

God's Man and Pharaoh's Man

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[0 : 00] Well once again today let's continue with our studies of the life of Joseph. Today we're looking at this section in chapter 41 from verse 37 through to the end of the chapter.

We've seen the amazing transition that took place in a very short time in Joseph's experience. On a certain day he began that day in jail and by the end of that evening of that same day he was alongside Pharaoh sharing in the power that Pharaoh had and only Pharaoh was more powerful in all the land of Egypt.

That is an amazing transition and it's part of the way that the account we have of Joseph's life in the Bible shows the Lord being with him and the effects of the Lord being with him through all these stages of his experience.

And in this passage today we've been seeing how there are some parallels between the life of Joseph and that of Jesus. And how that helps us to understand something of the way God was preparing the way for the coming of Jesus through things like that in the Old Testament.

And today we'll see some of these parallels even more clearly in this passage than in the previous ones. And that will be so as we go through the life of Joseph and what the rest of the book of Genesis has to say about it.

[1 : 27] More of these parallels will come out clearly so that we can detect in them some of the great principles and the great actions and transactions that take place in the ministry of Christ himself.

Joseph. We're calling this God's man and Pharaoh's man because Joseph is in fact that. He is God's man in Egypt.

He is there not just for Egypt's sake but he's there to prepare the way for the coming of God's people into Egypt. When they come eventually to Egypt.

Not just his brothers and immediate family but those with him. The wider family when they come to Egypt during the famine. And God is preparing a way for that.

So that eventually as they come to multiply in Egypt they will many years from now be led out of the bondage of Egypt. Giving one of the great pictures of redemption that you find in the Old Testament in the Exodus.

[2 : 30] And Joseph is also a man of God in Egypt. In Egypt he isn't just simply God's man in Egypt. He's a man of God in Egypt. He retains his godliness.

He retains his obedience to God. He retains his clear witness to his God. Through every aspect of his life. Even in the change now from prison to prime minister.

Let's look at Joseph first of all as a man of God. As a man of God now in his new circumstances.

Look at verse 38 here what Pharaoh said. Pharaoh said to his servants.

Can we find a man like this in whom is the spirit of God? What did Pharaoh mean? Did Pharaoh really come to believe in God? In Joseph's God?

The true God? The God that is a lone God? As Joseph testified to. Well most likely that was not really what Pharaoh meant by his confession.

[3 : 27] But Joseph had given him in his clear testimony an account of his God. Joseph's God. And that only his God was able to interpret dreams to show the meaning to Pharaoh.

And therefore show the meaning of life. And Pharaoh has come to see how true that is. That what Joseph said about his God has indeed come to be true. Because he has interpreted to him the dreams that Pharaoh himself had.

And the meaning of them. And set out suggested ways by which the country be prepared. For the seven years of famine. After the seven years of plenty.

And with all of that in his mind. Here is Pharaoh saying to those who are listening. Can we find such a man like this? In whom is the spirit of God? And Pharaoh really effectively is saying far more than he really knows.

Because this is really a definition you might say of a Christian. A definition of someone who is in fact saved. Somebody who knows God.

[4 : 34] Even in the New Testament's description. There isn't a better description than you find here on Pharaoh's lips. A pagan king. Actually saying can we find a man like this?

In whom is the spirit of God? What is it that distinguishes someone who is born again from someone who is not? It is this particularly that distinguishes them. The one has the spirit of God. The other does not. In one the spirit of God lives. That's so clear from the New Testament. That when someone is born again. The spirit of God through whom that person is born again. Comes to live in the soul of that person. God comes to live in the soul of that person. God comes to make his home in the soul of that person. Nothing less remarkable than that is said in the New Testament about a person who is a believer.

A Christian. A disciple of Christ. Whatever name you call it. A person who is born again as a man. And a woman. A child who has the spirit of God. In the Old Testament.

[5 : 36] The spirit of God came upon certain people and endowed them with remarkable gifts. They were singled out from most people. Because God was doing something remarkable through them.

People like David for example. Or those that were given skills to build a temple. To fashion things for the temple. But here the focus is on Joseph. And his position in Egypt.

And the wisdom that he has shown. And the way that he has not only just opened up Joseph's dreams. And the meaning of them. But actually gone to prepare a plan. A development plan.

For the whole country. And effectively for the whole world. Because all the world came under the famine. All the known world at the time. Came to Egypt.

And then coming to Egypt. They came to Joseph. See how that fits with Jesus. Later on. But that is really what made Joseph the man he was.

[6 : 34] He was a man in whom is the spirit of God. What makes you a Christian today? What distinguishes you from other people? Not simply your lifestyle.

