

The Grace of Life's Disappointments

Genesis 40–41

Can God use the difficult situations of life to bring about His greater good?

The right thing at the wrong time, is the wrong thing.

God orchestrates “coincidences.”

Joseph experiences a number of painful setbacks. He is slanderously accused of attempted rape. He is mocked for his race and his social position. He finds himself in the prison he once oversaw. Is this just a series of unfortunate events?

God places Joseph in a position to reach those who would cross his path. God employs ordinary means to move people towards Him.

We all have appointments on our calendars. What about those unexpected appointments?

Joseph makes interactions profitable (vv. 5–8).

Let's look at how Joseph behaves in these exchanges. He:

- a. Initiates the action—He operates from a position of confidence by engaging the cupbearer and baker.
- b. Observes their “troubled” mood, then displays compassion (vv. 6–7). Afflictions help us become more sympathetic.
- c. Asks the appropriate questions, in the correct way, and listens. We know interesting questions lead to interesting answers (Cf. James 4:3).
- d. Proceeds to show how God is the answer to their questions. Joseph is able to lead these Egyptians to a talk about the God of the Israelites.

Joseph causes us to think about the importance of Christian translators. How are the normal longings of the human heart addressed in the person of Jesus?

We also see Joseph delivering difficult information. The interpretation of the baker's dream is hard news. We see here that Joseph "executed with fidelity the office divinely committed to him." – John Calvin

God gets His man before Pharaoh.

Once again, having done the right thing, Joseph finds himself confined to "the pit" (40:15) for two more years. From the human perspective, God does not know what He is doing.

Given the fact that Joseph's interpretations were so accurate, we know that God directed the dreams. So, at just the right time, God caused Pharaoh to dream in order for Joseph to gain an audience with him.

The Counterfactual: Had the cupbearer remembered Joseph two years earlier, Pharaoh would not have appreciated his value.

Key Take-Away: God can use the painful, disappointing events in life to bring about greater things.

Application Questions:

Can you relate a time of disappointment in your life that eventually gave way to greater blessing?

What does this passage teach us about patience?

How do we use everyday opportunities to point people to God?

What qualities in Joseph do we find attractive?