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As we continue our worship this morning, let's turn for our scripture reading to Psalm 71. Psalm 71. Our study in Genesis finds Joseph at perhaps his lowest point, having served in Potiphar's house and then been wrongly accused and imprisoned.

And we ask ourselves, could we sustain our hope? Could we sustain our faith in circumstances such as these? A period of years will go by before anything changes in Joseph's life. And it's one thing to recognize a difficulty and to cling to the promises when it first hits, but day by day by day as it wears on and there seems to be no hope of change, how do we sustain our hope? How do we sustain our faith? Well, this is something that David is familiar with and this Psalm tells us, gives us a little bit of insight into the kind of thinking that can help us sustain our focus on God and the things of God no matter what the circumstances. Psalm 71.

In you, O Lord, I put my trust. Let me never be put to shame. Deliver me in your righteousness and cause me to escape.

Incline your ear to me and save me. Be my strong refuge to which I may resort continually. You have given the commandment to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress.

Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man, for you are my hope, O Lord God. You are my trust from my youth. By you I have been upheld from birth.

You are he who took me out of my mother's womb. My praise shall continually be of you. I have become as a wonder to many, but you are my strong refuge.

Let my mouth be filled with your praise and with your glory all the day. Do not cast me off in the time of old age. Do not forsake me when my strength fails, for my enemies speak against me and those who lie in wait for my life take counsel together, saying, God has forsaken him.

Pursue and take him, for there is none to deliver him. O God, do not be far from me. O my God, make haste to help me.

Let them be confounded and consumed, who are the adversaries of my life. Let them be covered with reproach and dishonor, who seek my hurt. But I will hope continually and will praise you yet more and more.

My mouth shall tell of your righteousness and your salvation all the day, for I do not know their limits. I will go in the strength of the Lord God. I will make mention of your righteousness, of yours only.

O God, you have taught me from my youth, and to this day I declare your wondrous works. Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, do not forsake me until I declare your strength to this generation, your power to everyone who is to come. Also your righteousness, O God, is very high.

You who have done great things, O God, who is like you? You who have shown me great and severe troubles shall revive me again and bring me up again from the depths of the earth. You shall increase my greatness and comfort me on every side. Also with the lute I will praise you and your faithfulness, O my God.

To you I will sing with the harp, O holy one of Israel. My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to you and my soul which you have redeemed. My tongue also shall talk of your righteousness all the day long, for they are confounded, for they are brought to shame, who seek my hurt." There's an awful lot you can say about this song in the hymnal of Israel.

I could probably divide this into four or five parts and spend a lesson on each one, at a minimum. But one thing you can see just as we read through is the fact that every time you see the psalmist talking about himself and using the first person pronoun, he turns right around and uses the second person pronoun, talking about God. He says, I have become a wonder to many, in verse 7, but you are my strong refuge.

And one of the things that can eat away at our confidence and at our perspective is to let our eyes dwell for too long on ourselves. And you say, well, I know I shouldn't be self-centered and I shouldn't have my eyes on self, eyes on people, eyes on things. But whenever you take your eyes off of those things, they have to turn somewhere.

What are we going to fix our eyes on? And of course, you have the great exhortation from Paul looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. And you see that pattern throughout this psalm. He says in verse 4, Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.

Here's me in the grip of the forces of evil. But look at verse 5, You are my hope, O Lord God. You are my trust from my youth.

And every time he glances at himself or glances at those who would wish to do him harm, he returns to the Lord and he says, You are my rock and my fortress. He says in verse 15, My mouth will tell of your righteousness and your salvation all the day, for I do not know their limits. Wouldn't it be great if we could begin to talk about God and never run out of words, never run out of observations.

It's a limitless topic of conversation. You find this when someone, especially somebody in their late teens or early twenties, falls in love or becomes infatuated. You cannot get them off of that subject of the person that they are fixed upon.

You bring up something like, Well, I wonder how the baseball team did this past weekend. Oh, Frank just loves baseball. Or you talk about, I'll go wash the car.

