

00-04-30b

Let's resume our study now in Genesis chapter 41. What I want to do here in the minutes that remain to us this morning is step back and take a look at the career of Joseph. And you might call this Joseph's four houses.

Joseph's four houses. You think back in our beginning, when we first saw Joseph back in chapter 37, where was he dwelling? He was in the house of Jacob. So Joseph's first house is the house of Jacob.

Jacob is the authority there. And Jacob places Joseph, his son, over his older brothers to rule them. Remember that back in 37, where he sent them out to tend the sheep.

He was feeding the flock with his brothers. And he made him the tunic of many colors. His brothers saw that his father loved him more than all his brothers.

They hated him and could not speak peaceably to him. But the brothers were only a part of Joseph's responsibility there. The brothers resented.

What did they resent about Joseph? Why were they so upset? Well, for one thing, they saw that he was favored by the father more than they. And why was that? Was Jacob just possessed of a pathological love for Joseph? Or was it that these brothers did not merit that kind of love? Looking at their actions in Shechem and so forth. Their deception and their cruelty and their lack of sensitivity to the things of God.

And then here's Joseph, who's very much a man after Jacob's own heart because he's a man after God's own heart. And that produces this fellowship between father and son that can't be counterfeited. It can't be duplicated by the other brothers.

And so they resent him. When they saw that his father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him. And that in itself is a symptom of a deep flaw in the soul that you can't be content with someone else's blessing.

And this pervades even down to the present. Sometimes we see someone else getting attention. You see this especially among children.

This is notorious at birthday parties. At Christmas, everybody gets something usually. But at a birthday party, one person is having the birthday and the other siblings, especially when they're small, get to feeling very jealous of the attention and the gifts and the party and the friends and so forth that can reveal that there are some underlying issues.

So that's what happens there. His father not only honors him and favors him to cause their resentment, but they also resent his dreams, which are the prophecy of his future

exaltation. So when he dreams these dreams, verse 11 of 37 tells us his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

It tells us in verse 8, his brothers said to him, Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us? So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. Shades of the Lord Jesus Christ. Shades of Stephen, as we saw this morning.

So finally, his coat, which was given to him by Jacob as a sign of favor and a sign of status, is used as proof that they are not responsible for his death. Proof in quotes. They take the coat and dip it in blood and prove to Jacob that they had nothing to do with his death.

It was a wild beast. And that coat was stripped from him. He is sent away and does not return.

Joseph never returns to live in that house again. He is carried away by an Ishmaelite caravan in slave chains, having been sold for silver. So that's the first house.

What is the second house for Joseph? It's the house of Potiphar. In Potiphar's house, Potiphar is the authority. And watch for the similarities.

Potiphar obviously would be parallel to Jacob in the first house. He places Joseph in his house to serve. He is a slave and he is there to serve.

But pretty soon he gives him the rulership, puts everything under his authority. So just as Joseph in Jacob's house both ruled and served, remember he was over a lot of things, but then he also carried bread to his brethren when Jacob sent him out into the field. In the same way, Potiphar has Joseph in the house both to serve and to rule.

Potiphar's wife is only part of Joseph's responsibility in that house. He takes care of everything in the house except the wife, as far as meals and scheduling and ordering of servants and a lot of things that relate to the wife. He's in charge of that.

Potiphar's wife wants Joseph for a type of service that Potiphar did not intend. And it will require disloyalty to Potiphar to carry out her wishes in the same way that if Joseph had hidden the acts of his brothers, he would have had to be disloyal to his father. He comes in and has to explain to his father that his brothers are not doing what they're supposed to and that's one of the reasons they hate him.

Joseph, in order to be there, had lost his first robe. The reason he's a slave in Potiphar's house is that his first robe was taken from him and everything that it symbolized and everything that went with it. He had left one life to enter this life.

He lost the first coat, the robe of honor from his father to be there. When Joseph does not comply with Potiphar's wife's wishes, and what is basically her wish, what is it she

wants from Joseph? She wants her gratification at Potiphar's expense and even at Joseph's expense. She wants to be gratified, whatever certainly physical gratification as well as other things.

