

Genesis Ch40v1-23 - Where Is God?

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Preacher: Jonny Grant

[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

We're going to read all of chapter 40 this morning. I'm going to pray and then we'll hear what God has to say to us. So let's read God's word, starting at verse 1.

Some time later, the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their master, the king of Egypt.

Pharaoh was angry with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, and put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard in the same prison where Joseph was confined.

[1 : 41] The captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph and he served them. After they had been in custody for some time, 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. When Joseph came to them the next morning, he saw that they were dejected.

So he asked Pharaoh's officials who were in custody with him in his master's house, why do you look so sad today? 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. So the chief cupbearer told Joseph his dream.

He said to him, in my dream I saw a vine in front of me and on the vine were three branches. As soon as it budded, it blossomed and its clusters ripened into grapes.

[2 : 56] Pharaoh's cup was in my hand and I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup and put the cup in his hand. This is what it means, Joseph said to him.

The three branches are three days. 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.

But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness. Mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison.

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. When the chief baker saw that Joseph had been given a favorable interpretation, he said to Joseph, I too had a dream.

And on my head were three baskets of bread. In the top basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head.

[4 : 13] This is what it means, Joseph said. The three baskets are three days. Within three days, Pharaoh will lift off your head and impale your body on a pole.

And the birds will eat away your flesh. Now, the third day was Pharaoh's birthday. And he gave a feast for all his officials.

He lifted up the heads of the chief cupbearer and the chief baker in the presence of his officials. He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, so that he once again put the cup into Pharaoh's hand.

But he impaled the chief baker, just as Joseph had said to them in his interpretation. The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph.

He forgot him. Well, let's pray together. Father, thank you for your word.

[5 : 24] Thank you for this true account of the life of Joseph. We ask for your spirit's help to have understanding with our minds, but that it would also be driven deep into our hearts.

And it would change us and affect us in such a way that it affects our week in what we do and how we live.

We pray that what we hear today will be good for us and will help us. Thank you that you are present here now through your word to us today.

Amen. Well, not much has changed in the last 10 years of Joseph's life. At 17, he was thrown into a pit of a well by his brothers and sold off as a slave.

Now 27, Joseph is thrown into the pit of a dungeon by his master and is working as a slave. Nothing new to report.

[6 : 38] Just the same old struggle and suffering. In fact, by the time we get to the end of chapter 40, guess what? Joseph is still in the pit of a dungeon and he's still doing slave stuff.

One wonders if God has moved on and left Joseph behind. You see, life can be like that for God's people, can't it?

We long for a change in our circumstances, but the problem is nothing ever seems to change. We cry out to God for a better life, but life, it seems, gets no better.

There's trouble at work and weeks later, the same trouble is there. Or maybe you develop an illness and months down the line, there's no improvement, there's no relief.

Or you're struggling with a relationship that's broken down and years later, it's still not right. Nothing new to report, just the same old struggle and suffering.

[7 : 54] One wonders if God has lost interest in me. Maybe he's forgotten me altogether. Well, God has not forgotten his people and God has not forgotten Joseph.

You see, in the unchanging struggles of life, God is consistently unchanging towards us.

In our unchanging sufferings of life, God is consistently unchanging towards us. We're going to look at three main things from our text this morning that are going to encourage us, comfort us, and assure us in this time of struggle.

So first, we want to be encouraged by God's sovereign design. Encouraged by God's sovereign design.

Joseph is in prison and he's soon to have some new friends. Look at verse 1. Sometime later, the cupbearer, so he was the winemaker or the wine buyer and the baker, he's the pastry chef of the king of Egypt, offended their master, the king of Egypt.

[9 : 18] So something must have ticked Pharaoh off. Maybe he didn't like the choice of wine with the steak he was having that evening or perhaps he found the croissants just a little too flaky.

Whatever it was, he's got annoyed. That's what powerful people do. They throw a wobbly and he throws the baker and the cupbearer into prison where Joseph was.