Oh, Frank's got the nicest car. When some girl is in love with Frank, that is all you're going to hear about no matter what the topic of conversation. Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing if in our souls, whatever the topic of conversation, whatever the subject of our thoughts, it immediately turns to God.

You see that time and again in this psalm, not to mention the other Scriptures. He says in verse 18, Of course, as you get older, as Jake Hess is fond of saying, old age ain't for sissies. And it becomes a challenge in the area of just physical ability.

It's not like a child that you say, Well, as they grow, it's going to get better and they're going to become more and more capable as our life progresses. And after we pass a certain point, just because of the way of the world, we start heading downhill. And he says in verse 18, When I am old and gray-headed, O God, do not forsake me until I declare Your strength to this generation.

It's one thing to say, O Lord, please don't let me suffer the ravages of old age. I'm praying don't let me suffer the ravages of middle age. I can't even imagine what it's going to be like when I really get old.

I think I've got problems now. But it's one thing to just go to God and say, O God, I don't want to go through this deterioration. I used to be able to do X number of pull-ups, and now I can only do X minus 5. Or I used to be able to run so fast and now I can't.

I used to be able to get up and down without my knees cracking and sending me messages. You can long for the good old days when all was well. But the psalmist here, talking about getting old and gray-headed, he says the reason I want You to save me, O God, the reason I want You to be with me is so that in my old age, I can accomplish something.

I can communicate something about You that I have learned to the next generation. Your power to everyone who is to come. But in order to do this, of course, we're going to have to be outward-looking.

It takes objectivity to be able to... We have to be focused on God ourselves before we can talk about Him to others. And this is, of course, our whole life, whatever our age. We are ineffective in reflecting the glory of God if we aren't focused on Him.

Your righteousness, O God, is very high. In verse 19, You who have done great things, O God who is like You, You've shown me great and severe troubles. And of course, the older you get, the more and the greater some of those troubles might have been.

But as soon as he thinks about that, he turns right around and says, You who have

shown me great and severe troubles. First of all, he recognizes that God has allowed these. You have shown them to me.

You will revive me again and bring me up from the depths of the earth. And this, of course, it is incomprehensible to me that there are actually scholars of the Bible who think that there's no resurrection hope in the Old Testament. And when they come to verses like this, they have to explain them away.

What else is he saying here when he says, You will revive me and bring me up again from the depths of the earth. And they say, Well, it's just figured if He'll bring him up from a dark patch in his life. But this is a confidence in the resurrection that He'll be brought up from the earth.

You shall increase my greatness and comfort me on every side. So what began in verse 20 as God showing him great and severe troubles ends with increasing greatness and comfort on every side. And that's a confidence.

That's a hope that sustains his faith. And over and over again, like a refrain throughout this psalm, you see the theme of praising the Lord. My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to you.

And my soul, which you have redeemed. What is the basis for praise? What is the basis for singing these songs? God has delivered. God has redeemed.

God is righteous. Verse 24, My tongue will talk of your righteousness all the day long. And these people who are seeking my hurt, they're going to be confounded.

The righteousness of God is going to prevail. I will strengthen thee. Yea, I will help thee.

Yea, I will uphold thee with what? The right hand of my righteousness. And you know, the New King James, they translate it, my righteous right hand, and God forgive them. What they're trying to say is that God has a mighty hand and it's righteous.

But in the Hebrew and the way it's constructed, it is the right hand of God's righteousness. It is a subtle difference in nuance there, but the idea is that it is God's righteousness which we can claim, which we can have in our souls. When you say His righteous right hand, it gives you the picture of God reaching down.

And that is a concept, but in that verse, I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness. God gives us that righteousness and it's present within us. And rather than picturing God as reaching down to save from above, this is being sustained from within by the righteousness that God can create in our souls.

So it's a wonderful song of hope and the confident expectation of deliverance all through life. He has been sustained from his youth. He says, God, you're the one that took me

out of my mother's womb.

And now he's anticipating becoming old and gray-headed. Whatever our stage of life, early, middle, or late, the narrow road is lighted by the Word of God and the faith and the hope that we have in it. Let's return now to our study in Genesis.

