

Small Group Discussion Guide

For the week of September 18 - 24, 2022

Main Thought and Scriptures:

God uses the pits and prisons to prepare and position us for our purpose. In Genesis 40 and 41, Joseph was thrown in prison as an innocent man. Yet, the Lord was with him and caused him to prosper. While in prison, God enabled Joseph to rightly interpret the dreams of the cupbearer and baker of Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt. Joseph appealed to the cupbearer to remember him when he was released and to help him to get out of prison. However, the cupbearer forgot about Joseph leaving him in prison for another two years.

1. Pits and prisons prepare us for the palace by teaching us to trust in the Lord.

- If the cupbearer was the source of Joseph's release from prison, Joseph would have never learned that true deliverance comes only from trusting in God.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. ⁷Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. ⁸This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones. ⁹Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; ¹⁰then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine." (Proverbs 3:5-10 NIV)

- Sometimes, God allows us to go through "prison" seasons so that we learn to trust in Him alone.

2. Pits and prisons position us for our purpose.

- Finally, after two years, Pharaoh had a dream that no one could interpret. The cupbearer remembered Joseph and brought him to Pharaoh to interpret his dream. God enabled Joseph to rightly interpret Pharaoh's dream about a great famine coming to the world.

"Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.'" (Genesis 41:39-40 NIV)

- The prison was the path that led Joseph to the palace and to the fulfillment of God’s dream for Joseph’s life. From this position of authority, Joseph saved millions of lives from a great famine, including the lives of his brothers, who betrayed him.
- God uses the pits and prisons to position us for His purpose. Later, Joseph declared to his brothers who betrayed him:

“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.” (Genesis 50:20 ESV)

Discussion Questions:

(Break into groups of 3-4 to discuss.)

- As you reflect on the weekend sermon, the main thoughts, and scriptures above, what is the Lord highlighting to you and why?
- How has a “prison” season in your life taught you to trust in the Lord? What happened and why? How has God prepared or positioned you through a “prison” season of your life?
- Are you facing a “prison” season right now? How could the Lord be preparing you and positioning you through it? Explain.

Prayer:

- Pray for one another that the Lord will reveal His purpose and how He is preparing and positioning us.
- Pray for a friend or family member who is going through a “prison” season right now. Pray that God would reveal Himself to them and use us to reach them.