And when she doesn't get that, when she doesn't get what she wants from Joseph, she falsely accuses Joseph and she strips his clothing away in the process. And then she uses the garment as tangible proof that she is right to accuse him, that she's in the right and that she bears no wrong, in the same way that the brothers used the garment to prove that they were in the right and bear no wrong in what happened to Joseph. Once again, he is sent away and does not return.

He will never again dwell in the house of Potiphar. What is the third house for Joseph? It's the round house. It's the house of the captain of the guard, who actually is Potiphar, but one of the reasons the Bible does not name Potiphar as the captain of the guard is it helps us see this as a distinct environment.

It helps us see that there's a separation from his previous situation. And in the house of the captain of the guard, the head man there places Joseph over the jail both to rule and to serve. He puts him over everything in the jail, but when the two mucky-muck prisoners come, the butler and the baker, he serves them.

So he's there to rule and to serve. The two prisoners are only a part of Joseph's responsibility, but they become the main issue in the same way that Joseph's brothers became an issue, Potiphar's wife became an issue. These two prisoners are going to be the issue in his fate.

Joseph reveals to the two prisoners their fate when they leave the prison. One is restored, one is executed. Based on what? Based on their... It's predicted by Joseph, but the basis of restoration of the butler and the execution of the baker is based on their loyalty to Pharaoh.

Once they are investigated, one of them is found to have been loyal to Pharaoh. The other one is found to have been traitorous to Pharaoh. So one is elevated for honor and the other is elevated for hanging.

But implied and implicit in their fate is Pharaoh has judged them and found one vindicated and loyal and found the other unfaithful and worthy of death. That's Pharaoh, hands down, the sentence. Joseph doesn't determine their fate.

Joseph simply tells them what their fate will be. And that's important. Two years later, which tells us that this is in the third year of his incarceration in a roundhouse, he's completed at least two full years of imprisonment there, and sometime during the third year, his prison garment is left behind when he is summoned by Pharaoh.

Remember, they took his garment and put different garments on him, washed him,

shaved him, and sent him to Pharaoh. So once again, he leaves a garment behind as he exits that house, never to return. And now in chapter 41, we find the fourth house that Joseph dwells in.

And house here is a little bit more metaphoric, perhaps, than in the previous three cases. But we'll call this the house of Pharaoh. Pharaoh places Joseph over the nation to rule and to serve.

He is going to serve specifically to deliver the people from calamity. Here, unlike the first three cases, people acknowledge his wisdom and his authority. He's not rejected as he was by his brothers.

He's not falsely accused and rejected as he was by the wife of Potiphar. He's not forgotten and abandoned as he was by the butler when he left the prison. Here, everything comes to light.

His attributes, the favor that God bestows on him is now visible to all. And everyone acknowledges his wisdom and his authority. Pharaoh gives him a garment of fine linen.

So this is now his fourth garment. He's had the coat of many colors. He's had his slave garment.

He's had his prisoner garment. Now he has his vizier's robe, which is a full-length robe that descended to the... You remember in the Egyptian, I'm sure you've all seen these little paintings where they have kind of a towel wrapped around their waist and it's sort of a short skirt that the servants wear. In the tomb paintings, the vizier wears a full-length robe that goes all the way to the floor.

That's part of his robe of office, if you will. He has the gold chain. He has the signet ring.

The signet ring, of course, had the scarab seal. They found literally thousands of scarabs all around the Middle East, particularly in Egypt, that are seals of authority. This is how you sign a checkbook.

This is how you put your imprimatur or your approval on a treaty or a covenant or a contract. And he carries the signet of Pharaoh on his hand. All Pharaoh's authority has been given to him in that ring.

He rides through the land carried by Pharaoh's chariot, wearing a gold chain. He is given a new name and a new wife. The new name and the new wife are not from his native people.