We resume this morning in chapter 40. Genesis chapter 40. You know, 40 is the number of testing.

I am told that we've had well over 150 lessons now in Genesis. So you've made it to chapter 40. 40 gives you the hope that our trials will soon be o'er.

But we just have 10 chapters left in Genesis. It's been for me quite a fascinating and enlightening study thus far. And it is significant, I think, just not from an inspired point of view, but this is a time of great testing for Joseph that we find here.

Of course, the chapter numbers are not in the original text. But I choose to believe that there is some divine hand in this being chapter 40. And this is the reason why.

You will recall that Joseph sold into bondage in the house of Potiphar, rejects the advances of Potiphar's wife, and she becomes bent on revenge and revenges herself by accusing Joseph before the servants in such a way that Potiphar has no choice but to take him out of the household. She was probably hoping that he would be executed, which was the normal penalty for this crime. But Potiphar, being captain of the guard, puts Joseph in the prison of which Potiphar is the grand master.

I know what you thought I was going to say. He is the captain of the guard. He's over all of the jail system in Egypt.

So you get the idea that when his nose burns, when his anger is kindled up in chapter 39, verse 19, it is at his wife who has put him in the impossible. Joseph has been the goose that laid the golden egg. He has been the cash cow for Potiphar.

And he's looking at the loss of this man whom he trusts and has trusted for a period of time implicitly and who has been a source of great blessing. And it's clear to me that his anger was aroused, as it says in verse 19, against Mrs. Potiphar. But he's in a box because she has been careful to repeat these accusations in front of the servants before they were repeated to Potiphar.

And those servants are part of the Pharaoh's circle and they talk to other servants and Potiphar can't overlook this. He can't not do something. The bad example that would be set in the undermining of discipline is too great.

So he takes him and puts him in the round house, the prison, a place where the king's prisoners are confined. And he's there in the prison, up there in verse 20. So now in

chapter 40, we saw that... And if you think about this career of Joseph, if you step back just a moment in Egypt, first he's in Potiphar's house, then he's in the prison, and ultimately he's going to be in Pharaoh's house.

And these have been compared to three scenes or three panels. You have these room dividers that are three panels hinged together and oriental designs on a lot of these. And there will maybe be a scene and they're linked, but they're separate.

And in the same way, we have these three scenes in Joseph's life. And at the beginning of each scene, there is an explanation or an exposition that talks about how he got to be there and what the circumstances were. And then it's followed by a narrative or a piece of story.

In the first situation, back in chapter 39, it told us that he'd gone to Potiphar's house, the Lord was with Joseph, he was successful, he was in the house of his master, his master saw the Lord was with him, put him in charge of everything that he had. This second panel now is about to begin. The house of Potiphar, that was the first scene.

And we saw at the beginning that even though Joseph started in very bad circumstances, God was with him, God blessed him, and the people around him recognized that and committed things into his care. Same thing happens now in verse 21 of Genesis 39. The Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy and gave him favor.

This is natan, the Hebrew verb natan, which means to give, followed by kesed, gave him grace. By the way, this is the only place where this particular combination is used. We have grace all through the Old Testament.

Kesed is one of the more common words translated mercy and so forth. But to give in this sense is unique. He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

The keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners in the prison. So it's like whatever pot you want to drop Joseph into, he's going to bob to the top because God is with him and God is blessing him. God is actively working for Joseph's well-being even in the midst of his trials.

And this of course sets up a contrast. What are you going to dwell on? Are you going to dwell on your trial or dwell on God's grace? The keeper of the prison in verse 23 didn't look into anything. It was under Joseph's authority because the Lord was with him and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper.

So he just has the golden touch. He has the wisdom. And notice also that Joseph is not sitting around feeling sorry for himself.

One of the quickest ways to kill the gifts that God has given us, to give whatever native intelligence, whatever wisdom, whatever common sense, is to lose our objectivity

because the best tools in the hands of somebody that doesn't know what they're doing, you can give somebody... They've got these special hammers now that have a titanium handle and all kinds of rubber grips and special heads and things on them. But if you put it in the hands of a carpenter that doesn't know how to build, the finest nails, the finest lumber, and the finest tools are still going to produce something that's going to fall to the earth. God has given us what's been called a spiritual IQ.

