

SERMON-BASED STUDY: WHEN GOD OPENS DOORS

Genesis 41:25-39, ESV – Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁶ The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years; the dreams are one. ²⁷ The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty ears blighted by the east wind are also seven years of famine. ²⁸ It is as I told Pharaoh; God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁹ There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, ³⁰ but after them there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt. The famine will consume the land, ³¹ and the plenty will be unknown in the land by reason of the famine that will follow, for it will be very severe. ³² And the doubling of Pharaoh’s dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about. ³³ Now therefore let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. ³⁴ Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land and take one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plentiful years. ³⁵ And let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. ³⁶ That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine that are to occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine.”

³⁷ This proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants. ³⁸ And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?” ³⁹ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. ⁴⁰ You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you.” ⁴¹ And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.” ⁴² Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck. ⁴³ And he made him ride in his second chariot. And they called out before him, “Bow the knee!” Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁴ Moreover, Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no one shall lift up hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.” ⁴⁵ And Pharaoh called Joseph’s name Zaphenath-paneah. And he gave him in marriage Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On. So Joseph went out over the land of Egypt.

⁴⁶ Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went through all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁷ During the seven plentiful years the earth produced abundantly, ⁴⁸ and he gathered up all the food of these seven years, which occurred in the land of Egypt, and put the food in the cities. He put in every city the food from the fields around it. ⁴⁹ And Joseph stored up grain in great abundance, like the sand of the sea, until he ceased to measure it, for it could not be measured.

Notes:

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QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week’s teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

ENGAGE WITH THE MESSAGE

- 1 Think back on the young Joseph we met eleven years earlier in Genesis 37. Is he any different? If so, how?
- 2 What happens in Genesis 41:25-32 that precedes Pharaoh's response in verses 37-40? What does Pharaoh learn about Joseph in this brief interaction? What does this teach you?
- 3 Joseph gives Pharaoh more than he requested. What does this say about Joseph's character?

DIGGING DEEPER

A **Acts 8:26-31, 34-36, ESV** – ²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. ²⁷ And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸ and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." ³⁰ So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹ And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

³⁴ And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶ And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?"

- 4 Pastor Mark encouraged us to be faithful to what God has called us to. What did faithfulness look like for Philip?
- 5 What is the relationship between divine preparation and human initiative in this account of Philip's life?
- 6 Both Joseph and Philip were ready and willing for what God had planned next. What habits or practices help prepare us to be ready to respond when God calls? Which do you need to practice more?

B **1 Peter 1:6-7, NIV** – ⁶ *In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.* ⁷ *These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

Colossians 3:23-24, ESV – ²³ *Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,* ²⁴ *knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.*

7 What is significant about the imagery Peter uses to describe trials? What does this say about how God views the trials?

8 What would change if you saw all of your daily responsibilities, even the mundane ones, as sacred work for the Lord? (i.e., cleaning the toilet as sacred work)

9 For many, experiencing a trial can cause thoughts of things being unfair. This thought can grow into bitterness. Have you allowed the trials you experienced to become seeds of bitterness, or have you allowed them to refine you, as God intended? Explain your answer.

TAKING IT HOME

After years of situations outside of Joseph's control, his faithfulness has prepared him for God's ultimate plan for him. Being in trying situations can be discouraging, which may cause us to miss opportunities God brings. Where might God be calling you to faithfulness, even when it feels unseen and unrewarded? How can you be more alert to the opportunities God may place in front of you? How can you cooperate with God to prepare for what He has next? Share with your group what God is showing you. Pray for one another as you seek to live to glorify Him in all you do and say.

PRAISES AND PRAYER REQUEST

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FOR FURTHER STUDY

James 1:2-4

Esther 4:9-17

1 Peter 4:12-19

2 Corinthians 4:16-18