

00-04-02b

We're ready now to resume our study in Genesis chapter 40. We have the cup-bearer and the chief baker given dreams by God at a particular point. And we had some excellent questions over the break, some excellent observations.

What is the cause for their imprisonment? The Bible does not say. What is going to be the cause? What's the thinking process of Pharaoh in restoring them? The Bible does not say. And one of the things that that does is reinforce to us the fact that these events revolve around Joseph, even though obviously the butler and the baker think their lives are important to them and you have Pharaoh and all of the other people in the court, but really, from our perspective and from a biblical perspective, the story centers on Joseph and the entire nation of Egypt is just a foil for God's dealing with his people.

And the nation thinks it's important, all the people think they are important, they're going to be experiencing famine and all kinds of other things, but this is all subordinate to God's purpose and God's plan for his people. And this is another wonderful thing to keep in mind as we find ourselves immersed from day to day in the details of our lives, because it is easy to, I had this experience when I was young, I read voraciously, I read every book I could get my hands on and in Rogers County there was a finite number of books that could be had, and when I exhausted the grade school library, I sneaked over to the high school library, when I ran out of books over there, I got a card at the Claremore Public Library, which was more difficult to get to because Claremore was 13 miles away and we lived in the country, but I read, I particularly enjoyed mysteries and adventure stories and a lot of the great classics by Kipling and so forth, and I read, there was a great set of biographies of American patriots, Nathaniel Green and Zeb Pike and lots of these other early guys that you don't hear too much about anymore, that were around the time of the American Revolution, I read all of them, I even read the ones about the women, I ran out of all the men, I went back and read about Molly Pitcher and all of these well-known personages, but I love to read because you could be transported to a different place and time and see and hear and smell things that were outside the realm of your own experience and you get so wrapped up and even now I have a bad habit, if I get engrossed in something that I'm reading or studying, I will give answers to questions and have no recollection of the question or the answer, people will say it's time to eat or this that and the other and I will say sure I'll be right there and I don't have any memory of having done it because I'm elsewhere, my body is here but my spirit has flown, and it's important for us to be aware of reality and to not become so engrossed in something that we lose contact with the real world. People have dreams sometimes that are so real to them at the time, they wake up and say it was so real, it was just unusually vivid and I felt like I was really living through that experience.

Well, the life that we live and the circumstances and the people that surround us, this seems like the reality to us, but it's not and it is important for us to remember at any

given time that these are things that God has orchestrated and has brought to us through our senses. You'll forgive me, but we're in a modern age and I'm a technical computer guy and I've seen too much Star Trek and so my mind runs in weird ways, but how do we know the things that we know? They come to us through our senses, through the eye gate and through the ear gate and through the evidence of touch and there have been great debates in philosophy about empirical, you know, what can you know and how reliable is what we know, because senses can be fooled. Movies have brought to a fine art the fooling of the senses.

Now this is going into three-dimensional. I haven't seen it, but I understand from some of my less religious friends that this year's Sports Illustrated swimsuit edition had a 3-D quality to it. I guess the pictures of the girls in their bikinis and even the advertisements and so forth in the swimsuit edition this year were 3-D and you put on the little glasses with the red and blue lenses or something and this all, but it is the fooling of the senses into thinking something's three-dimensional when it's not or something's there when it's not and movies on the big screen especially with the sense around Dolby stereo audio portion of it and everything immerses us in a sensory experience that is not real.

Well, in our lives we are immersed in a sensory experience that ultimately is not real and I don't mean to say that we should treat life as a mere movie, but there is a sense in which the circumstances that we face, the factors that come into our minds that we have to make decisions and set priorities and deal with, however mundane and ordinary they may seem, these things have been orchestrated and coordinated by God. In the same way here you've got the lives of this butler and this baker and the other prisoners, the chief jailer here, Potiphar and his household and his wife. These people would have lived, died and blown away in the dust of history and never been known except for Joseph.

Everything in these chapters revolves around Joseph and there's a reason for it. It isn't that Joseph himself is ultimately of importance, it's the plan of God. It's what these things foreshadow, what they reveal about God and what they will ultimately reveal about God's plan for his people and in the final and greatest sense it's going to reveal the Son of God.

There is more Christology in the Joseph story than you can possibly, at least more than I can get a hold of. I sense that it's there, but it's bigger than my capacity to understand and elucidate it. But when you look at this and you see these men having these dreams, their toils and their tribulations and everything else, why do they have the dream at this particular day, at this particular time? Why didn't they have the dream two years before, before they were imprisoned? Because they need to be next to Joseph.