We have perception into the things of God that is not limited by our human intelligence or by our circumstances or by anything else because the things of the Spirit are not discerned in the flesh. So it doesn't matter what our flesh is like. It doesn't matter what kind of a brain we have or what kind of grades we ever made in school or how quick on the uptake we are because our perception of spiritual things does not depend on any human ability.

The carnal mind cannot understand the things of the Spirit because they are spiritually discerned. Well, guess what? The Spirit is not subject to the limitations of the flesh. And this is why it is so important to teach children because we say, well, children, there's a lot they can't understand because they're not experienced and they're small.

Their brains haven't developed. They've got a limited frame of reference. It doesn't matter.

If they're believers and if they have any interest at all in the things of God, God the Holy Spirit will teach them. And He's the best teacher. He is the ultimate paidos, guider of the youths.

And the things that we present, we teach them Bible stories and they can perceive and they can understand and they can apply a lot. They have the knowledge of good and evil. And it's important not to overlook that.

So here we have this beginning of the second panel and we see it beginning much as the first, the exposition here, the explanation. Once again, Joseph, it seems like he's in the pit of adversity and God lifts him up. And he's in charge.

Even if you throw him in a pit, he becomes in charge of the pit. Now in chapter 40, it came to pass after these things. When you see this phrase after these things, it can mean a short time.

It can mean a long time. We know that the total lapse or the total duration of Joseph's experience as a slave and as a prisoner in Egypt is 13 years. It told us that he was 17 back when he was with his brothers and telling them about the dreams.

It's going to tell us that he's about 30 when he is promoted by Pharaoh. So this period of enslavement and captivity and imprisonment is 13 years. So we have to guess now about how long he would have been in Potiphar's house to be entrusted with all of those

things.

We think, well, maybe a year or two or three he might have been in Potiphar's house. Couldn't have been too long because Mrs. Potiphar wouldn't have just gone blithely along year after year after year and after year eight or year nine suddenly say, oh, wow, look at that Joseph. I think I'll proposition him.

You get the idea that the impact of Joseph's good looks and so forth brought this to a head very quickly. So you think it would have been a year or two at most that Joseph was in the household of Potiphar and then he's imprisoned. Well, you know the story of Joseph and you know what we're coming up on here with the butler and the baker or the cupbearer and the baker.

And this period of time in the prison if you think about it is probably on the order of about 10 years. Eight, nine, ten years. This is a long period of time.

After these things that the butler and the baker. Of course the butler we think of Jeeves or somebody in a British production of some sort. The gentleman's gentleman.

But a better rendition of this would be the cupbearer. Cupbearer to the king. And the baker.

And he's not just the baker. He's not the guy with the Pillsbury doughboy hat on his head. He is the head of the production of food in Pharaoh's household.

So one of these men handles the wine and the other one handles the food preparation. The butler and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their lord, the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers.

Now we just saw Potiphar's anger in the last chapter. And this was the verb charah C-H-A-R-A-H in Hebrew which means to burn followed by af A-P-H which is the nose. And it says Potiphar's nose burned.

His anger was kindled is how we translate it. This is a different word. This is the Hebrew word kaaf Q-A-A-P-H kaaf This is a flash anger.

This is a rage that flares up in a moment and then often dissipates just as quickly. A good colloquial translation might be Pharaoh lost his temper with his butler and with his baker. This is a flash... You get the idea as you go through this story that this particular Pharaoh is impulsive.

He does things on impulse. He's going to throw the butler and baker into prison on an impulse. He's going to restore one and hang the other sort of on an impulse.

He's going to promote Joseph on an impulse. And he's very decisive. He's very quick.

He makes a snap judgment and he acts. And he seems to be very passionate about these things. So he flies into a rage would be another way to translate this.

He flies into a rage with his two officers. The chief butler and the chief baker. It doesn't tell us what their particular sin is.

It's not pertinent to the story. But the both of them on the same day perhaps they're implicated in some sort of a supposed plot. So he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard in verse 3. Who is the captain of the guard? Potiphar.