The name is an Egyptian name. The wife is an Egyptian wife. Now, I hope that just by laying these things out in this fashion, you've already begun to see that there is a great deal of relation between these pictures in the phases of Joseph's life, particularly as it

relates to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I just want to suggest to you quickly a few of the Scriptures that bear this out. There are many more, and I encourage you, you will think of some as we go through this. Make a note of the phrase that comes to your mind and look some of these up later or research these more fully on your own because time does not permit us to really do justice to this.

But if I can at least suggest it to you, perhaps the Holy Spirit and your time in the Word can do the rest. But let's take a look, first of all, at that first house, the house of Jacob, where Jacob places Joseph over his brethren, but they resent it. There is the prophetic indication that he will be elevated even higher in the family, and this produces an even greater resentment.

His words produce resentment. What do the Scriptures say about the Lord Jesus Christ? Well, you can look at Luke chapter 20, where we will be in the not-too-distant future in our study of the Gospel of Luke. Luke chapter 20, beginning at verse 9. Jesus here tells a parable.

It's the parable of the vineyard that was leased to vinedressers. He went into a far country for a long time. At vintage time, he sent a servant to the vinedressers that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard.

But the vinedressers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again, he sent another servant, and they beat him also, treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. Again, he sent a third, and they wounded him also, and cast him out.

Then the owner of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect him when they see him. But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir.

Let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others.

But that parable is a picture of the Lord God of Israel sending prophet after prophet to Israel, who had been given the keeping, the stewardship of the things of God. And time and time again, you saw in the statement of Stephen to his accusers, Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They were all persecuted. And Jesus delivers the same message here.

God finally sent the ultimate communication in the person of his son. And that produced the most violent reaction yet. So, like Joseph with his brothers, Jesus has a similar reception from his brothers.

The robe, Matthew 27, verses 27 through 31, is one of many passages you could look at in this connection. Matthew 27, verses 27 through 31. This is during the trials after the arrest of Jesus.

The Jews have sent Jesus to Pilate, who is the governor. And in verse 27 in Matthew 27, the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him.

When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and a reed in his right hand. And they bowed the knee before him and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews. Then they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head.

And when they had mocked him, they took the robe off him, put his own clothes on him, and led him away to be crucified. And this is a metaphor in the same way that Herod's treatment of John the Baptist represents the reaction of the nation to the messenger and the message. Here, the soldiers of the governor mirror the reception of Jesus by his own people, where he is identified as the Messiah, and they mock him.

They put on a robe and bow the knee, but it's all in scorn. You're reminded of the tragic entry into Jerusalem with the hosannas and the palm branches. And within less than a week, Jesus will be on the cross, and people will be walking by reading the sign, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, in three or four different languages.

So, the robe which was given by the Father to designate authority is scorned and is dipped in blood in both of these cases. Of course, Joseph is sold by his brothers to the Ishmaelites, the Midianite caravan, for silver. And I probably don't even need to give you the references there in Matthew 26, 14-16, and Matthew 27, 1-10.

26-14, one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priest and said, What are you willing to give me if I deliver him to you? And they counted out to him 30 pieces of silver, and from that time he sought opportunity to betray him. And then in 27, 1-10, after Jesus has been arrested and condemned, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put him to death. They led him away and delivered him to Pontius Pilate, the governor.

Then Judas, his betrayer, seeing that he had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned by betraying innocent blood. They said, What is that to us? You see to it. He threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed and went and hanged himself.

And he goes on in verse 9 to say, Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, They took the 30 pieces of silver, the value of him who was priced, who they of the children of Israel priced, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me. So another link being sold for silver. And the dreams that Joseph had, the

dreams that were prophetic foretellings of his exaltation, Matthew 26, verse 64 through 68, Jesus before the high priest.

The high priest says, I put you under oath by the living God. Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus said to him, It is as you said.

Nevertheless, I say to you, Hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, He spoke in blasphemy. What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you've heard his blasphemy.

What do you think? They answered and said, He is deserving of death. They spat in his face and beat him and struck him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy to us, Christ. Who is the one who struck you? And you think about the brothers when they cast Joseph into the pit, saying, Well, so much for the sheaves bowing, so much for the stars bowing.

