

THE LIFE OF JOSEPH – SERMON 10

FORGOTTEN, NOT FORSAKEN

Genesis 40:23-41:1

INTRODUCTION

- At this point in the life of Joseph, there appears to be a glimmer of hope, a possible way out of the prison.
- After his kind treatment of Pharaoh's butler, surely the butler would put in a good word to his boss, who had the power to release him from prison.
- But as the days, weeks and months passed, the reality sank in – he had been forgotten.

There are four lessons to consider from Joseph being forgotten in the prison:

I. OUR INCLINATION TO BE FORGETFUL

A. We forget other people

1. When we are unthankful
2. When we fail to show mercy
 - a. The royal law (James 2:8)
 - b. The priest and Levite forgot their neighbour, while the Samaritan remembered him (Luke 10:30-37)
3. When we fail to sinners of coming judgment (Ezekiel 3:18)
4. When we fail to respect and obey those over us (Hebrews 13:7)

B. We forget God

1. Unbelievers who reject and forget God shall be turned into hell (Psalm 9:17)
2. Believers can and do forget God
 - a. When we neglect spiritual duties such as prayer, Bible reading and church attendance
 - b. When we hear the word, but do not obey it (James 1:25)
 - c. Every time we sin, we are forgetting God (Psalm 106:13-15)
3. A believer can “forget he was purged from his old sins” (2 Peter 1:9)
4. The purpose of the Lord’s Supper is to cause us to remember Christ’s sacrifice (1 Corinthians 11:24-25)
5. “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and *forget not* all his benefits.” (Psalm 103:2)

II. THE INEVITABILITY OF BEING FORGOTTEN

- A. In a fallen world, the good deeds of people will often be forgotten (Ecclesiastes 9:13-18)
- B. Often those we show the most kindness to, show the most ingratitude
 1. Many, like the butler, are only concerned with having their own problems fixed
 2. The corrupt nature of men frequently returns evil for the good done to them
 3. Men are “lovers of their own selves” (2 Timothy 3:2)

III. THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF GOD FORGETTING

A. The butler's forgetting was part of God's providential plan

1. Some criticise Joseph for making his request, saying it shows lack of trust in God
2. There is nothing wrong with asking for deliverance from our trials (2 Corinthians 12:7-11)
3. As long as we accept God's answer, and God's timing
4. God most often uses human means to accomplish His purposes

B. God promises to remember His people

1. The psalms record the prayers of God's saints in times of trouble, asking why has God forgotten them (Psalm 13:1; 44:23-24)
2. But God promises, "Yet will I not forget thee" (Isaiah 49:14-16)
3. He forgets not even the sparrows, how much more His children? (Luke 12:6-7)
4. God sees and rewards even a cup of cold water given for His sake (Matthew 10:42)
5. God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love (Hebrews 6:10)

C. When man fails us and forgets us, the Lord will not

1. The disciples left Christ in His hour of trial, but the Father did not (John 16:32)
2. No man stood with Paul, yet the Lord stood with him (2 Timothy 4:16-18)
3. Remembering this truth will preserve us from bitterness

IV. THE IMPERATIVE TO FAITHFULNESS

A. Joseph remained in the prison another “two full years”

1. They were long years
2. But for Joseph, they were “full” – productive, complete, bountiful – not empty or lacking
3. He maintained a bold testimony of his confidence in God both *before* (Genesis 39:9), *during* (40:8) and *after* his imprisonment (41:16)

B. God was teaching Joseph during those “forgotten years”

1. Patience (Romans 5:3)
2. To wait on God
 - a. Hope in man, when deferred, “maketh the heart sick” (Proverbs 13:12)
 - b. But hope in God “maketh not ashamed” (Rom 5:3-5)
 - c. “God’s delays are not God’s denials” (Hebrews 6:15; Psalm 37:7,34)
3. These years would try and refine Joseph’s faith (Psalm 105:19; Job 23:8-10)
4. In these years, he would abandon all trust in himself, or trust in any other man, and learn to trust in God alone (cf. 2 Chronicles 16:12; Jeremiah 17:5-7; 1 Peter 4:19)

C. In every situation, we must make our brief time on earth “full” and abounding in devotion and service to God

1. “Redeem the time” God has given, don’t waste it on vain pursuits (Ephesians 5:16; 1 Corinthians 15:58)
2. The “full” lives that have been lived to the glory of God will be recompensed at the judgment seat of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11-15)