So he puts the cup bearer and the baker in the custody in the house of Potiphar in the prison, the place where Joseph was confined. And this word prison is round house. So you get the idea that there is a complex.

A lot of churches have a parsonage and it's either adjacent to or very near the church house. Well, in a sense, the captain of the guard lives on the premises. He has his very ornate dwelling place and it is adjacent to the prison that he oversees.

And this apparently was a round house and the political prisoners, the upper crust prisoners, this is the white collar crime incarceration place. These people are treated well. They are assigned a personal servant.

So this is not in irons in the dank, moldy dungeon someplace. They are free to move about the palace. They are this palatial dungeon, I guess.

But they're confined. Their liberty has been restricted and they're confined there. But they have amenities and they sleep comfortably.

We know they have a personal servant who comes and checks on their well-being and brings them their food. So they're not suffering in the physical sense. They have just had their liberty curtailed and they are more or less political prisoners.

The captain of the guard in verse 4, we know this is Potiphar, charged Joseph with them and he served them. These are very important men. Potiphar has played the political game long enough to know that the wind may change up in the Pharaoh's area and he may decide to restore these men.

And Potiphar is going to take very good care of them. Well, the best man he knows, the wisest man he knows, and the one that he knows he can entrust with their care and have it turn out well is Joseph. And that's exactly what he does.

Potiphar is no fool. He charged Joseph with them and he served them. Very same phrase that is used of Joseph serving Potiphar back in chapter 39.

So they were in custody for a while. This is some, again, unknown period of time. Then, verse 5, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt who were confined in the prison, in

the roundhouse, had a dream.

Both of them. Each man's dream in one night and each man's dream with its own interpretation. And Joseph came into them in the morning and looked at them and saw that they were sad.

Now this word for sad is real unusual. It only occurs one other place in the Old Testament. This is the word zaaph.

Z-A-A-P-H. We had kaaph for the rage of Pharaoh and now we have zaaph which is the expression on the faces of these two men. The other place this is used is in Daniel 1.10. And you can probably guess just by the book what that is a reference to.

Daniel 1.10. Remember the circumstances of Daniel and his three friends being taken captive and hauled off to Babylon and Daniel in verse 8 of the first chapter had purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's delicacies. He wouldn't drink the wine that he drank so he requested the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs.

I wonder if Daniel might have meditated on Joseph a little bit when he was in this situation. The chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, I fear my lord the king who has appointed your food and drink. Why should he see your faces looking worse than the young men who are your age? Then you would endanger my head before the king.

And that phrase looking worse to develop a pallor, to look badly, to look ill is what's used here of the faces of the butler and the bakers. Only two places in the Old Testament where this is used. So Joseph comes in and you'll notice Joseph is diligent, Joseph is attentive, Joseph is on time.

Something I'm still wrestling with in my own life. But one of the reasons that Joseph is favored and is put in charge of things is that he is reliable. Every day he comes in and checks on these officers of the king.

So when he comes in in the morning and he looked at them, we can get in a fog and be thinking about our troubles and be moaning our woes and forget to look around. Forget to be attentive and to pay attention and to see opportunities when they arise. Joseph, whatever situation he finds himself in, he does his best.

He does it heartily as under the Lord. And so he's been put in charge of these two men and so he looks at them. He pays attention to them.

He's not moaning and feeling sad over himself. He looks at them and saw that they were sad. And this is kind of an irony, isn't it? That here's Joseph, the Hebrew slave in the prison and here's these men who have been among the highest in the Pharaoh's cabinet and he is attentive and they are sad.

So he asked the officers who were with him in the custody of his Lord's house, saying, why do you look so sad today? And this is a great attitude. This is a great technique to use, to ask a question. Sometimes we make assumptions.

We look at something and we draw a conclusion in our own mind or we judge other people by ourselves. But part of the wisdom that is given to Joseph by God is when he sees something that doesn't look right, he inquires. He looks into it and he asks the question.

