

# Genesis 40–41

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[ 0 : 00 ] Again, that is Genesis chapter 41, verses 37 to 41. Joseph rises to power.

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? 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. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.

This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated. Well, good morning, and let me give my word of welcome to Christ Church Chicago.

We're so glad you are here. Can we say amen again for our young people and our youth who did a marvelous, marvelous job?

[ 1 : 12 ] Good job. Thank you, Brother Milton and the youth team for leading us this morning.

Thank you, Brother Isaac, for the scripture reading. I pray that when you heard Brother Isaac say the text was chapters 40 and 41, you didn't pray that the sermon would also be twice as long because it's two full chapters.

I promise you it will not be. My wife and I were on our way back to Jacksonville from Chicago after one of our visits here prior to relocating to Chicago.

We got on a plane from Chicago to Jacksonville, and our plan was a straight line, nonstop, leaving Chicago and arriving in Jacksonville two hours, 15 minutes.

Partway into the flight, the pilot came on and said, There are storms in the Jacksonville area, and we have been rerouted. We won't be going to Jacksonville.

[ 2 : 35 ] We're going to be landing in St. Louis. St. Louis was not in our plans. We had not requested it, desired it, or anticipated it.

Yet, somebody else was in control. And that somebody just told us we weren't going where we thought we were headed, and as such, we wound up landing in St. Louis.

Not only were we in St. Louis, but we were stuck on an airplane, another place we didn't want to be. The pilot kept coming on, saying, it'll be 15 minutes, 20 minutes, 30 minutes.

He did this for over an hour, until finally we were told we'd have to deplane and spend the night in St. Louis. We finally get on a new flight early the next morning, finally headed to our destination.

But as the plane got on the runway, the pilot came on again and said, I'm sorry, there are some new storms that have shown up in the Jacksonville area.

[ 3 : 50 ] So we're not going to be able to take off yet. A couple of hours more went by, until he finally said, looks like things have cleared up, so we're finally going to be taken off.

Finally. The plane took off and ultimately landed. Right after landing, our dear friend, the pilot, comes back on and says, ladies and gentlemen, I have some good news and some bad news. The good news is, we have finally landed in Jacksonville. The bad news is, there are no gates available to pull the plane into.

So it's going to be another 30 minutes or so before we can get you off this plane. Some of you in this room today may feel like that's the story of your life.

You plan to be somewhere by now, yet you're in a holding pattern, waiting, and you don't know when this plane is going to land and get you to your destination.

[ 5 : 08 ] Prayerfully, as we continue our series on the life of Joseph today in chapters 40 and 41, you'll find encouragement through his example that though the path may not have been as straightforward as you would have liked, there may have been some unpleasant detours along the way.

God is in control and God's timing is always perfect. As we look at Joseph and God's timing in our text this morning, there are some important lessons I believe we can all learn from this narrative. First, there's the painful reality of waiting on God's timing. Secondly, there's the appropriate posture we should have while waiting on God's timing.

And then there's the ultimate promotion that comes from waiting on God's timing. There's the pain, the posture, and the promotion.

When we last left our story in last week's episode of Family Matters, Joseph was in prison for a crime he didn't commit.

[ 6 : 32 ] Talk about a painful reality. I mean, let's just look back for just a moment. Joseph goes from dreaming about the sun, moon, and 11 stars bowing down to him at age 17 to being thrown into a pit, sold into slavery, falsely accused of sexual assault, and thrown into prison.

Now, at the time of our text, about 28 years old. Then following the events of chapter 40, which we'll talk about, verse 1 of chapter 41 says it was another two years after that that Joseph finally saw any relief.

This doesn't look like anything Joseph had dreamed about. He's been waiting on God, but it's been one hardship after another, one delay after another, one detour after another.

How long, Lord? This, my friends, is part of the painful reality of waiting on God's perfect timing. Very few people like waiting in a waiting room. It's irritating to have a 2 p.m. appointment with your doctor only to get in at 3.30. And no one likes waiting in the emergency room ever.

[ 8 : 08 ] We don't like waiting in line. We don't like waiting for the light to change. We don't like waiting for that person searching everywhere to give exact change to the clerk at the grocery store.

I can't stand it when they tell me there's a 20-minute wait on chicken at Popeye's. The place that sells chicken.

However, these are not even the most difficult waiting rooms we might find ourselves in.