Not only are you not in the heavens, you're not even standing on the surface of the earth. You're down in the pit. And they sold him.

When you get to the second house, the house of Potiphar, Jesus as a servant, you have Philippians 2, verses 5-8. Paul says, Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God. Or a better translation would be, who did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped and held on to, but made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Of course, that passage goes on to say some wonderful things about his exaltation. But it reminds us that in the same way that Joseph went from being an authority in his brother's house to the form of a servant, Potiphar's wife tries to force him to be disloyal to Potiphar by laying with her.

She comes and says, Lie with me. In the same way, John 6, verse 15, the people of Israel try to force Jesus to be disloyal to his father by taking the throne of Israel in a political way rather than in a redemptive way. And in 6.15, when Jesus perceived they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he departed again to the mountain to be by himself alone.

Right before the walking on the water episode. You have also in Matthew 12, verse 39, an evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign. Remember the scribes and Pharisees said, Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.

Show us a sign. We want you to do a trick on command. He said, No sign will be given to this generation except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah. And indeed, a greater than Jonah is here.

The queen of the south will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. And indeed, a greater than Solomon is here. And you could probably add, just by way of illustration, Pharaoh, he doesn't say that Pharaoh is going to rise up with this generation.

Obviously, Pharaoh was more receptive to the words of Joseph than his own brothers were. So, numerous passages that we could look at. These are just a few.

Joseph is falsely accused by Potiphar's wife. And you have this, as we already read, in Matthew 26, 59 and following. All of the false accusations that are made by the scribes and Pharisees.

His garment. This is an interesting passage. Turn to Mark 14.

Verses 51 and 52. You remember that the arrest of Jesus when it takes place at Gethsemane. They come out with sticks and weapons and so forth.

Jesus says, if you come out against a robber with swords and clubs to take me, I was daily with you in the temple teaching and you did not seize me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled. Then they all forsook Him and fled.

Now a certain young man followed Him having a linen cloth thrown around His naked body. And the young man laid hold of Him and He left the linen cloth and fled from them naked. It is a reenactment of what happened when Potiphar's wife seized Joseph and tried to subvert Him and then falsely accused Him.

This is the same thing that's happening to Jesus. They've tried to subvert Him. Now they're falsely accusing Him.

And symbolically you have probably John Mark here fleeing the scene, leaving his garment behind as a living parable, a living reenactment of what took place in the house of Potiphar. And it's a reminder that the Scriptures must be fulfilled. There will be false accusation.

There will be false arrest. There will be false imprisonment as a result of this. The third house, the house of the captain of the guard.

Of course, once again, I guess I should finish the second house there because when he is accused, the garment is used as evidence. She says, See, he has left his garment here with me. And like the robe that was presented as evidence to Jacob, the garment is

presented as evidence to Potiphar.

And the fact that often death is pictured, Paul, for example, in 1 Corinthians as being unclothed. He says, We don't wish to be unclothed but to be clothed upon. And isn't it interesting that the final basis of accusation and disbelief in Jesus is at the cross.

If you look at Mark 15, verses 29-32, those who passed by seeing Jesus on the cross crucified between the two thieves, they blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, Aha, you who destroyed the temple and built it in three days, save yourself and come down from the cross. Likewise, the chief priests also, mocking among themselves with the scribes, said, He saved others, himself he cannot save. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross that we may see and believe.

His physical death on the cross is the final proof that they bring forth that their accusations are valid, that if He was the Son of God, He would never die. He wouldn't be dying on the cross. His crucifixion, it's like the garment, it's the proof.

See, if He really was the Son of God, He'd come down from the cross and then we could all believe. If He really was the Son of God, He would deliver Himself. He says He can build the temple in three days, but He can't even save Himself.

And they mock Him, they use the very means of their own deliverance and the death that He's dying on the cross, it's like holding up the garment and saying, see, this is the evidence. And it's something they themselves have done. They put Him on the cross and He submitted.