They have a captive audience in Joseph. He's the only dream interpreter there is. They both have this dream on the same night and it is an absolutely faithful foretelling of the future and it's from God.

They are no doubt rank unbelievers. God doesn't speak to them as he does to some others, but they get this dream. It's a fascinating study you can do.

We don't have time to do it here if we hope to finish Genesis in any of our lifetimes. But look at the different kinds of dreams that God sends to people in the scriptures. Some of them are strictly visual.

Some of them are strictly audio, audio portion only. We used to get that back when TV was less reliable. Remember they would put a thing up on the screen when they were having technical difficulties.

They'd say, we are experiencing technical difficulties, please stand by. They'd have a little picture of a cartoon man with his finger in the light socket. And you could hear the audio portion of the program, but the video wasn't coming across.

Those were much more entertaining days for TV. I can remember many times when the station would go off the air or they'd show the wrong thing or somebody would be practicing and the camera would come on and things you weren't supposed to see came across. Mics would be left open and people would say things off camera that they didn't know were being broadcast to the world.

It was quite amusing. But some dreams, it's just a voice that people hear in the night. Samuel, and Eli tells him, respond.

Say, speak Lord for thy servant heareth. Others are strictly visual. Sometimes there's a component of both.

You remember Jacob's ladder. He saw the angels ascending and descending and there was one standing over him who spoke to him and confirmed promises to him. Well, by far the most disconcerting are the dreams where it's visual only and nobody speaks and nobody explains because now you've got to figure out.

Nebuchadnezzar later on with Daniel is going to have the dream of the image with the golden head and the shoulders and the thighs of bronze and the legs of iron and the feet of mixed iron and clay and so forth. Well, he can't figure that out. Nobody speaks to explain it.

That's the kind of dream, the most obscure sort of dream is what the butler and the baker have and you can anticipate that's what Pharaoh's going to have. So, these people are forced by circumstances to turn to the one who has a relationship with God who can offer them the interpretation from God. They've been given half of the puzzle.

They've been given the dream that foretells the future but they can't make it out. They can't decipher it. They hold the truth in their hands but they can't understand it.

They have to go to the man of God to find out what it means and this is a pattern that you can apply for yourself in many other places in the scripture. God has given, has put the knowledge of himself in the heart of every man but what do we do with that? It's like the dream that's locked. Without the ministry of God, the Holy Spirit, without coming into relationship with God through that ministry, the carnal mind will never understand the things of the spirit and it's a shame because this life, like mathematical story problems, puts before us a challenge and we are supposed to show what we have learned and what we know by applying and that of course is the trick.

You can, boy I had a very colorful academic career when I was in college when I was at the Naval Academy which at the time was being called the un-college. I still have a t-shirt up there back when 7up was saying they were the un-cola while Navy was the un-college because it's so unlike a civilian college but one of the things that made my time there so interesting was in the academics trying to grasp the principles and then solve the problems with the principles and I thought you know I ought to be good at this. This is what believers are supposed to do with the principles of the word of God is you learn the theory and then you put it into practice and so they would teach me the theory in class and I would go home and look at those problems and they would say I will never forget the last problem I ever worked in statics.

Statics is where you have mechanical things and you're trying to figure out the forces on them. This is real important in ship building and all kinds of things pertaining to the Navy. So they had this class called statics and they had a picture on this test and there was a threaded thing sticking up with a nut on it and then there was a wrench on the nut and then there was an extension that went off at a weird funny angle off the handle of the wrench and then there was another extension off of that and a third extension so this wrench had like four extensions all at different angles and they said there is a clockwise torque of so much on the end of this.

Figure the stress in each of the deals and what is the torque on the nut. And I took my paper to the front of the class and handed it to the professor. I walked out of the class and I went and found my plebe English professor who was a major in the Marine Corps and I said Major Crowley I have got to change majors or I will flunk out.

And I got a zero on that test which of course brought my 64 average down to a 32 in the class but fortunately the major was there to walk me through and I know Lori knew Major Crowley as well. He was a wonderful officer and a very good mentor and he was God's instrument of saving my incipient Naval career there. But you have to be able to take principles and make application.

In that particular instance I could not. I knew some of those formulas and things but to figure it out was beyond me. Well that is the point of a lot of our life is that it is beyond us and we tend to think all in terms of how ridiculous would it be to get wrapped up and

start to sweat and cry over how much forces are in the third section of the wrench extension or a story problem about the two trains heading toward one another from Boston and Chicago and one is going this fast and the other is going that fast.