You can learn a lot by asking questions. They said to him, we each have had a dream and there is no interpreter of it. Dreams and their interpretation were a big deal in ancient Egypt.

Going to sleep at night, the Egyptians viewed that period of time as a time when they were closer to the gods. They came closer to whatever divinities they believed in and that this was the time when revelation could take place. There are tomb paintings and things of pharaohs having these dreams because the pharaoh, of course, was thought to be a god or a demigod.

And so, it's particularly important when a pharaoh has a dream. But these are important men in Egypt and they have a dream. They've been in there for a period of time and now both of them on the same night have a dream that they can't figure out.

And there was a professional dream interpretation guild. There were men that was their job was to interpret dreams. These men are incarcerated.

They can't go seek out the dream guys. They can't go find out what it means. And it is very significant to them that they both have a dream in the same night and they both have no idea what it means and this worries them sick.

And it's evident in their faces. We've each had a dream and there's no one to interpret. We're stuck.

We've had a visitation from the gods is what they would say. The gods have told us something but we don't know how to figure it out. Joseph said to them, Do not interpretations belong to God.

Tell them to me, please. And Joseph is careful to preface what he is about to do in listening to... In fact, in Hebrew, that's actually the literal phrase. The interpreter of dreams is one who hears a dream and this was the common thing.

You would go tell them what you dreamed. Do not interpretations belong to God. Tell them to me, please.

So the chief butler told his dream to Joseph and said to him, Behold, in my dream a vine

was before me and in the vine were three branches. It was as though it budded, its blossoms shot forth and its clusters brought forth ripe grapes. Then Pharaoh's cup was in my hand and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand.

Joseph said to him, This is the interpretation of it. The three branches are three days. Within three days, Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner when you were his cup-bearer.

But remember me when it is well with you and please show kindness to me. Make mention of me to Pharaoh and get me out of this house. For indeed, I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon, literally into the pit.

When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, I also was in my dream and there were three white baskets on my head. In the uppermost basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh and the birds ate them out of the basket on my head. So Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation of it.

The three baskets are three days. Within three days, Pharaoh will lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree and the birds will eat your flesh from you. That came to pass on the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants.

Then he restored the chief butler to his butlership again and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand, but he hanged the chief baker as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph but forgot him. Well, this first dream is told by the butler.

By the way, where did these dreams come from? Who's responsible for the butler and the baker having these prophetic dreams at this particular time on the same night? It's the Lord God, isn't it? It's easy to kind of let that slip into the background, but you think, so many days and so many weeks passed and at a certain time, three days before Pharaoh's birthday, God sent this dream, not to Joseph, but to the butler and to the baker and left them in a quandary wondering what it meant. This is opportunity for Joseph. He sees a vine before him.

The details of this vision are interesting because the vine has three branches. These vines go through three stages of growth. They bud, they blossom, and they produce grapes.

Then, the cup-bearer sees himself in the dream and he does three things. He takes the grapes, he presses them into Pharaoh's cup, and he places the cup in Pharaoh's hand.

Three stems, three phases of growth, three actions on the part of the cup-bearer.

And Joseph, this is what we would classify as an allegorical interpretation where one thing represents another. Joseph says, this is the interpretation. The three branches are three days.

Within three days, Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place. This lift up your head, you remember last week, our special music, when we heard George Beverly Shea singing, the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein, from Psalm 24. And you remember, as you get down into that psalm, the next great melodious portion of that psalm says, lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be lifted up, ye everlasting doors.

Well, lift up your heads is the verb *nasah*, which means to lift up, and *rosh*, which means head. And that's the noun and verb that are used over in Psalm 24. Now, to lift up the head can mean a couple of different things in the scriptures.

In Numbers, chapter 1, verse 2, and again in Numbers 4, verse 2, so you've got Numbers 1, 2 and 4, 2, this phrase is used of taking a census. You lift up your head to be counted. All you people, we say raise your hand to be counted.

Well, people would lift their head and be counted. The second use is to act confidently. Lift up your head.

Get up, stand up, march forth. You find this in Judges 8, 28 and in Psalm 24, 9, the passage I just alluded to. The third use is to deal kindly, and you find this in 2 Kings 25, 27, which is parallel to Jeremiah 52, 31.