Now the problem for Joseph is they're not quite on an equal friendship. They're still the king's attendants. They still hold a special status. So, verse 4, the captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph where he served them.

Well, you can't get much lower than that, can you? Joseph's not only in prison, but he's at the bottom of the pile where he's serving the other prisoners.

What is God doing? What is God up to? Has he forgotten Joseph? Well, not so. God is working.

[10 : 28] In fact, we have here a spoiler alert. You see, the cupbearer is going to have a big part to play in Joseph's life.

In fact, he's going to be the person that God uses to get Joseph out of prison and into a position of power to serve alongside Pharaoh.

Read on in the story and you will find out. But we're getting a bit ahead of ourselves. At this point, we just need to know that God is working and he's working out his purposes even though we don't know and we can't always see what God is doing.

Which means we just get on serving. You see, our role is not to try and figure out what God is doing.

His ways are not our ways. His thoughts are not our thoughts. No, we simply trust that God is sovereign and we keep on serving. And that's exactly what Joseph did.

[11 : 39] Look at verse 6. When Joseph came to the other prisoners the next morning, he saw that they were dejected. They were down as they were eating their breakfast.

Now, if I were Joseph and I were at the bottom of the pile, I might feel a little bit delighted in their trouble. I mean, there's nothing better than seeing those who are above you suffer and struggle, isn't there?

But not Joseph. He sees an opportunity to serve. Verse 7. So he asked Pharaoh's officials who were in custody with him in his master's house, why do you look so sad today?

I mean, it's not a big thing. Just a sympathetic observation. They're glum. They're not the same jovial selves.

Something's not right. Why are you so sad? And sure enough, it led to some God talk. Verse 8. [12:49] Oh, we both had dreams, they answered, but there is no one to interpret them. Then Joseph said to them, well, I know someone, don't I?

Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams. Joseph does the one thing he can do to help lift the burden.

He points them to God who sees all things and knows all things. In his suffering, he sees the suffering of those around them and he points them to God who is sovereign over all.

You see, God has not lost interest in you or me. He's not forgotten us. God has a design for your struggles in life.

Our sufferings might not be the path we would choose. Our troubles mightn't be what we would plan. But God knows and God has a sovereign design for every circumstance of your life.

[13:59] In other words, God is in control of your day to day. in what you face when you go to work tomorrow morning. The news that you might receive in the doctor's surgery.

The relationship that you're struggling with. God is sovereign over every single detail and it's in moments like that we don't need to panic.

In fact, we get on serving. Our suffering that we face with God's help can make us sensitive to the needs and the suffering of those around us.

Just as we run to God in our struggle so we can point others to our God who sees all things and knows all things. So when we struggle, don't look down.

Look up. You might see someone who is sad and someone who needs help. You see, in the unchanging struggles of life, God is consistently unchanging towards us.

[15:14] In your suffering, be encouraged by God's sovereign design for your life. So first, be encouraged.

second, we can be comforted. Comforted by God's steadfast love. So the cupbearer and the baker tell their dreams to Joseph.

They take it in turns. And God, through Joseph, gives the interpretation. The cupbearer dreams means he's going to be restored to being chief cupbearer.

the baker's dream means he will be, well, it's brown bread for him, isn't it? We'll come back to that shortly.

Now, while the dreams are very important, it's Joseph's response that should get our attention. With the cupbearer looking forward to his restoration, Joseph sees an opportunity.

[16:20] verse 14. He says to the chief cupbearer, when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness.

Mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison. Now, I don't blame Joseph, do you? I don't think there's much wrong in asking those with influence.

it's okay to be asking others for help when we're in a tight spot. Who wouldn't ask? But it's not that he asked, but what he's asking for.

Because Joseph was to learn that God is sufficient in his struggle. look at Joseph's request again in verse 14.

When all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness. Now, that word kindness means covenant love.