Not just simply outwardly the way you live your life. That is part of it. But why is that different? Why is that the way it is? It is because as a Christian.

You have the spirit of God within you. You are a person in whom is the spirit of God. And however much we try. And do things without having this.

And however much success a man or a woman may have in this life. And however skilled they may be. And however much they may advance in their career. And advance the career of others. And however much good they may actually bring to other people.

It is absolutely indispensable. For salvation. For pleasing God. For having a future that is positive.

[7 : 41] With God in heaven. It is indispensable to have the spirit of God. Nothing is more important.

In terms of our prayers. Than that we pray. That we have the spirit of God. Remember David in Psalm 51. When he came to confess his sin.

Especially the sin that he had committed. In taking Bathsheba the wife of someone else to be his wife. And then organizing the death of her husband. Uriah the Hittite. And David in his backslidden way.

Just went on like that. Adding one thing to another. In his slide away from God. He was a believer. He was a man of God. He was a man who had the spirit of God.

But he had declined. He had gone on to the slippery slope. Of backsliding. Of letting so much of the world. And of worldly thinking into his own mind.

[8 : 39] When Nathan the prophet came. And really showed him his sin. When God brought that out so clearly for him. Psalm 51 is his great prayer of repentance.

And you remember. Amongst all the things that he prayed for. He prayed for this. Take not your Holy Spirit. Away from me. Now that does not mean that.

Somebody who has the Holy Spirit. In the teaching of the New Testament. That a person who has the Holy Spirit. Can then lose the Holy Spirit. That is not really what it is saying.

But it is saying this. That nothing should so make us. So afraid. As the possibility even. That we have offended the spirit. And that if God should take his spirit from us.

We are dead. We are dead. Because it is where the spirit of God is. And operates. That you find life. You can have a congregation.

[9 : 38] You can have a preacher. That actually says everything. In its own way. That is according to scripture. You can have a congregation. That goes through the rituals.

Of worship together. And engages in many activities together. That may be perfectly right. And fitting in themselves. But for a congregation. For a preacher.

For an individual. To have life. Spiritual life. And vitality. It can only come. But it does come. From the spirit of God.

And you know. We have to always remember this. And always come back. To remembering this. When we are thinking about. Our evangelism. Whether it is in our young people. With our young people.

Or our older people. Whether it is in seeking to reach the unchurched. And those who live. In our districts. That don't come to the gospel at all. Whatever it is. We are thinking of. As a congregation.

[10 : 34] And however busy. We might be with it. And however good as they are. These things are. Let us never forget. That above all things. We need the spirit.

Of God active. In our lives. In our activities. In our worship. In our homes. In our public witness. In everything we do.

Because that. Is the secret. Of spiritual success. Spiritual life. Spiritual vitality. A man in whom. A congregation in whom.

Is the spirit. Of God. And if you go. To the book of Acts. I have given you some references. There are a lot of. There are a lot of. Bible text references.

In your notes today. But I will just leave you. To read through them yourselves. Later on. Just follow them out. And look at the connections. Between these texts. And what we are saying. For example. In Acts chapter 6.

[11 : 28] There was a need to. Elect people. Or choose people. Or appoint people. Other than the apostles. So that the apostles. Could concentrate. On what they called. The word. The preaching of the word.

And prayer. The practical necessities. Of the church. Needed to be attended to. And to allow the apostles. To focus on the more spiritual things.

They chose. Men who would look after the practical things. That's where we get our deacons from. The whole office. Or the idea. Of deacons. But if you look at. The qualifications.

The main thing that's said. About these deacons. Is not that they were good. With administration. That they were good at practical things. That was certainly part of it. But that's not the main qualification.

What is the main qualification? That they are people. In whom is the spirit of God. People who have. The spirit of God. As you go on.

[12 : 25] In Acts to read. About Stephen. He was chosen. As a man filled with the spirit of God. And his preaching. And the preaching of others.

Like him there. Were told. In the same chapter. In verse 10. That they could not be resisted. The power. Of their argument. The power of their preaching.

Could not be resisted. Why? Because it was full of the spirit. The best thing. You can do. For me as your minister. For me as a preacher of the gospel.

Is pray. That I will be full of the spirit. That the preaching of the gospel. Will have the spirit of God. In it. In abundance. Because that.

Is the means. By which. People's lives are changed. By which. By which you souls are fed. And by which I will be used of God. The spirit.

[13 : 18] Of God. So vital. And think of. The way that this is. Joseph. As a man of God. As a holy man.