So, if you go back to the third house now, the captain of the guard, when he places Joseph over the jail to rule, well, Jesus, this imprisonment would correspond with death because He's gone from Potiphar's house into this place where there is very little chance of return. He's cut off there. And that place, when you find the two prisoners there and Joseph gives their fate, one of them is going to be restored.

He's going to be raised again. The other is going to be forever condemned. And in the place of death, even in the place of death, this place of imprisonment, Jesus has dominion over death.

Death cannot hold Him. You have many passages for that. John 5.24, where Jesus promises eternal life.

You can't make that promise unless you have authority over life and death. But Jesus says in John 5.24, Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. He says in John 8.52, Now the Jews said to Him, We know that You have a demon.

Abraham is dead and the prophets. And You say, If anyone keeps My word, he shall never taste death. Are You greater than our father Abraham who is dead? And the prophets are dead.

Who do You make Yourself out to be? Because He's already said in verse 51, Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word, he shall never see death. And that whole context there communicates that. Same thing in Acts 2.24, the speech of Peter on the day of Pentecost.

Him being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, You have taken by lawless hands, having crucified and put to death, whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. For David says concerning Him, and he goes on to quote, You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life.

You will make me full of joy in Your presence. Many other passages in that regard. Romans 6.9, Romans 8.2. We've seen those in our study of Romans where Jesus is the firstborn out from the dead.

He's resurrected from the dead. And in the same way, even when Joseph is placed in that roundhouse prison, he rises. He is foretelling the fate of those who come there based on their attitude toward the Pharaoh.

And he's ultimately going to be the first to be delivered from death, as it were. And then he's going to in turn deliver the nation of Egypt and eventually his own people after having been delivered himself and rising to authority in that place. So it's also interesting that the amount of time that he spends there we know is between two and three years, which is the same amount of time that Jesus spends in the heart of the earth.

Early in the morning on the third day after two full days have passed. This is why it's so important to understand the Thursday crucifixion because Jesus spent all day Friday and all day Saturday. Friday being the holiday Sabbath.

The first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread as well as the last day were high holy days and were a Sabbath on which no work could be done. The Passover itself was not declared to be that day, but the first Feast of Unleavened Bread is. And that's why crucified on Thursday at the same time the Passover is being celebrated.

That Friday, full day in the heart of the earth. Saturday, full day in the heart of the earth. After two full days, early in the morning on the third day, he rose again.

And early in the morning after these two full years, as it were, Joseph comes out. And when he comes out, all of the trappings of his association with that place of death, that place of imprisonment from which there's no return. You know, the sentence for violating

Potiphar's wife should have been death and for all practical purposes was death.

But when he comes out of there, they wash him, they shave him, they give him new clothes. It's exactly the same thing that happens in Leviticus 14 for the cleansed leper who's entered into new life. That Leviticus 14 is what Jesus refers Nicodemus to when he talks about you must be born again.

Are you a teacher in Israel and don't understand these things? Why didn't you study that newborn baby appearance that is given to the leper when all his hair is shaved off, when he's washed and cleansed and bathed and clothed in that way? And in the same way, Joseph is coming out of death when he comes before Pharaoh never to return. And he will deliver the rest of that nation as well as his own nation from death because of his own deliverance. So there's a powerful parallel there that you can see.

And of course, Matthew 12.39 is where Jesus gives the sign of Jonah as the only sign that will be given to this generation and it's highly significant. Then finally, this most recent house, the house of Pharaoh, where he is placed over all. He's given unlimited dominion, second only to the authority in the house, which is Pharaoh.

And Jesus Christ is given all authority, second only to the Father in heaven. You find this all over the Bible, but especially take a look at Ephesians 1.20 and following. Another one of my favorite passages.

I did my short and long exegetical papers in seminary on this passage. The mighty power of God, which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named. There's a man running in front of Joseph's chariot proclaiming Him as the one to whom all must submit, not only in this age but also in the age to come.