When will they meet and start to worry about what about the people on the train and what if they actually do meet and there is a wreck and are there any ambulances standing by? Has anyone been alerted? Have they called the authorities? To get so involved in the problem that we lose sight of the fact that the problem is there for a reason. It is all constructed to test your ability. First of all do you know the principles and second of all can you apply them? That is the reason.

These people the butler and the baker were born and grew up in Egypt and got the jobs that they got and came to that place in the prison for this one moment that is recorded in scripture. Contact with Joseph. It is a part of God's plan and when we can remember in the course of our daily life that all of these circumstances, whatever our bodies are doing or not doing correctly, whatever our finances are doing or not doing, our employment, the ups and downs of life, the political process, the elections coming up, all of this is a construct.

We have been given a situation. It is a proposition. You know in debate they say here is the proposition.

I put it to you that here is the situation. What should be done? Well that is what our life is. Each day God puts to us a circumstance.

It says in this circumstance how does the man of God think? How does the man of God function? Or the godly woman? What should a person do? We get too emotionally involved in it. We start treating the problem as the reality rather than God and his plan as the reality. So that is a reminder to us as we see these dreams of the butler and the baker.

And Joseph begins to think that this butler being restored is going to be the means of his rescue from his interminable time in prison. So he starts kind of crying the blues there and he says you will notice this is the only time in Joseph's career, this is about the longest speech we have had from Joseph thus far, except for what he said to Potiphar's wife, the only other time he said anything. Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place.

Lift up the head as I mentioned last time can be a reference to someone considering your case to deal with you, hopefully deal kindly with you, but to come before the king to have your case brought forward. He will lift up your head and restore you to your place. You will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner when you were his butler.

But remember me, verse 14, when it is well with you and please show kindness to me. We have remember, we have show kindness, we have get me out of this house, deliver me from this house. These things are actions that are normally associated with God.

You can look for example at the idea of remember, turn back to Genesis chapter 8 and verse 1. You know your geography of Genesis, you know that that is right smack in the middle of the flood story. And after the rains come and all the creeping things and birds of the air are destroyed and so on, 8.1 God remembered Noah and every living thing. In the midst of the disaster, whose memory is it that counts? God remembered Noah.

9.15 I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. The waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. Does God remember you? That is the question.

19.29 of Genesis, these are all passages we have already seen. 19.29 It came to pass when God destroyed the cities of the plain, this is Sodom and Gomorrah, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt. Deliverance is based on God's memory.

Chapter 30 verse 22, Genesis. God remembered Rachel and God listened to her and opened her womb. This is where Joseph came from.

God remembering. And you can also find a reference to this in Exodus 2.24. Exodus 2 you can imagine this is the deliverance from bondage in Egypt several hundred years later. The second thing that he says, he says remember me when it is well with you and please show kindness to me.

We have already seen the chesed of God coming to Joseph in all these different circumstances but now he is asking this butler for this kindness. Look back at chapter 24 verse 12 of Genesis. The servant of Abraham praying, O Lord God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day and show kindness to my master Abraham.

The place to look for remembrance, the place to look for deliverance, the place to look for kindness is God himself. And it is hard to fault Joseph if you think about his circumstances and we would probably not have lasted as long as he did or done as well as he did but the principle is there nevertheless that we can falter. We can start to seize upon a fortunate looking circumstance or a providential looking circumstance and say this is going to be the means of my deliverance and then we try to finish it for God.

We try to go ahead and gild the lily and it is a danger to be avoided. The other thing he asks for, he says remember me, show kindness to me, make mention of me to Pharaoh and get me out of this house, deliver me out of this house and of course being brought out of the house back in Genesis chapter 15 verse 7 we have God speaking to Abraham. This is right after 15.6 where he believed in the Lord and it was accounted to him for

righteousness, one of the most famous Abraham verses in the Bible.

The next verse says, God said to him, I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to inherit it. He brought him out of his father's house to this great inheritance and this great standing before God and of course it is the very same thing God is going to say to Israel in Exodus chapter 20 and verse 2, I am the Lord God who brought you out of bondage in the house of Egypt. So all of these things belong to God and I hesitate to be critical of anybody in the Bible but you have to say this is a little bit of a slip, it is understandable but nevertheless Joseph has done so well in looking to God for these things and being patient but the time that passes and the no end in sight situation can wear us down.