As a man who. Has the spirit of God. Well. That of course distinguishes Jesus. As well as. His incomparable holiness. In every step of his way. You can see that he is.

A man of God. A person. Yes he is the son of God. But remember he had to live his life. In this world. A world totally. Opposite to himself. And he retained.

His perfect holiness. In all of that. Joseph. As a man of God. Joseph. As God's man. In Egypt. Because Pharaoh. Came to appoint Joseph.

Specifically to this position. Pharaoh said. 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.

[14:17] To lord themselves. As you command. Only as regards the throne. Will I be greater than you. In other words. He really. Apart from having absolute power.

Which of course. Pharaoh retained for himself. But apart from that. Joseph had control of everything else. In the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh. Appointed him.

Willingly. And authoritatively. To that position. And just. To show his position. Pharaoh gave him. Certain things. By which it would be made plain. To the whole of.

The Egyptian people. And this is in fact. What Pharaoh himself. Had ordered. He said. He took his signet ring. From his hand. And that would be something like.

The queen today. Saying to. Somebody that she had appointed. Next to herself. And said. Here's my credit card. When you go to Harrods.

[15:13] They'll just give you anything you want. And Pharaoh's. Signet ring. Would be something like that. All Joseph would have to do. In acquisitioning. Acquisitioning anything. Or in giving out any orders.

Would to. Here is Pharaoh's signet ring. He's given it to me. I'm wearing it. That shows. My authority. And. His second chariot. Well of course.

Nowadays we're used to. Important officials. Traveling about in limousines. Special cars. That. That. They have given to them.

As ministers of the crowd. Or as people of importance. In that regard. Well here is. Pharaoh saying to Joseph as well. He clothed him. In garments of fine linen.

Put a gold chain about his neck. And made him ride. In his second chariot. Only Pharaoh. Had a chariot. Of a better speck.

[16:08] If you like. Than Joseph. And he also gave him. A wife. There are questions of course. In regard to this. Because. The wife that Joseph was given.

Was not a believer like himself. She would be an Egyptian. We're told that she was the wife of Potiphar. A priest of On. An extremely important man in Egypt. Because the cult.

Of On. Was the cult of Ra. The son of God. And this was a very important. Gift. If you like. That Pharaoh. As far as the Egyptians were concerned.

Gave to Joseph. And Joseph probably. Really had no. Way of. Not accepting this gift. It doesn't mean.

That he compromised himself spiritually. Obviously he didn't. But. This gift of a wife. And a home. A house. To go with a job. As it was given by Pharaoh.

[17:01] So it was part of. Joseph's status. But you see. The interesting thing is. That. He actually. Gave names to his children. The two children that are mentioned there.

Manasseh. And. Ephraim. And these are names. That. Show how. Joseph's mind. Was still focused on God.

How he was still faithful to God. Even in this position. And even having such an Egyptian wife. The names of his children were still. Names that carried a Hebrew meaning.

And especially. The first one was Manasseh. Which. Roughly means. God has made me forget. All my hardship. And my father's house. It's like the Hebrew word.

To forget. In other words. All the hardship. That had led up to this. It's not that. Joseph had forgotten it literally. But it was now behind him. Manasseh. And he could say he had moved on from that.

[18:00] By God's blessing. To the position he now occupied. God had made him benefit even from the hardships. And now had placed him in such an important position. He had come.

If you like. Similar to Jesus himself. From humiliation to exaltation. And he was now thanking God for that. In his own personal life. Manasseh.

Is a word that featured significantly. But. He also had a second son called Ephraim. For God has made me fruitful. It's a word. Which sounds again like the Hebrew word for making fruitful.

And that goes back to God's promises to his people. To the likes of his great grandfather Abraham. And then to Isaac. And to Jacob. And now to Joseph himself.

And you'll find this picked up throughout the history of Joseph. And on into the future of Israel.

Ephraim means being fruitful. Or made fruitful. And when you think of God's relationship with his people.

[18 : 57] That's at the very heart of it. God makes them fruitful. God brings them spiritual fruitfulness. He makes their lives blossom.

I will be he said. Through Hosea like the dew. To Israel. I will make them blossom. And grow. And sprout forth. And that's something we still recognize.

As a necessary part of our experience as a church. The growth of the church. The growth of the kingdom. The many parables Jesus had. Regarding the growth of the kingdom.

And the growth of his people. In terms of. Not just their numbers. Because that's not the most important thing. But their growth spiritually. And their development in knowledge.

And commitment to God. And serving God. There is Joseph. Giving his name. This name Ephraim. With regard to God's. God's promise to his people.