[17:32] It's a steadfast love. It's a faithful love. It's the same word that God used to show his love to Joseph just previously.

Just look back to chapter 39 at the end of verse 20. Chapter 39, the middle of verse 20.

But while Joseph was there in the prison, the Lord was with him. He showed him kindness and granted him favour in the eyes of the prison warder.

God showed Joseph kindness. God remained loyal, committed, faithful to Joseph in all his trials and troubles.

That's what covenant love does. It doesn't give up, let out, run out, or burn out. It's a steadfast love.

[18:34] You see, God's love is enough. God's love is sufficient, which means we can keep on trusting.

I think Joseph was beginning to wonder if God had forgotten him. Maybe God doesn't love me. But we got to remember that God had made a covenant promise to Joseph and his family, and here in

chapter 40, Joseph is asking another prisoner for the same loyal commitment. Remember me and show me kindness. But why ask others to promise what only God can promise? Why would you put your trust and your hope in people who can't deliver on their promise? promise? This was a lesson Joseph would soon learn. Despite whatever commitments the cupbearer made, look at verse 23, back in chapter 40, verse 23.

The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph. He forgot him. You see, there is only one we can ultimately trust.

[19 : 56] trust. Look, when we're going through our ongoing struggles, we can turn to the good of others or to the power of others. We can get help from one another, which is a good thing.

There's nothing wrong with that. But let's not put all our hope and trust in people. Why trust the steadfast failure of people when we have the comfort of God's steadfast love?

God's covenant love, his kindness remains no matter what our suffering is, as the writer of Lamentations reminds us, because of the Lord's great kindness, or the Lord's steadfast love, we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

They are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness. You see, in the unchanging struggles of life, God is consistently unchanging towards us.

So in your suffering today, in your struggle today, be comforted by God's steadfast love. Third, encouraged, comforted, and assured by God's saving promise.

[21 : 29] Let's get back to the dreamers. The dreamers were told, or the dreams were told, and the dreams were interpreted. For the cupbearer, the interpretation was favourable, wasn't it?

Verse 13. Within three days, this is the interpretation, 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.

All is well. But for the baker, the interpretation was less favourable. Verse 19. Within three days, Pharaoh will lift off your head and impale your body on a pole and the birds will eat away your flesh. For one, his head will be lifted up, for the other, his head will be lifted off. Now, the question is, will the interpretation of these dreams be fulfilled?

Remember what Joseph had said back in verse 8. Do not interpretations belong to God. So can what God said be trusted? well, yes, God is always true to his word.

[23 : 01] Let's see how this gets worked out. Verse 20. Let's read. Now, the third day was Pharaoh's birthday and he gave a feast for all his officials. He lifted up the heads of the chief cupbearer and the chief baker in the presence of his officials.

He restored the chief cupbearer to his position. so that he once again put the cup into Pharaoh's hand. But he impaled the chief baker just as Joseph had said to them in his interpretation.

You see, the interpretation given by God through Joseph came to pass. What God said would happen did happen.

God's word is faithfully fulfilled. You see, when God speaks, God acts. What he says always comes to pass.

Now, what are we to take from this? Well, there's a big capital A assurance for Joseph. You see, these two dreams are a reminder of the two dreams that Joseph had had ten years before.

[24 : 20] Can you remember them? Have a look back with me to chapter 37. Back in chapter 37, he was a 17-year-old and he has a dream.

Verse 6, Joseph said to them, that is his eleven brothers, listen to this dream I had.

We were binding sheaves of corn out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while all your sheaves gathered round mine and bowed down to it.

a place of position of authority to which others are bowing. Verse 9, then he had another dream and he told this to his brothers, listen he said, I had another dream and this time the sun and moon, probably speaking of his mother and father and eleven stars of his eleven brothers were bowing down to me.

Let's go back to chapter 40. You see God had spoken through these dreams to Joseph to tell him that he would rise to a position of power and authority where his brothers would bow down to him and serve him.