Then he gets into a little bit of, let me tell you why I am such a sad case and why I really deserve for you to remember me and do a kindness for me. Indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews and I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon and the word here is the same word that was used of the well that his brothers threw him into. I have done nothing that they should put me into this pit and so it is a little bit of self justification.

I don't deserve to be here. How many people in jail say that? I don't deserve to be here and we are going to see that this does not bear fruit because this is not in fact God's time for Joseph's deliverance. When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good in verse 16 he said to Joseph I also was in my dream and there were three white baskets on my head.

In the uppermost basket all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh. This is really interesting because in Egypt there were, they found in all these ancient documents among other things a dictionary of the language that was spoken in Egypt and in that dictionary there are 38 different kinds of cake. There are 38 different words for different kinds of cake in Egyptian and there are 57 different kinds of bread.

So when the chief baker here says these baskets were filled with all different kinds of dainties, of foods, these 57 breads and 38 different kinds of cake are probably what he was seeing because they were great gourmet people. They liked their food. You can see it in the tomb paintings.

This is what the Israelites will refer back to and say boy back in Egypt we really had good chow now we are eating this manna and getting distracted by that. But this is what the baker sees. All kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh.

Cakes and pastries and breads. And the birds ate them out of the basket on my head. If you think about three baskets, you've seen people in the ancient world with baskets stacked up on their heads.

How tall is the top of the basket? They typically can't reach the top. They'll occasionally steady a jug or a basket or something on their head but if you're carrying it on your head you can't reach it. He doesn't say the basket was in my hand which would be normal.

It's on his head. He's trying to get from the bakery over to Pharaoh's throne room to give him all of these wonderful delicacies. But the birds are landing and eating all of these things away and pecking away.

You know what birds do. So they're up there and he can't fend them off. Remember Abraham when he cut the animal in pieces and he had to wait all day and it wasn't until night time that God came and the smoking pot and burning torch came between the pieces.

What did Abraham do all day? He guarded the pieces. He had to scare away the birds. The birds kept coming down wanting to eat the pieces and it specifically says that Abraham stayed there all day and kept the birds off of these pieces of meat.

Well Abraham was able to do that because that meat wasn't in a basket on his head. But you can imagine the cavorting that the baker would have to do to try to keep the birds away from a basket the top of which is above what he can reach. So the point is it's impossible.

There is no way he can prevent the birds carrying away these pastries and breads. The birds ate them out of the basket on my head. 18.

Joseph answered and said this is the interpretation of it. The three baskets are three days. So far so good.

Sounds just like the butler. Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head. Now that from you should not be there in my opinion.

It's in the Masoretic text but there are other Hebrew texts where that is not found and the Hebrew from which the Vulgate was translated is not there. The reason is that the punch line comes last. The language is the same.

He says Pharaoh will lift up your head and hang you on a tree. This is going to be death by being impaled on a stake or being hung up on a tree and the birds will eat your flesh from you. So he's not going to decapitate him but he says he's going to lift up your head.

He's going to consider your case. That's what lift up the head means. He's going to consider your case just like it says he's going to lift up the head of the butler.

So you might mark out that from you because that anticipates. Joseph delays to tell him until the last point. But this is very graphic.

He says he's going to lift up your head. He's going to hang you on a tree and the birds

will eat your flesh from you. This underscores the certainty of his demise.

Not only is he going to die but he's going to be picked over by the carrion birds. It 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. He brought them forward to consider their case.

That's what lift up the head means. And 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.

Notice it doesn't say he cut off his head, he hanged him. When we think of hanging we think of Judge Roy Bean and the noose and all of that. But a lot of times they would hang someone on a tree by impaling them.

When you think about the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross and the cross is called a tree, that was not death by strangulation per se, but there was impaling. There was him who may have pierced is the idea. So the chief butler did not remember Joseph but forgot him.

And these are kind of synonymous terms and why is it doubled? It could just say he did not remember Joseph. But it says not only did he not remember him but he forgot him. This is not just a little bit of a lapse of memory, he totally forgot him.

It's fascinating to look at these dreams because there are two of them. They are in the heads of these two men, one of whom is going to be restored or delivered, the other one is going to be destroyed. And there are so many things that foreshadow here that it's hard to even know where to begin.

But first of all, of all of the possible royal officials, who do we have here? The very first thing to think about, we have the cup bearer and the baker. What does the cup bearer deal with? Wine. He squeezes the grapes and makes wine.

