

Joseph is Favored Genesis 39:1-6a

September 23, 2018

- 1 Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and Potiphar (**pot EE fur**), an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites (**ish ME uh lights**) who had brought him down there.
- 2 The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man; he was in the house of his Egyptian master.
- 3 His master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hands.
- 4 So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him; he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had.
- 5 From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had, in house and field.
- 6 So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge; and, with him there, he had no concern for anything but the food that he ate.

Joseph had a very difficult situation but found favor from God. Imagine what it might be like to be Joseph. If anyone at all in the Bible had a right to complain, grumble, or be negative, Joseph is one. We complain when the internet goes out, a storm knocks out the electricity, the car breaks down, cell phone call gets dropped. In reality God has blessed us richly and continues to bless us with abundance. We don't have to worry about food, clothing, or shelter. So, we should virtually always have gratitude and look forward to serving the Lord out of thankfulness.

When I first became a church leader, that is when I accepted my first leadership role in the life of the church, I was glad to serve. I felt an honor to be asked. But I also was reluctant to ask others to volunteer or to help. I did not want to be, or appear to be, pushy or demanding. I did not want to ask someone else to work. Eventually I realized the value of a blessing. You see, it is a blessing for me to give. It is a blessing for me to help. It is a blessing for me to serve because it is a joyous response to God for what God has given to me. Serving is a response of thankfulness and appreciation. If I do not ask others to serve then I am denying them the blessing. It is a step towards being right with God; an opportunity to express thanks to God. It is a joyous response to the blessing.

Imagining being Joseph. Your brothers are jealous of you because you have received an ornamental coat that was made special just for you. So, your jealous brothers try to kill you by throwing you into a pit and claiming that wild animals killed you. Meanwhile, traders headed for Egypt come along and your brothers sell you into slavery for 20 pieces of silver. Joseph - our Bible hero - is sold into slavery. If anyone has a right to complain about anything that happens to them it is Joseph.

When our Scripture reading takes place Joseph is taken to Egypt and is now the property of Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard. Joseph is favored by the Lord and becomes successful in virtually everything. Potiphar recognizes the Lord's favoritism and puts Joseph in charge of all that he has. Now, once again, imagine you are Joseph. You are a slave serving in the household of an Egyptian. This is not the career path of your choice. This is not your dream. This is not what you want to do. If you are Joseph you could be rebellious, reluctant to serve, and always complaining. The Bible does not show Joseph with any such negative attitude. Joseph is not beat down or self victimized as a failure. Instead Joseph chooses to maintain a positive

attitude. Joseph is grateful, helpful, and productive and is focused on being a good servant because he is focused on the Lord and the Lord's blessings. God not only blessed Joseph with success but God also blessed Joseph with wisdom. Therefore, Joseph understands the reality of his position and makes the best of it.

We all face the choices of life when facing struggles. We can moan and groan about our situations or we can make the best of it. The lesson is that Joseph is a willing servant because Joseph is blessed by God and it has a compounding effect on his happiness and success. I have struggled in life like you and everyone else. There have been tremendous pressure of paying the bills and trying to make ends meet and the stress that comes from that. But my real struggle has been with a sense of purpose. I found myself focused on time and money. There never was enough time and never enough money. I ended up just going through the motions like a zombie in a suit. I confess I had lapsed. I was focused on my troubles but when I focus on God and started daily devotions, prayer, Bible reading, serving, and mission work, I began to feel good. The good feelings compounded as I received an internal spiritual blessing. When I attributed thanks to God, my life changed. Within me is peace and happiness that keeps growing as my love for the Lord keeps growing.

You are favored by God. We are all favored with food, clothing, shelter, and an abundance of luxuries. We all have stressful days and restless nights where we struggle with problems. When you get up in the morning pour your heart out to God. The Spirit will provide you with the strength to avoid temptation, the fortitude to focus on the blessings from God, the wisdom to handle the problems of the day, and a compounding blessing that comes from a positive attitude. Be grateful to God for providing for you and being with you. Show your appreciation to God through your offerings - your service, ministry, and missions. You will feel good as you receive internal spiritual blessings. If you truly love the Lord, you will have a passion for showing your thanks. Put God first and foremost in your life above everything else.

When faced with the difficult circumstances of life, praise can be difficult, and it can be the last thing you want to do. Sometimes it seems that happiness and joy are a distant reality. If you are ever in a state of self pity - praise God. When you are consumed with daily pressure - praise God. Because when you offer praise to God then your focus is on God and the blessings of God. This takes your focus off of your troubles and it turns our attention from the self to God. Joseph had a difficult situation and found favor from God. When you are faced with difficult situations you too can focus on the blessings of God and focus on expressing thanks to God.