**“Wait for the Lord”**

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Genesis 41:9-16

Luke 22:52-71

 Lenten Midweek 4

**SERMON READING** Genesis 41:9-16

Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, “I remember my offenses today. When Pharaoh was angry with his servants and put me and the chief baker in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, we dreamed on the same night, he and I, each having a dream with its own interpretation. A young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. When we told him, he interpreted our dreams to us, giving an interpretation to each man according to his dream. And as he interpreted to us, so it came about. I was restored to my office, and the baker was hanged.”

Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they quickly brought him out of the pit. And when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came in before Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.” Joseph answered Pharaoh, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.”

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

We are at the half-way point of our Lenten journey with Joseph, which will continue into Holy Week’s Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. We have been jumping our way around, noting His trials. And (with that) Joseph seems to be just a series of tragedies to triumph over, with the **quiet “down-time”** not “waded through” like it is, almost always, with us. Joseph had bad days, but also good days. His life was a roller coaster, but **we have those** … with lots of just regular ‘ole plain ones (lots of those) in between. Joseph’s story ends on the happy side. He reconciled and grew old with family and his father, prospered, then, and got received finally into glory no doubt. A wonderful end to a life’s story that had some **tumultuous** starts.

**3**

What we miss, though, when addressing just the highlights of Joseph’s life is his **patience for the Lord to act for him (in His time and way)**. As the story, today, picks up, Joseph was in an Egyptian dungeon … and had been there for a long time, quiet, lonely, and discouraging. Tonight’s reading is the **tail end** of that long period of time. He gets noticed for the discernment from God that he has in dreams and God’s will. With a God-given solution and wisdom to save the world from a coming famine, Joseph then becomes (from out of that dungeon) the very highest-ranking official in Egypt’s empire, except for Pharoah himself. God brought on a “high-point” in Joseph’s life that would lead to many other “high-points”. Thirty years old he was when this happened. Sold into slavery at 17, then jailed by Potiphar at, maybe, 18, it had been **that many years** imprisoned and **expected to be patient**. **Slavery and imprisonment** was Joseph’s life throughout his 20s.

And that should encourage us toward the Godly virtue of patiently “**waiting on Him**”. It’s “faith” to wait on God. What an object lesson it is to, even, all ages of our people that this one (in the prime of his earthly life) waited as Christians are supposed to, for the Lord’s Good. The Psalms say: “**I** wait for the Lord, **my soul** waits, my soul **waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning**”, and “**they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, mounting up with wings like eagles**.” And, Paul says: “we **walk by faith, not by sight**”. Our hope is for what “**will be**” mostly, and not on “**what now appears**”. Scripture has us **walking (and waiting) upon the Lord,** which is **what faith is all about.** And Joseph is one good example of that … beyond whatever else his story shares with us.

Of all that we’re reminding ourselves about Joseph, don’t forget how long he waited on the Lord in prison during his prime years, not knowing if he’d ever get out (**innocent yet punished and suffering … and that’s where He points us to His coming Lord**). How many times Joseph may have thought about not waiting upon God, but escaping by his own hands, tempted to plot something else from anger and hopelessness, yet Joseph waited. He waited for the deliverance of the Lord (even if that deliverance might happen in a time after his life). But waiting on the Lord was his **strength**, not weakness or giving up. It was an expression of a **tested and proven faith**. It was “**faithfulness**”.

**2**

Humanity sees that, mostly, different. The ideas of this world mostly reject patience in luau of haste and immediacy. Speeding in traffic and fast climbs up corporate ladders breeds dictate what we think and do in long lines or when the internet WI-FI fails or is slow or “standard” delivery from Amazon isn’t fast enough, so “overnight” is the impatient choice.

Waiting on God is to draw us into a deeper faith and a greater hope. When accused falsely of things or chronically sick or temped, waiting on God means “**waiting**”. Wait and don’t despair in it. Don’t take matters, impatiently, into your own hands away from God’s movement. Place everything, knowingly, into the nail-scarred hands of the Savior, and wait for the Lord who **loves you**.

And **stand firm (“steadfast”) in that patience**. Don’t (for instance) do what Peter did (rashly), deny the Lord after having pledged Him his patience and instant defense: “Lord, I’m ready to go with you both to prison and death”, yet “I do not know the man” as Jesus passed him being led to trial and torture. Peter denied His Lord, not **waiting for and with Him (faithfully)**.

**1**

Waiting **doesn’t come naturally**. Waiting on God is faith that **comes from God** **gifting that patience** **…** **knowing where God’s leading us**. And maybe that’s an advantage that we have on Joseph. Because, in his wildest dreams, Joseph couldn’t have ever imagined himself made the world’s second most powerful man. But God promises **our Good end** because of the **finished work of Jesus**. Joseph heard of **hope from God**, but God gave Joseph (after the long wait) more than he deserved or could have hoped for. **He gifted him** the wisdom to discern dreams and administer solutions. **Our wait won’t disappoint us**.

It's foundationed (**our wait is**) in the **finished work of Jesus**. Like Joseph, His faithfulness included the dungeons of sins that He assumed (didn’t deserve but got punished for). Like Joseph, He (Jesus) was a son of Israel sold for coins. Like Joseph, He worked deliverance (Jesus did) for the world that needed it. In Christ, God worked (He patient till the right time) to reconcile men and women from all time to Himself, returning us to a relationship Good. God (in the sacrifice He provided for death upon a cross) was able to **not count our sins against us**, having **counted them to Jesus**.

And Jesus is God’s Son exalted when He faithfully finished His work, “for us men and for our salvation having **come from heaven, making Himself nothing, taking the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of me, humbling Himself even further, being obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross**”.

**Then** God the Father “highly exalted Him, given Him the name that is above every names, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth … and ever tongue confess Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father”.

**Our lives** unfold not too differently to Joseph’s: not quickly, but **with much struggle and need for patience**. But we wait—with faith and confidence in Jesus, and **HE’S THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITHFUL WAITING (BECAUSE OF OUR CONFIDENCE IN HIM**.

We **entrust** our days and burdens (and even **quietness**) to God in Christ Jesus. God has promised that Jesus fully atoned for our sin / our guilt. With repentant hearts, **that** has been taken away. And Heaven is open to us. But, for now, we will have good days and bad, victories and tragedies, yet know how our story ends … and that will be **only** joy.

When our days in this life’s sometimes dungeon drag on, wait for God. Luther said: “I know that I have been baptized and that I have eaten and drank of the body and blood of Christ, so have the Him in me and for me / salvation and sustenance and nourishment. I’ve been absolved of my confessed sins, and they are, most certainly, forgiven me. Victory over the devil and death and Hell **is promised me through Christ**. **What more could I ask for?**” Amen.