What does the baker deal with? Bread. He bakes bread. Bread and wine were the items shared by Abraham with Melchizedek.

Bread and wine are going to be shared by the Lord Jesus Christ in the upper room with his disciples. Jesus is going to make those symbols and illustrations of his work on the cross. This is my body which is broken for you in terms of the bread.

This cup is the new covenant in my blood. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior. He is God's Son and He is the issue.

And people that come to that rock, He is either the rock of salvation or He is the stone of stumbling and the rock of offense. And you see these two men who are similar. They

hold similar titles, similar positions, similar relationship to Pharaoh.

They come to this point. They have these dreams. One goes up and one goes down, if you will.

And tied to this fate are these symbols, the cup and the bread. And there is obviously throughout the career of Joseph a foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus Christ. And this is another one of those cases.

And it is from God. God could have picked any two officials. He could have given them any one of a number of different dreams.

But these dreams, there has been some speculation that these men were not actual bakers and cup bearers so much as that this was a symbolic function. You know the king of England, they have the queen now. But they have the knight of the bath and the knight of the garter and this kind of thing.

Well they don't actually go give the king or the queen a bath or put the garter on. These have come to be symbolic of a high cabinet post or a high standing in the monarchy. And there has been some speculation that this was more a symbolic sort of function.

That these guys didn't actually have to squeeze the grapes. Because the rest of the dreams are somewhat allegorical. And that the actual squeezing of grapes in the cup and so forth might not have been a normal function for the cup bearer.

They would have low level servants to do that sort of thing. Gathering grapes off of the vines. Surely he doesn't just have one man that is totally responsible for all the vintage in Egypt.

But the point remains that these men are powerful. They are influential. But they have a problem that they can't solve.

They have a dream that they can't understand. And the word of God comes to them. And one is restored and one is destroyed.

And this is not a place where you have the picture of faith. One of them doesn't respond to the gospel that Joseph gives them or something. But these are symbols.

These are foreshadowings of what is to come. There are a lot of other things we can say about these dreams. But in order to really appreciate it we need to also look at Pharaoh's dream.

If you look at chapter 41. It came to pass at the end of two full years that Pharaoh had a dream. Behold he stood by a river.

Suddenly there came up out of the river seven cows fine looking and fat. They fed in the

meadow. Then behold seven other cows came up after them out of the river ugly and gaunt.

Stood by the other cows on the banks of the river. The ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven fine looking and fat cows. So Pharaoh awoke.

He slept and dreamed a second time. Suddenly seven heads of grain came up on one stalk plump and good. Then behold seven thin heads blighted by the east wind sprang up after them.

The seven thin heads devoured the seven plump and full heads. So Pharaoh awoke and indeed it was a dream. It came to pass in the morning his spirit was troubled just like the butler and baker.

He sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. Pharaoh told them his dreams but there was no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh. Why is that? You think well allegorical surely they could have made something up.

The problem is that the symbols in this dream like the cows had many meanings. It was a symbol of Isis. It was a symbol of Egypt.

It was a symbol of the ocean of all things. Because of the multiple symbolisms or meanings that could be associated with each of these anybody that ventured an interpretation could be shot down by someone else that says no this stands for Isis or this stands for the ocean or this stands for the nation of Egypt itself. And because they were what they call multivalent they could carry lots of different possible interpretations.

Nobody dared to put one forward even one that they made up out of their head because it could so easily be shot down by someone else. So they said there is no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh. So the chief butler spoke to Pharaoh saying I remember my faults this day.

I remember my sins this day. When Pharaoh was angry with the servants put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard both me and the chief baker we each had a dream in one night he and I each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his own dream. There was a young Hebrew with us there a servant of the captain of the guard.

We told him and he interpreted our dreams for us to each man he interpreted according to his own dream. And in verse 13 it came to pass just as he interpreted for us so it happened. He restored me to my office and he hanged him.

So Pharaoh sent and called Joseph and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon and he shaved changed his clothing and came to Pharaoh. How many times do we see clothing involved at turning points in Joseph's career? His coat of many colors when he

gets cast his garment that is taken by Potiphar's wife now he is changing garments yet again to go before Pharaoh. Pharaoh says to Joseph I've had a dream there is no one who can interpret it I've heard it said of you that you can understand a dream to interpret it.