Sometimes, in God's waiting room, there's the couple who wants a child, but months turn into years of disappointment.

There's someone who's been laid off from work and applies for scores of jobs with no responses. There's the disease that nags or the treatments that seem to go on endlessly despite prayers for healing.

There's the prayer for that wayward child to come to faith, but the wall of resistance seems insurmountable. Anybody ever been in or perhaps is still in one of life's waiting rooms?

[ 9 : 23 ] They can indeed be full of challenges, struggles, hardships, and even isolation.

Providential delays are never easy, but they are designed to focus our faith and increase our dependence upon the Lord.

In our seasons of waiting, though full of struggles and challenges, we don't know how the timing of all factors will play out or what other factors may be currently involved and at stake.

But we must wait, realizing that a sovereign God is orchestrating the events of our lives according to his perfect plan in order to accomplish glorious things, which we'll ultimately see here in our text with Joseph.

Just an aside, how do we do this? There's just one more reality to waiting on God's perfect timing. That reality is that the Lord will be with you.

As you heard, if you were here last week, we see it several times in the story of Joseph, but specifically at the end of chapter 39 when he is put into prison, he ends up running the prison because the Lord was with him and he will be with you while you wait.

[ 10 : 52 ] God's timing is always perfect. So then what do you do in the meantime, in between time, while you're waiting?

What's the appropriate posture, attitude that you should have while you wait? I believe our text shows us. The text at the opening of chapter 40 says, sometime after Joseph was initially put in prison, we don't know how long this was, but it's more waiting, Pharaoh's baker and cupbearer were put into prison for something Pharaoh didn't like.

It doesn't say what they did, but obviously it was enough to land them in the slammer. Here's the first thing I want you to see about Joseph's posture.

The scripture says, the captain of the guard put Joseph in charge of them and he served them. Here it is. Joseph was working while he was waiting.

He was working while he was waiting. He wasn't grumbling, complaining, or somewhere in a corner with his arms folded, pouting.

[12:10] He was still busy doing what he could do where he was while he was waiting on God to do something else. It's easy to become distraught, distressed when things aren't going our way or it looks like it's taking too long.

We can either be like the child who holds their breath until they get what they want. A tactic I wouldn't recommend if you grew up in my house because you are going to smooth pass out. Or you can decide to just stop, give up, quit, throw in the towel, believing that it's just never going to happen.

But remember, God's timing is perfect. And you've just got to stay faithful and keep working while you're waiting.

The second thing to see here about Joseph's posture was that he remembered God while he was waiting. As we continue our story, Joseph notices the baker and cupbearer look depressed and he asks them, what's wrong?

[13:24] Side note, while you're waiting for your breakthrough, can you be concerned about somebody else's? While they proceed to tell him that they've been having dreams, but there's no one around to interpret them and tell them what they mean.

Then Joseph says at the bottom of verse eight, do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell them to me. Joseph remembers, acknowledges, and attributes his ability to understand their dreams to the Lord.

He literally takes the time to witness to them about a God who has all the answers. Despite the fact that Joseph was waiting on help, he still didn't forget where his help came from.

What an example for us. Don't you get amnesia when things don't turn as fast as you want them to. Don't forget God when the waiting gets hard or gets difficult.

God knows exactly what he's doing, and oftentimes he's personally preparing us for what he ultimately has prepared for us.

[14:44] And his timing is always perfect. Now most of the remainder of this chapter, and much of chapter 41, deals with dreams and the interpretation of dreams.

The baker, the cupbearer, and soon Pharaoh himself. However, I don't want you to get sidetracked about these dreams. Back in this time, one of the ways God communicated with people was through dreams.

Dreams were not an uncommon phenomenon, and people would often seek out interpreters to tell them the meaning of those dreams. They didn't have the Bible, the complete scriptures as we do now, through which God speaks to us.

I don't want you to mistake what was actually the Mexican food you ate last night, for you hearing God tell you to quit your job, sell all your possessions, and move to Alaska.

It's not about the dreams themselves as much as it is about how God used the dreams and the interpretations as a mechanism, a vehicle for elevating Joseph in his timing.

[16:05] Starting at verse 9, chapter 40, both the cupbearer and the baker tells Joseph their dreams, and he tells first the cupbearer that your dream means in three days you're getting out of here, and you're going to be restored back to your old job and be back in the palace.

But unfortunately, not so much for the baker. To the baker, Joseph says, your dream means in three days you're going to be executed.