The 2 Kings 25, 27 passage to deal kindly with is not in view here, nor is the taking of the census that we found in Numbers 1, 2. To act confidently, and in some cases, this meant to act confidently because you're being brought before the king. And in some extra-biblical literature, when you look at Ugaritic and some of these other ancient cognate languages, to lift up the head can mean to be brought into the presence of the king. And because we're in an Egyptian environment here, that is also an overtone of this usage.

But he says, in three days, Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place. He's going to restore you to confidence and restore you to a place of function. He's going to bring you back into his presence.

And you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner when you were his cupbearer. So, Joseph is very confident that this is actually going to take place. And his confidence is manifested in his addition to the dream.

He says in verse 14, Remember me when it is well with you. And please show kindness to me and make mention of me to Pharaoh and get me out of this house. I was stolen

away from the land of the Hebrews.

I've done nothing here that they should put me into the pit. They should put me out of circulation. And as admirable as Joseph has been, you get the idea that this is a little bit of a lapse.

You wonder if maybe Joseph's hope is slipping a little bit. Sometimes we see something on the horizon when we're in a circumstance and we think maybe this is the Lord's deliverance. And we can latch hold of it and try to kind of make it be that rather than just waiting to see. This is my aside on that subject.

We do this sometimes with divine guidance. We've talked about divine guidance and about the fact that God does not guide through impulses. It doesn't mean that you're not going to have impulses that are going to work out for good.

Everyone has had the experience of suddenly thinking, I need to call so-and-so. And you go over to the phone and you call them up and it winds up being a very productive conversation. It's a blessing to you and a blessing to them.

And you think, that was probably a divine impulse, a divinely motivated impulse that I wound up calling them. Or you go to a certain place and you run into someone and good things that are obviously part of God's plan follow. But the distinction there is that's something we see in hindsight.

We can see that God put pieces together. But in divine guidance we don't go looking for the impulse and say, well, I have an impulse. This must be from God.

We have to wait and let the plan of God unfold on its own. Our impulses may be a part of the plan of God, but it's not something that we're going to look for and try to make the plan of God. It's a subtle distinction, but it's important when you think about divine guidance.

Don't start overanalyzing impulses or fortuitous circumstances. You see something work together in a very unusual way and you say, well, this must be God's plan because look how unusual it was that these factors... Well, maybe it is and maybe it isn't. The fact that something came about in an unusual way, the fact that there is an impulse present in our soul or a burden or whatever you want to call it.

You get a burden to pray for someone. You find out later that they were going through difficult times at that point. Well, that's wonderful, but we are not to start looking a gift horse in the mouth and trying to anticipate the unfolding of God's plan by deciding that these things are in fact divine.

These are things we will see in retrospect. We have to measure everything by the objective standard of the Word of God because you have just as many impulses that are

completely off the wall. Satan and his minions can arrange things in an unusual way and make it look like it came from an angel of light.

So, the fact that we have an impulse or the fact that we have a fortuitous circumstance doesn't mean that it's the plan of God, but those things can be a part of the plan of God. How do we know? Well, we don't use that as a guide. We use the Word of God as our guide.

We let that light shine and the fact that these things exist, we don't seize upon it and say, well, this is the deliverance of God. And this is kind of what Joseph is doing here. This is a mechanism whereby Joseph can be brought to the attention of the Pharaoh, but whether this is going to be God's plan or not, we've got to wait and see.

Joseph doesn't have to tack a billboard onto the back of the cup bearer here. He doesn't have to put a message to Pharaoh and pin it to his shirt like your mom used to do when you went to kindergarten. You know, don't let Sam forget to buy his milk at lunch today.

They just pin it to your shirt. Well, he's pinning a note to the butler's shirt hoping that Pharaoh will read it and deliver him. This may or may not be a part of God's plan and Joseph is kind of jumping the gun and this is something we want to watch out for.

Well, we're going to need to pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll see the resolution of this stream and that of the baker. Very fascinating things in the baker stream.

We'll pause here and take our break.