Joseph answered Pharaoh gives the same preface that he gave to the butler and baker. It is not in me God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace or an answer that will give him peace and put his mind to rest that he knows what these dreams mean. It is very interesting also that there is all this theory about Genesis and that it was written by different people and woven together and that it is based on the names of God that are used.

You will notice that whenever Joseph is talking to the Egyptians he uses Elohim but when the narrator is talking about the Lord being with Joseph he uses Yahweh which is God's personal name. Joseph doesn't say Yahweh will give the interpretation he says Elohim. Elohim is like our word God it is kind of generic all the different people used Elohim or El to talk about the God or the gods and it is Joseph is not evangelizing them to the God of Israel so much as saying that is going to be a subject for later.

He says it is with God and people can take that however they take it. It doesn't specify the God of Israel it doesn't specify Yahweh but the narrator knows that it is the God of Israel that is with Joseph and so he consistently uses that. So there are reasons why this vocabulary is used in Genesis and to pick the book apart on that basis and say well it is different stories woven together really misses the point.

So when Pharaoh recounts his dream and tells it a second time and we will look at this in detail next time but you have the dreams of Pharaoh presented twice. Pharaoh has two dreams just as the butler and baker each had a dream that makes two dreams and Joseph is going to tell Pharaoh the fact that this dream is doubled means that it is going to happen soon and it is certain it is certainly going to come to pass. Let me ask you this where else have we seen two dreams in this story? At the very beginning Joseph had two dreams.

Joseph is an interpreter of dreams he can look at the symbols and tell what they mean and he knows that when a dream is doubled that means that it is certain and that God is going to bring it to pass in God's time. So do you think that Joseph has ever thought back to those two dreams where he was in the field with his brothers binding the sheaves and the sheaves bowed down to his sheaf and then up in the sky where the sun and the moon and the stars were bowing down to Joseph? Do you think Joseph can figure out what those dreams mean? Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had conversations with God that are recorded. There were covenant promises made, covenant enactments that took place between God and those patriarchs.

Joseph has had none of that has he? Have we ever seen God speak directly to Joseph? Has there ever been any sort of formal... isn't it interesting that Abraham, Isaac and

Jacob the patriarchs are much more Old Testament saints in the sense of covenant with God and speaking with God and having God appear and so forth. Joseph has these dreams but God is not in the dream. He doesn't see Jacob's ladder.

He doesn't see the torch and pot passing between the pieces. What does Joseph have to sustain his faith? He has less than any of his father, grandfather or great grandfather. All that we know of that he has are those dreams.

But Joseph knows what they mean and that's the basis of his faith. He has the expectation that it's going to come to pass. It's been doubled.

All of the things that he says about these other dreams, that the circumstances in the dream make a difference. One of them happens on the earth and you have the sheaves and you have the harvest, the second one takes place up in the sky and it's more of a timeless and not in the land situation. Even without the Bible telling us... Joseph's dreams by the way are never interpreted are they? Except by implication.

Jacob says, do you think we're all going to be bowing down to you? But what does it mean? Why does it mean the sun and the moon and the stars? What does that mean? That's never explained. But based on the interpretation of these other dreams and based on our hindsight and looking at what God has done, we can see what those meant. Joseph knew that and that was his word of God.

That and what he had learned from his mother and from his family of God's dealings in the past. That's what sustained his faith and that's his confidence. He's going to have to go two full years and we know that you have two followed by three and that's always significant.

The Lord Jesus is going to be in the heart of the earth two days, three nights and early in the morning on the third day. After the two full days, it's on the third day that he's raised. That pattern repeats itself throughout the scripture.

If we can remember that like Joseph, our lives are woven into the fabric of God's plan and the reality is God's plan and to not be so caught up in the circumstances that we lose our perspective because when we lose that perspective and lose that confidence, that's the undergirding of our faith. When our faith fails, whatever is not of faith is sin. The righteousness of God comes to us through faith.

The reflecting of God's glory, the purpose for which we've been saved and called is to produce that righteousness. The theme of the book of Romans, righteousness by faith in the lives of believers. That's our calling.

If we can remember that even as we do the mundane things of life, every thought needs to be taken captive for Christ. That's our great opportunity and there's no greater illustration of that than the life of Joseph. We'll pick up here and look at Pharaoh's

dreams in detail next time but let's close in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you for the tremendous place that you have assigned us in your plan. We have so much by way of resources and provision from you. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will constantly remind us of who we are and why we're here so that we can live in a way that pleases you and that is glorifying to our Savior.

We pray these things in his name. Amen.