And in three days, at Pharaoh's birthday party, that's exactly what happened.

Now, for all this talk about faithfulness while waiting, working, trusting, remembering God while waiting, let me be clear that Joseph did not want to be in prison.

He wasn't hanging out in the pit, living his best life. We get the first glimpse of his frustration in verses 14 and 15 when he talks to the cupbearer after interpreting his dream.

[17:20] Only remember me when it is well with you, and please do me the kindness to mention me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house. For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also, I've done nothing that they should put me into the pit.

Joseph wasn't some superhero. He didn't like his situation any more than you like your situation when you have to wait. In fact, it took Joseph 15 verses here to say what I would have been saying way back in chapter 39.

You've got to be kidding me. I've done nothing wrong. That woman is crazy and is lying on me. I'm innocent. This is a miscarriage of justice, and somebody needs to call my attorney.

It's totally acceptable and understandable to not like what you're going through, to struggle, agonize over the weight, pressure, and pain of waiting on God.

But in those moments, check your posture. Trust him and remember that God orders every moment of our lives and he is working out every detail for his glory and our good.

[ 18 : 45 ] When you remember that, it makes the waiting rooms of life that much more bearable. another two years now has passed at the top of chapter 41 and the cupbearer is back in the palace with Pharaoh and has totally forgotten about Joseph.

This is a great moment, church, to remind you that though it may seem you have been forgotten by man, you're never forsaken by God.

could it be could it be that the timing still wasn't right for Joseph? I know, I know he's in prison but think about it for a moment.

If the cupbearer had remembered Joseph and tried to make a case for him to Pharaoh right after he was restored, why would Pharaoh have even cared?

Right now, Joseph would have just been some strange no-name prisoner that wouldn't have been worth the time of day. Perhaps, perhaps the cupbearer needed to forget in order for Joseph to be ultimately positioned where God wanted him.

[ 20 : 05 ] It was only after Pharaoh started having dreams that Joseph would become a valuable, relevant, indispensable resource. That's when the cupbearer needed to remember.

Yes, Joseph wanted out of prison now. But if Joseph had been released out of prison then, he would have missed everything God was trying to accomplish.

Mark this down, mark it down in your notes. Being released may have immediately resolved the pain, but it would have effectively canceled the promotion.

It may have immediately stopped the pain, but it would have effectively canceled the promotion. Old school bakers will tell you that they'll often use a toothpick to determine when a cake is done. they stick the toothpick in the center of the cake and when they pull it out, if it still has crumbs or moisture stuck to it, it's not ready and needs to go back into the oven just a little bit longer.

[ 21 : 26 ] Though it may look like it's ready, though it may smell like it's ready, it's not ready until that toothpick comes out clean. sometimes our prayer is not God get me out.

Our prayer should be God keep me while I'm in until the timing is right because your timing is always perfect.

God so Pharaoh dreams two disturbing dreams back to back that trouble him. He calls all his people and advisors and magicians and makes calls to the psychic hotline and nobody can interpret these dreams.

Then our friend the cupbearer finally remembers and tells the king about this young Hebrew that was locked up with him during his stint in the joint.

this guy was able to correctly interpret not only his dream but that of the now dearly departed baker. That's who you should talk to.

[ 22 : 41 ] So Pharaoh immediately tells them to go quickly get Joseph out of prison and bring him before him. Wow, moments ago Joseph who was in the pit now stands in the palace in front of the king.

Pharaoh says they tell me that once you hear a dream you can interpret it. Now I love this again check Joseph's posture in his response.

Verse 16 of chapter 41. Joseph answered Pharaoh it is not in me. God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.

Despite all he's been through despite all he's endured despite all the waiting he still remembers God and says I can't do anything.

It's all God. This example is an important reminder because now had that been me sure Pharaoh I can interpret your dreams but first you're going to have to do a couple things for me.

[ 23 : 50 ] for starters I'm going to need you to take care of Potiphar's wife.

Yeah she lied on me and put me in prison and I'm going to need you to do something about that.

Secondly I'm going to need some back pay for all the time that I was unjustly in prison and then maybe how about a private camel that will work a private camel so that I can go check on my people.