[25 : 51] Well would God's word stand? Can God be trusted? Well ten years later nobody's bowing down to Joseph, he's stuck in a prison.

Seems the promised word has failed. But not so. God has given a capital A assurance. You see God is saying to Joseph, just as the dreams of the cupbearer and the baker were fulfilled, so will my promise to you be fulfilled.

You can trust God's word. God always does what he says he will do. Which means for Joseph and for us.

We keep on believing. You see Joseph had been given a promise. A promise that, well I expect he had hoped would have been fulfilled a long time ago.

But our timing is not always God's timing. Joseph would have to wait until God fulfilled his promise to him.

[27 : 00] How long was that going to be? Well Joseph isn't told, is he? He's not given any days or number of how long he'll have to wait. But he does get assurance that God's word can be trusted.

God's saving promise to Joseph will be fulfilled. And Joseph must learn to trust God's timing, to go on believing God's word that it will come to pass.

you see like Joseph we can find ourselves in a season of suffering where we long for things to change and we hope for better days but nothing ever seems to give.

Ten years can pass and we're still in that same old struggle and one wonders has God forgotten me? Has God moved on and just left me in this mess?

Well we too have been given the assured word of God's saving promise. You see the promise given to Joseph would only serve of a much greater promise that was to come the promise of the Savior Jesus Christ.

[28 : 20] You see at just the right time in God's time according to God's great sovereign design God sent his son Jesus into the world.

Jesus entered into the dark dungeon of this world to lift us up. Jesus has come so that we might experience his steadfast love in all of our suffering.

This is God's saving promise to all who will trust in him. turn with me please to 1st Peter chapter 5. It's towards the end of your Bible so you might want to go to the very end which is Revelation and then you come to Jude and then John John and John and 2nd Peter 1st Peter 1st Peter chapter 5 right at the back of the Bible so as you think of the trouble the suffering that you're going through as we turn to Jesus we discover that he is sufficient he is enough in all of our suffering let's pick it up in the middle of verse 5 1

Peter chapter 5 verse 5 God God God God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble verse 6 humble yourselves therefore under God's mighty hand that he may lift you up in due time in other words it's a call to trust God's sovereign design for your life humble yourself before God well what does that look like how do we do that well look at verse 7 cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you in your struggle in your suffering humble yourself by crying it out to the only one who can deal with it we can cry out to

[31 : 07] God remember me show me kindness and he will he will show you his steadfast love because he doesn't forget his people but more than that look at verse 10 and the God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory in Christ after you have suffered a little while will himself restore you well it's strange to think of our sufferings as lasting as it says here in verse 10 a little while Johnny do you not understand what I'm going through how can you say it's a little while when we've been struggling for years with pain or loss or heart break it doesn't seem a little while but in the light of eternal glory our sufferings and struggles today are just a blip a blink of the eye in the light of

God's eternity one day the risen Lord will come again and he will restore you for those who are trusting in him he will lift you up but for those who refuse him and ignore him it will be a very different ending but as we trust and as we wait verse 10 he will make you strong firm and steadfast in the midst of all of our struggles he will keep you so that you will endure through all things this is the kindness of our God he is faithfully committed to you the covenant love of God expressed to us in Jesus Christ is new every single morning whatever you're suffering you see in the unchanging struggles of life

God is consistently unchanging towards us so we can all read together verse 11 to him be the power forever and ever amen let's pray our father god we thank you that you know and you understand each of our struggle and suffering today you know the things that are weighing us down the things that ask us where are you lord have you forgotten me so help us today that we might humble ourselves before god that we would cast all our anxiety that we would tell him all our fears and all our concerns knowing that he loves us with a steadfast love that he cares for every single

detail thank you father god that in christ you lift us up you restore us you make us strong firm and steadfast and you will hold us and you will keep us as we wait for the eternal glory to come thank you that you are with us and that we can trust you in Jesus name amen well the end of first Peter that we read says the God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory in Christward o Christ