And He put all things under His feet and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. Revelation 19.12. Revelation is the great book for these principles because it pictures for us the ultimate fulfillment and glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ. When it talks about Jesus Christ, heaven is opened and behold a white horse and he who sat on him was called faithful and true and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

His eyes were like a flame of fire and on his head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except himself. Joseph is the only one of the Israelites who knows how to speak Egyptian.

And so he's the only one that understands his own name amongst his people. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood and his name is called the Word of God. The armies in heaven clothed in fine linen white and clean followed him on white horses.

Out of his mouth goes a sharp sword. With it he should strike the nations. He himself will rule them with a rod of iron.

He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. He has on his robe and on his thigh a name written King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The very first vision that John has of Jesus in the book of Revelation back in chapter 1. Remember the gold chain that Pharaoh hangs around Joseph's neck? John says, was in the Spirit here on the Lord's Day on the Isle of Patmos.

I heard a loud voice. I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. Having turned, I saw seven golden lampstands and in the midst of the seven lampstands one like the Son of Man clothed with a garment down to the feet girded about the chest with a golden band.

His head and hair were white like wool as white as snow and his eyes were like a flame of fire and so forth. His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. When I saw him I fell at his feet as dead kissing the earth.

So the new name, the gold chain, the unlimited authority, the signet ring, the name that is above every name, the bride, Revelation 21, verses 2 and 9. I, John, saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Verse 9, one of the seven angels came to me and talked with me saying, Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife. He carried me away to a great high mountain and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God.

This is the eternal bride of the Lamb, the new Jerusalem that is populated by the faithful, certainly by the church and perhaps others. For the church specifically you can look at Colossians 1.18 and Colossians 1.24 and Ephesians 5.32 when he talks about the husband and the wife and Christ and the church. The Lord Jesus Christ has been given a bride and it is a Gentile bride in the same way as Joseph.

So what are we to conclude from all these things? Well, personally, think about Joseph and think about the long career that he had without these things being evident. Wouldn't it have been great if an angel had come down to Joseph and said, Now, look, Joseph, I know you're just 17 years old, but let me tell you what's going to happen. You're going to be betrayed and sold into the hands of foreigners by your own brothers.

You're going to be a slave and then you're going to be falsely accused and imprisoned there. You're going to come near to the point of death. You're going to languish in prison for a long time and then ultimately... God didn't give him that information in advance, did He? God accomplished this wonderful picture, wove the life of Joseph into His plan in such a prominent way, in a way that reflects God's glory and His knowledge of things before they take place and emphasizes the work of Jesus Christ, the greatest thing that God has ever done.

And He does it through the life of one man, Joseph. We tend to think of the Bible characters as somehow gilded from birth, but Joseph was just an ordinary young man like any of us, but because of his faith and because his faith didn't waver and his obedience to God didn't waver, God was able to use him and reflect His own glory and foretell, prophesy, and illuminate the career of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in the life of this one boy, this one young man. God can do the same with our lives if we trust Him, if we're willing to believe that the same God that was at work in the life of Joseph is at work in our life, that the things that happen to us have a purpose, and whether or not we can see the end from the beginning, to trust that God knows the end from the beginning and that everything has a purpose and that we, like in our memory verse, that as we have opportunity, we can do good whatever our circumstances, wherever Joseph was, he did good.

If they elevate him into prison, well, he'll do good there. If he's a servant in Potiphar's house, he'll do good there. Why? Knowing and believing that we will reap in due season if we do not lose heart, if we do not faint.

It's the same God. It's the same grace. It's the same power available to us that was available to Joseph and available in abundance to us because of the age in which we live.

What a wonderful God we have. What a great Savior we have. And what a tremendous opportunity we have to reflect the glory that God has designed for our lives to reflect the image of God that can be recreated in our souls through that transforming power of God's Word and God's Spirit if we just remember who we are, if we just remember why we're here.

Let's close in prayer. We thank You, Father, for the privilege of occupying the place that we occupy in Your plan, saved by grace, united with Christ, destined to share His glory, His sonship, His heirship, His priesthood, His election in all things. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these truths on our heart and enable us to live in the light of them day by day.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.