No Joseph merely says I can't interpret it but God can. Pharaoh tells Joseph his dreams and Joseph not only interprets the dreams you're going to have seven years of plenty like you've never had in Egypt and then you're going to have seven years of famine like you've never seen. Joseph then also gives one of scripture's first national economic recovery plans. He tells Pharaoh he needs to store up a percentage of the food during the plentiful years and then hire someone with wisdom to oversee the distribution of the food during the years of famine. Now finally comes the promotion we've been waiting for. Starts here in verse 37 that was read in our scripture reading this morning.

[ 25 : 35 ] This proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants and Pharaoh said to his servants can we find a man like this in whom the spirit of God is?

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 to the throne will I be greater than you. And Pharaoh said Joseph see I have set you over what an incredible ascension from prison to the steps of the throne.

Joseph's father had rebuked him for dreaming. Now Pharaoh the greatest king of his time welcomes his advice. His own brothers despised him but now the entire Egyptian nation calls him family and receives him as their own.

The hands that were hard and blistered with the work of a slave are now adorned with the bling from a signet ring directly from the king. The prisoner once bound in shackles now walks free with a chain of gold linked around his neck.

[ 26 : 58 ] That coat of many colors that was torn from him by violence and the garment left in the hands of the adulterous woman who falsely accused him linen drawn from the royal wardrobe.

He who was once used and trampled on like a mule now has all of Egypt commanded to bow down before him as he rides in the second chariot prime minister of Egypt.

Don't miss this parallel though that's even more exciting. We see here God using Joseph a man who was rejected despised and afflicted falsely accused of a crime he didn't commit to bring about salvation for the then known world.

It points us to another man. The soon coming king Jesus himself who was born in a manger who was despised and rejected by mankind a man of suffering and familiar with pain falsely accused of crimes he didn't commit who would die to bring about the salvation of the entire world.

This this is how Joseph endured. This is how you can endure. You never judge God's love for you by your circumstances.

[ 28 : 33 ] But you like Joseph must judge your circumstances by God's love. Even if it's heartache and pain, even if it's shackles and chains, even if it's betrayal and injustice, God still loves you.

How do you know that? Because of Jesus Christ. Romans 5 verse 8 says, God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, he died for us.

No matter who you are, you will spend some time in a waiting room. And waiting rooms are never fun.

But it's how you respond to this time that will make all the difference. when we have the right attitude, the waiting room can be a classroom that teaches us how to grow in our faith.

It can be a doorway to an even greater, more intimate relationship with God. And sometimes, just like Joseph, the waiting room is a prelude to an adventure with God we could never have anticipated.

[ 29 : 59 ] Though we don't know what is ahead, God does. And his timing is always perfect. I don't know what you're waiting for.

A restored relationship, a health crisis to finally resolve, or maybe you're just waiting out a stormy time in your life when God seems far away.

I don't know when Jesus will move your mountain, meet your need, deliver you from your prison, or cause your plane to finally land at its destination.

What I do know is that regardless of the timing, like Joseph, we are to stay faithful, remember the Lord, trust him right where we are, do what we know is right, and then wait.

God is on schedule, God never runs ahead, God never runs behind, he will not be early, and he will not be one second late.

[ 31 : 08 ] Milton, we grew up saying he may not come when you want him, but he's always on time. the story is told about the special relationship that must exist in the world of trapeze artists between the flyer and the catcher.

Perhaps you've seen them at the circus or watched them on TV as the flyer is swinging high above the crowd. the moment comes when he lets go of the trapeze and flies out into the air.

For that moment, the flyer is suspended in nothingness. It's too late to reach back for the trapeze bar. There's no going back now.

However, it's also too soon to be grasped by the one who's doing the catching. The flyer can only be as still and as motionless as possible and wait.

Trapeze artists will tell you that the flyer must never try to catch the catcher. His job is to not flail about with anxiety but to simply wait for the well-trained hands of the catcher to grab him.

[ 32 : 45 ] This is a good picture of what it means to trust the sovereignty of God. We wait for God to catch us because God's timing is always perfect.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for your timing. Teach us how to trust you, how to wait on you, how to be faithful in those hard times of waiting on you to move.

we know that you have a plan and our job is to trust that plan. So God, give us peace, give us patience, settle our hearts and our spirits knowing that you will be with us during this season of waiting.

Let us be able to be encouragement to others as they go through their periods and times in the waiting room. And ultimately, we know that promotion comes from you.

Deliverance comes from you. Breakthrough comes from you. Healing comes from you. And we'll wait until you say we're ready.

[ 34 : 16 ] And it's time. In your son's name we pray. Amen. Let's do do