[19 : 59] Of fruitfulness. Now. That's us. That means. Something important. Joseph's now a prime minister. He's got all these trappings of power. What a huge contrast.

To the prison. Where we saw him. So faithful to God. Keeping to the serving of God. Keeping to a holy life. But things haven't changed.

His circumstances have changed. His outward conditions. Have drastically changed. He's no longer a prisoner. He's now the prime minister of Egypt. He's second to Pharaoh himself.

Does he become Egyptianized? No he doesn't. He retains. His commitment to his God. Just think about that.

It's actually a lot easier. In many respects. To keep your faithfulness to God. When you're in prison. Than when you're in a palace.

[20 : 57] In a prison you have adversity. You have pain. You have affliction. You have loneliness. Yes there are many questions. Yes people might even. Speak out against God.

Or Joseph didn't. But it's a lot easier. To remain close to God. To draw near to God. To come to pray to God. To take your strength from God.

When you're in prison. And when you're in a palace. Because then you're surrounded with temptations. You have a comfortable life. You don't have to look to God. Though you should.

Daily. For your food. For your daily sustenance. But let's remember Joseph. In every single situation in life.

Joseph honored God. Joseph did not depart from obedience to God. From faithfulness to God. And that's something we have to carry with us into our life as well.

[21 : 57] Our circumstances will change. The conditions of life change. The experiences of life are varied. There are grievous losses.

There are times of deep pain. Distress. Loneliness. Questionings. There are times of advancement. Of comfort.

The great thing is. Are we true to God? In all of these. Like Joseph was. Joseph. Joseph. Joseph. Joseph. Is a man of God.

And he's God's man. In Egypt. He's not Egyptianized. Even though he is now placed. Second to Pharaoh himself. And how does that show us the connection with Jesus?

Well we mentioned. The transition from. Humiliation to exaltation. Or exaltation after humiliation. Think of the plan. That his brother had for him.

[22 : 58] Think of how that enmity was directed against Joseph. To get rid of him. To get rid of him from their lives. To get rid of his influence. To get rid of the things that he was saying about himself.

And about them. And about their future. And how he would be Lord over them. And all the rest of it. Put that and transfer it into the life of Jesus. Think of the plans that people had against him.

Think of the way the Gospel of Luke. As we'll see tonight. Things are beginning to actually grow. In terms of the opposition that Jesus faced. The plans that the Jewish authorities especially had.

To get rid of this Jesus. But as with Joseph. So it is with Jesus. All of these human plans. Are actually part of.

And come under. And are inside. The bigger plan of God. It was God's great plan. That Joseph. Joseph. Should be in prison.

[23 : 55] And then be. Exalted. And be in charge of Egypt. For the benefit of his people. It is God's great plan. That placed his son in this world. To face the humiliation.

And the opposition. And the plans that came. To be against him. In order to provide. The death. That we could not die. That he died for us. And then the exaltation.

Which followed. Where Christ is exalted. For the benefit of all his people. Do you see the parallel there? The close connection. Where Joseph was made Lord over all.

And if you look at Acts 2.36. Philippians 2.9. Ephesians 1.22. These are all. Texts and passages. That deal with. The exaltation of Christ.

After his humiliation. After his work on earth was done. The Lord advanced of God. Has highly exalted him. As Philippians 2. Put it. And given him the name.

[24 : 50] That is above every name. He is. God's man. Not just for Joseph's family. But for indeed the whole world.

At the end of the chapter. All the earth came to Egypt. To Joseph. To buy grain. Because the famine. Was severe. Over all the earth. And that's how it is with Jesus.

There's no one else. That God commends. For us to look to. In the famine. Of our spiritual starvation. Than Jesus Christ. So he is.

Lord over all. He's secondly. The provider of life. You think of. Joseph. And his plan. And his strategy. The proposal. Which pleased Pharaoh. That's the development plan.

For Egypt's future. And God's way of providing. For the world. At the time. Well that's what's in the ministry. Of Jesus too. It's God's preparation.

[25 : 49] God's provision. God's way of providing. For us. As we said. The whole earth. Came under. The severe famine. And that's really.

Such a wonderful picture. For us. Because. It's full of spiritual meaning. All mankind. By the falls. Says the catechism. Lost communion.

With God. Are under his wrath. And curse. And so. Made liable. To all the miseries. Of this life. To death itself. And to the pains. Of hell. Forever. That's our spiritual condition.

That's our spiritual starvation. And we have no means. To feed ourselves. The spiritual food. That we require. Because we have disqualified ourselves. Just like the people of Egypt.

