**God is With Us**

***19****As soon as his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, “This is the way your servant treated me,” his anger was kindled.****20****And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison.****21****But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.****22****And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it.****23****The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because the Lord was with him. And whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed. (Gen 39:19-23)*

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***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?”[*[*c*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=gen%2041&version=ESV#fen-ESV-1234c)*]****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.[*[*d*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=gen%2041&version=ESV#fen-ESV-1236d)*] 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!”[*[*e*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=gen%2041&version=ESV#fen-ESV-1239e)*] 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. (Genesis 41:37-45)*

 Joseph’s story in Scripture reminds us that whatever our situation might be, God is with us. So, welcome everybody, especially you that participated in the Women’s Conference. I pray that just as you were blessed in these last two days, that this message will also speak to you and bless you. Today’s topic is taken from the book of Genesis and is one of the last ones from it for this sermon series (ending next week). We are going to talk about God’s providential care. More specifically, we’re dealing with how God cares for his children in every circumstance. We’re going to examine God’s care within Joseph’s difficult circumstance. Again, God is with us, His children, no matter what the situation looks like. Let’s get into it…

 Sometimes, God’s plan takes us through an imprisonment season. What does this statement mean? Looking at Joseph’s story, the question and its answer become clear. At face value, it seems that Joseph’s imprisonment was completely unfair. First of all, he was unfairly sold into slavery by his brothers. Second, despite the fact that he resisted temptation from the master’s wife, she got him thrown into prison thru a lie. His response could have been to lose hope, to distance himself from God, or to weaken in faith. He could have doubted God’s goodness and have said that God either didn’t like him, or had abandoned him, or that He wasn’t with him. The Bible, however, does not show that he did that. It says that God showed him steadfast love, and the warden noticed him favorably. In that horrible situation, in which he could have cut off all hope, he began to suddenly enjoy God’s goodness in the midst of that evil – even to the point of his superior trusting him with work and he having success in all his endeavors within that prison.

 At times, we do not understand the fire in which we find ourselves. For example, Samuel Wesley, the father of the famous John, had many enemies in his church where he pastored. On February 9, 1709, the rectory (the pastor’s house) caught fire, probably caused by one of his enemies. The future famous John, then six years old, was stuck upstairs because of the fire. Two neighbors, one climbing on top of the other’s shoulders, were able to pull the child out of the building through the window, a few seconds before the roof collapsed. The father, Rev. Samuel, said, “Come, neighbors, let us kneel down. Let us give thanks to God. He has given me all my eight children. Let the house go. I am rich enough.” John Wesley often referred to himself as a "brand plucked out of the fire" (Zech 3:2; Amos 4:11). In later years he often noted February 9 in his journal and gave thanks to God for His mercy. His father, however, served in that church for 40 years and saw very little fruit. How would he know the amazing things that his children would do for God’s kingdom?

 So, what about us? Perhaps you find yourself in a difficult situation. Maybe it is a family issue, a workplace problem, or something related to your health. You are hurting somewhere in your life. It may be that there is an obstacle in your way – the doors are not opening, the solution has not been found, or the relationship hasn’t been healed. Within that “prison,” God wants to remind you that He is everywhere (including right next to you in your difficulty). He is present in your tough moments, and he knows what is coming after you get through them. Sometimes He will not reveal the solution or the rescue to you, and you may suppose that He has forgotten you. That happened to Joseph. Pharaoh’s cupbearer, who served the king directly, forgot to tell the Pharaoh when Joseph had helped him by interpreting his dream for him while in jail. God had not abandoned Joseph, however – it was simply a delay. We all know how Joseph would interpret Pharaoh’s dream and suggest a plan regarding the coming years of plenty and famine. We all are familiar with how his position was elevated from prisoner to chief governor of Egypt. All he had to do was to stay faithful to God, regardless of the difficulty.

 Therefore, in whatever situation we found ourselves, we must decide to trust in God’s nearness, even when we do not sense Him. We just need to remain faithful to Him and use the gifts that He has given us, as Joseph used his gift of interpreting dreams in the prison.

 Sometimes, God’s plan takes us through an “imprisonment”, but whatever that situation may be, as God’s child, God is with us.