it's not culturally palatable, but Joseph risks it all by boldly speaking the name of God to a man who thinks he is God.

After all he's been through, he is absolutely confident that God is still with him even now. And when we go through life knowing, I mean absolutely confident that God is with us, and for us, that He has the final say over the events and details of our lives, it changes us. It changes our perspective and our outlook.

**Genesis 41:28-36**, "It is as I told Pharaoh; God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do. There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, but after them there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt. The famine will consume the land, and the plenty will be unknown in the land by reason of the famine that will follow, for it will be very severe. And the doubling of Pharaoh's dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about. Now therefore let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land and take one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plentiful years. And let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine that are to occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine."

Joseph not only interprets Pharaoh's dreams, but he lays out an entire economic strategy and agricultural policy, with suggestions for advisors and overseers that would lead to Egypt remaining prosperous during a seven-year famine that would have otherwise completely crippled the nation.

**Genesis 41:37-38**, "This proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants. And Pharaoh said to his servants, 'Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?'"

Pharaoh sees that there is a wisdom about this man, something different about this man. And a man who just moments ago considered himself to BE god, is now acknowledging "no, the Spirit of God dwells in this man!" This is the first time that the phrase "the Spirit of God" has been

used since the early chapters of Genesis, only this time the Spirit is within a human being. Joseph is carrying the Spirit of Wisdom, the Spirit of God within him, and Pharaoh is astonished.

**Genesis 41:39-40**, “Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you.’”

This is amazing. God took Joseph from the pit to the palace, from being a prisoner to the prince of Egypt. Now, there’s warning here for us. How many of us in the moment where we’re out of the valley, when we’ve got everything we need, we instantly forget God? We set Him aside, and we leave Him behind.

When we’re in the valley, we’re dependent on God in every moment. We’re crying out to Him for justice, for help, for provision. But when we finally do make it out of the valley we go, “Thanks so much God, I’ve got it from here.”

Many of us have no problem trusting God when life is hard, but what about when life is good? When we’re no longer in scarcity but abundance? When we’ve gone from the valley to the summit? The prison to the palace? Do we assume that life in the palace is for our benefit? That because we paid the price, because we suffered unjustly, because we were put in shackles, because we were thrown into the pit, because we put in the time and the work, we therefore deserve whatever it is we feel entitled to?

See, in scarcity, it’s easier to go, “God it’s all yours.” But in abundance, when you’ve got all you need, do you say, “You know what, significance isn’t found in what I gain but what I give.” So God, even in abundance, even though I put in the time, and the effort and the hard work, and the blood sweat and tears, nothing in this life belongs to me, it all belongs to you. Help me be faithful to you, to steward and manage everything you’ve given me in a way that pleases you.

That’s what Joseph is doing in every season since the pit. He’s going, “*none of this is mine. I was a fool for thinking it was about me. For elevating myself above my family, for leveraging God’s gifts and provision for my own benefit. Any blessing, any opportunity, any provision, or position, or prosperity, or power that comes my way, any fulfillment of the promises of God over my life, it’s not about me.*”

**Luke 12:48**, “Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required...”

All of the character formation that Joseph endured made perfect sense in his moment before Pharaoh. The loneliness, the disappointments, the betrayal, the wrong use of God’s gift, then learning to get it right, the questions and wrestling, and doubting, the feelings of forsakenness, the clinging to the promises...all of it, every ounce of it now makes sense in this moment. All of those details orchestrated by God were on display.

**Genesis 41:41-43**, “And Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.’ Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck. And he made him ride in his second chariot. And they called out before him, ‘Bow the knee!’ Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt.”

This is the fulfillment of his dreams. Early on, Joseph was proud and God humbled him. Joseph became humble, and God exalted him, and now all of the Egyptian empire is bowing before him. Joseph was faithful with little, now he’s been trusted with much.

Right now, look back at the journey you have been on. Think about what you’ve been through, where you’ve been so close to throwing in the towel, to walking away, to giving up on God, but you’re still here. You’re still hanging on.

Which means the devil hasn’t won. What the devil can’t take from you, he’ll try to convince you to willingly give it up.

Look back at your journey, I don’t know how hard it’s been, I don’t know what you’ve had to walk through. I don’t know the challenges and the heartbreak you’ve had to endure. You know, and God knows, and you’re still alive! You’ve taken the hits, you’ve been pummeled by life at moments, and yet you’re still here!

It’s no coincidence that you’re still fighting. You’re still breathing. Look at what you’ve endured. And now, looking back, where do you see God growing you, changing you, producing resilience, and humility, and confidence, and boldness in you, forming your character more into the image of Christ?

You couldn’t see it at the time, but you can see it now. You’re not the same person you were then, and you know now God was with you, that He never left you, and He’s producing something in you that is going to provide hope and life to those around you.

Joseph’s story began with dreams of being exalted above his family, then he was thrown into a pit and left for dead. He descended into the pit, was betrayed, put in shackles, and sold for silver. Joseph was falsely accused, slandered, and lied about, and taken deeper into the dungeon. He was left there for 13 years, forsaken, abandoned, and forgotten only to rise to prominence and power out of the pit. And he is exalted over all of Egypt as the prime minister where God is about to use him to change a family and a nation.

2,000 years after Joseph, another one descended from the heavens, was betrayed and sold for silver, was falsely accused, slandered, condemned, and forsaken on a wooden cross and buried in a pit. But he ascended three days later conquering death, Hell, and the grave to be exalted to the right hand of the father in victory authority, power, honor and glory. And one day, every knee will bow before Jesus who is the King of Kings, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord.

In the words of King David,

**Psalm 23:4**, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,  
for You are with me...”