

WHEN DREAMS COME TRUE**Genesis 41**

Intro: We've been talking a lot about dreams as we've looked at these lessons from Joseph but it stands to reason, Joseph was a dreamer and an interpreter of dreams.

We use the word "dreams" kind of loosely. When we are feeling romantic we use the expression "dreamy" as we contemplate the object of our affection from afar. We "dream" when we secure that object of our affection and we together plan our family and goals for life and career. We plan our "dream vacation" for when our ship finally comes in. And we tell our little ones "Sweet dreams" as they drift off into sleep. We also call terrifying things "Nightmares" and they are quite the opposite of the pleasant things we dwell upon.

What were your dreams when you were a teen looking into adulthood? What set your eyes to sparkling when you planned your life together with your spouse to be? What brought terror to your imagination? How about your dreams? How have they turned out for you?

Jason & Lydia have dreams for Amelia – we'll talk about that in a bit as we wrap up this talk.

Kathy and I have seen dreams fulfilled – well at least I did – I got her. We still have some dreams yet to come. Our ship still hasn't come in, but then again we are pretty far from a body of water large enough to accommodate such a ship. We have relinquished a dream of owning a bed and breakfast in some wonderful location. We've decided that retirement, which is when we envisioned our B&B dream to be, was not a good time to step into an undertaking that is very challenging for much younger and more energetic souls. But that's okay, because we have other dreams. Like being useful for the Kingdom for as long as we have breath. That's more exciting than making breakfast and beds by a long shot.

Out text for today is Genesis 41 which is 57 verses long. Because it's so long, I'm not going to read the entire chapter. Instead, I'll read some key verses as I bring the Word. That being said, the fact that I'm not reading the chapter is all the more reason for you to read it for yourself between Sundays – so let me give you a heads-up for next time, which is February 24, and read Genesis 42.

Dreams come true according to God's plan

- We see this all through the chapter, but verse 8 is very clear. Listen, *In the morning his mind was troubled, so he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them for him.* Genesis 41:8. The wisdom of the land falls far short – all the magicians and wise men of Egypt could not interpret Pharaoh's dreams. We would be wise to handle the "wisdom of the land/culture VERY carefully. We can get all kinds of advice from the conventional of the day. We can Google anything at all and get "insight". Bloggers pontificating is endless. But the wisdom of the world does not measure up to the word of God and the direction of the Spirit.
- Want your dreams interpreted? Want them to come true – make sure they are in line with God's will. Dreams come true when God is the one causing them. Not only is God the only one who can interpret those dreams.
- In the case of our text, God is the one who gives the dreams to Pharaoh and it was for at least two reasons, one, it was for the delivery of his chosen people and for his creation, which we'll look at in a bit. The other was because it was an opportunity to show the power of the God of Joseph and his people. Joseph was not bashful about sharing and neither should we. Just like him . . .

We need to boldly witness for God

- The Cupbearer finally remembered. And Joseph is brought before the very ruler of the land. The opportunity is huge!
- Pharaoh recites the dreams and when he's done Joseph was very quick to point out that only God knows. In the words of our text, *"I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."* Genesis 41:16. And later he continues, *"It is just as I said to Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the land of Egypt, but seven years of famine will follow them. Then all the abundance in Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will ravage the land. The abundance in the land will not be remembered, because the famine that follows it will be so severe. The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon."*

“And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept in the cities for food. This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine.”

The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials. So Pharaoh asked them, “Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?” Genesis 41:28-38

- We’ve witnessed it before, but here, again, we see the beauty of Joseph’s humility. He could have taken advantage of the situation but, as usual, he gave God all the credit. In the end Pharaoh cannot but see that Joseph is directed by a God that is so much more than another created being. In fact, the very name Joseph is given by Pharaoh, Zaphenath-Paneah, which means, “the god speaks and he lives”, is an acknowledgement by the ruler of Egypt, who considered himself a god, and was certainly, a pagan, that God is the one true God.
- Joseph did this fearlessly and so should we. I read a piece yesterday on a Barna report that shows that 50% of the millennial generation feel that evangelism is wrong. This kind of thinking flies in the face of Jesus’s great commission to go into all the world and make disciples. I think it comes from a culture that teaches it is wrong to impose one’s beliefs on others. We already know what the wisdom of the world teaches so we must be cautious. Another reason may be the poor example of Christian parents of the millennial generation who have reneged on the the Great Commission. It has not been modeled. We must be bold witnesses. And always make sure that . . .

God gets all the glory

- You heard during Amelia’s dedication the Amelia’s names have deep meaning. And like Jason and Lydia who named both their little girls with great intentionality (ask them sometime), Joseph had reasons for his son’s names. Listen, *Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On. Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh and said, “It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father’s household.” The second son he named Ephraim and said, “It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering.”* Genesis 41:50-52. They were Egyptian names but they gave God due credit for his obvious work in Joseph’s life.
 - Manasseh – God made me forget. For 13 years Joseph’s life had been a roller coaster ride in slavery and servitude. His oldest son’s name was an acknowledgment of God’s great deliverance.
 - Ephraim – God made me fruitful. Joseph’s youngest son’s name celebrated a joyous life and future.
- For Joseph, the names of his sons gave God due credit. In fact, the hymn that would best express the theme of Chapter 41 would be *“To God Be The Glory”*. Would that our lives would be the same. I had a friend named Rosie who could never have a conversation with anyone without praising God for all her many blessings. Her life glorified God. Let’s do the same ABC.
- Finally, we have a prime example here in this chapter of how . . .

God’s timing is perfect

- Last week I said that good things take time. Last week, in chapter 40, we left Joseph in prison having been the one who helped the royal cupbearer gain his release. So it’s significant that this chapter begins with *When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream. . .* Genesis 41:1a. He had interpreted the dream of the cupbearer and told him to not to forget him when he was back in Pharaoh’s good graces. But he did forget and two years is a long time. We don’t have the record of it here, but obviously it was a time of testing and polishing of a young man of God. But it was not easy.
- But think about this: as I’ve already pointed out, the events of this chapter took place when Joseph was 30 years old. He was treacherously sold into slavery when he was 17. This unfolding of God’s plan for his people, the Hebrews, and really, for all of the known world, took 13 long years. Thirteen years of servitude. But good things take time.
- Long before Isaiah said it, Joseph lived the reality that, *Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up*

with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:30-31 (ESV).

- Here's the truth, no matter when or how God's plan unfolds, it's good. Joseph would have been the first to acknowledge this. God's timing is perfect.

Conclusion: When dreams come true it's because God is involved. Until that happens, we need to boldly witness for him. We also need to make sure that God gets all the glory because his way and his timing is perfect. Amen.