They could not actually provide. For themselves. And the whole world. Outside of Egypt. Was in the grip. Of a famine. They had to depend. Upon this one man in Egypt.

[26 : 48] This one leader in Egypt. This prime minister of Egypt. And his plan. And his provision. That's why they all came to him. That's what Jesus has done.

With regard to our salvation. I am the way. The truth. And the life. He's the provider.

Of life. Against the background. Of our spiritual starvation. Jesus is the provider. And he's the provider.

And also the dispenser. It's very interesting that. In verse 55. When the people cried. To Pharaoh for bread. Pharaoh didn't say to the Egyptians.

Go to my officials. He said. Go to Joseph. That's what he said. Go to Joseph. There were many people.

[27 : 48] Under Joseph. Who would be officials. In different places in Egypt. To open up. The stone houses of grain. But what Pharaoh emphasized. To all those. Who cried out to him.

Give us food. Go to Joseph. In other words. Pharaoh was saying. You don't come to me. Yes I'm in charge of the country. But for this.

Go to Joseph. Joseph. He's the dispenser. It's not just his plan. He's the one who's in charge. Of dispensing it. Of giving it out. To those who need.

And that of course. Is so true about Christ. He is God's man. Not only as. The provider of life. In him. But the dispenser of life.

To us. Remember this man. Joseph. Is a man in whom. Is the spirit of God. And there's a wonderful connection. There too. With Jesus.

[28 : 44] Because. When. On the day of Pentecost. After the spirit of God. Had come with such power. Upon the church. In a way that. Had never happened before.

A way that. Could not have happened. Until Jesus had died. And risen from the dead. And gone to be. With the father in glory. The preaching of Peter.

As he preached to the multitudes. About these things. This is what he said. In Acts chapter 2.

And verse 36. He said that. What had happened. And what they had seen happening. Was nothing less than the promise. Of God. That had actually been brought about.

In Jesus Christ. Being therefore. He said. Exalted at the right hand. Of God. And having received. From the father. The promise of the Holy Spirit. He has poured out this.

[29 : 42] That you yourselves. Are now seeing. And hearing. In other words. Jesus was given. The spirit of God. To pour it out. On his church. Just like Joseph.

Is described as a man. In whom is the spirit of God. And about whom. Pharaoh said. Go to Joseph. He is the dispenser. He is the one. Who gives out the blessings. There is Jesus.

There is a picture for you. Of Jesus. And you can tie that. With the other text there. 1 Corinthians 15. 2 Corinthians 3. 17. But I want to finish by.

That great emphasis. Of Pharaoh. Because actually. This is really. Pretty much. What God is saying. To you and to me. About Christ. About his son.

How fulfilled. Is your life. How satisfied. Are you. When you look. Into your heart. And look. Into your soul.

[30 : 42] Do you find. Something there. That you know. Is not just. Satisfying. In your experience. And gives you. A meaning. And purpose. In life. As you live it now.

But also. Gives you. Purpose. And meaning. Looking to the future. And looking to eternity. Have you. That in your life. Now. That you know. Is.

Adequate. And sufficient. To meet with death. When it comes. To carry you. Into the judgment. Of God. To meet with him. We all know.

What. Spiritual famine is. That's what we were born in. And today. God is saying. To you. And he said. To me. Go to Joseph.

Go to Jesus. Go to the provision. That I've made for you. In him. Go to the. Dispenser. Of life. After all.

[31 : 46] This is the Jesus. Who said about himself. I am. The true bread. Which came down. From heaven. Whoever eats.

Of this bread. Shall live forever. And in John 6. Great words of Peter. When.

Many disciples. Decided. That's it. We're not going to follow Jesus anymore. They were only disciples. Outwardly. And they couldn't take any more. Of his teaching. It was too demanding.

They turned away. And no longer. Followed him. And Jesus turned. And said to the twelve disciples. Do you also. Want to go.

Will you also. Go away. Are you going to join them. And Peter answered for them. And he said this. Lord. To whom shall we go.

[32 : 45] You have the words. Of eternal life. God. And. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. That's. For you today. And for me. Go.

To this Jesus. Let's pray. Lord. We thank you. For your provision. In. Your own son.

Our lord Jesus Christ. We thank you. That you have given him to us. That we might call him. Our lord. and while he is your son in a way that we never can be yet we bless you that you gave him to the death of the cross that you raised him from the dead and set him at your right hand in glory that he is the dispenser to us of the Holy Spirit that through him we come into the possession of the life that he has provided O Lord help us today to draw near to you, to go to you to be convinced as Peter was that there is none other in whom we find eternal life for our souls hear us we pray for Jesus' sake, Amen