



# WHEN NOTHING SEEMS TO MAKE SENSE

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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# When Nothing Seems to Make Sense

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Genesis 39:20-23

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What can we do when nothing seems to make sense?

Genesis 39 tells the story of a godly man named Joseph. Though he did nothing wrong, he was sold as a slave by his own brothers and bought by the head of the Egyptian guard, Potiphar.

Hardship continued when he was falsely accused of rape by Potiphar's wife and cast into prison. He was completely innocent... this didn't make sense!

Joseph exemplifies five principles for us to remember when nothing seems to make sense.

Don't demand to understand. We can come to a time of perplexity, having done nothing wrong. In fact, many of God's greatest saints walked in darkness for parts of their lives.

Darkness does not mean that sin has prevailed. Darkness cannot overcome light. If God takes away the light, simply trust God and do not demand to understand.

Don't fail to be faithful. Joseph did not sulk in prison. Even there, in a time of persecution, Joseph served God. He was not a fair-weather Christian. In the darkness, he held onto what God promised him in the light.

Don't bow to bitterness. There was not a shred of bitterness in Joseph, because He knew God was with him. In hard times, we need to be very careful not to become bitter. Adrian Rogers says, "...it's not how you react when you're punished for doing wrong, but how you react when you're persecuted for doing right."

Don't be unwilling to wait. God knows where we are. The same God who was with Joseph in his youth was with him when he languished in prison. God is never late; He will bring us out in His time.

Don't let dreams dissolve. Joseph never forgot his God-given dream from his youth. God never forgot it, either; it came to fruition in perfect timing. Adrian Rogers says, "There is coming a day when God will make everything right; don't lose your faith when it doesn't make sense to you."

Don't let your dreams dissolve in the darkness.

God did not fail Joseph and He will not fail us.

## LIFE APPLICATION

Are you in a season when nothing seems to make sense?

Remember, as Adrian Rogers says, "Serve Jesus and never quit. Give Him your heart... your life. And don't ever lose your dream."



# When Nothing Seems to Make Sense

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## 1) INTRODUCTION

- a) We all experience ups and downs.
  - i) There are times when we don't know whether to hold on or let go.
  - ii) Sometimes we feel as though we are getting hit from every side.
- b) Sometimes we create our own problems; but what do we do when we've done nothing wrong, we're applying the proper principles, and yet, nothing seems to make sense?
- c) Genesis 39 gives us some principles that we can apply when life doesn't seem to make sense.
  - i) This chapter gives us a glimpse into the life of Joseph.
  - ii) Joseph loved God but found himself in great difficulty.
    - (1) He was sold into slavery by his brothers.
    - (2) He was carried to Egypt and became a slave in Potiphar's household.
- d) Genesis 39:20-23
  - i) The Lord was with Joseph, even while he was in prison.
    - (1) We can learn some prison principles from Joseph.
    - (2) We can learn to practice the presence of God even when we are in a dungeon through no fault of our own.
- e) Joseph was sold into slavery and bought by Potiphar.
  - i) Joseph was put in charge of Potiphar's household.
  - ii) Joseph was such a man of integrity and industry that Potiphar found himself trusting Joseph more and more.
  - iii) He rose higher and higher in Potiphar's house until he was finally taking care of all of Potiphar's affairs.
    - (1) God was with Joseph; and, even as a slave, he ascended higher and higher.
  - iv) Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph.
    - (1) Joseph refused with such vigor that he left his coat and fled.
    - (2) Potiphar's wife was so insulted and embarrassed that she accused Joseph of assault.
    - (3) Joseph was cast into prison even though he was totally innocent.
      - (a) He had been serving God, and now nothing seems to make sense.
- f) In today's message, we will look at five principles that we can apply when nothing seems to make sense in our lives.

## 2) DON'T DEMAND TO UNDERSTAND (Proverbs 3:5-6)

- a) Joseph had not sinned against God.
  - i) He had done nothing wrong; Joseph was doing what was right.
  - ii) Joseph was lied about and falsely accused.
    - (1) No doubt that Satan whispered in Joseph's ear, "Where is your God now? What good does it do to serve God?"



- b) We will experience times when nothing seems to make sense.
  - i) When difficulty comes our way, we should try to understand; but we will not always be able to understand.
- c) Proverbs 3:5-6
  - i) There will be things in life that we will not understand.
- d) Isaiah 50:10-11
  - i) We can be serving God and obeying Him and still experience times of darkness.
    - (1) The Christian life is not always filled with joy and happiness, and there will be times when we do not understand.
    - (2) Many of God's greatest saints sometimes walked in darkness.
      - (a) Job lived through darkness and was perplexed.
        - (i) He wanted to argue with God and demanded to understand.
        - (ii) Job did not understand, but God understood.
      - (b) Habakkuk the prophet could not understand why God was seemingly allowing the Chaldeans to get away with their sin and why there was so much violence and brutality.
        - (i) We are often distressed by the same things; we wonder why God allows so much corruption and vice in our time.
    - (c) John the Baptist was a mighty prophet.
      - (i) Luke 7:28
      - (ii) Yet, King Herod imprisoned John the Baptist.
      - (iii) John the Baptist was so perplexed in prison that he began to wonder if Jesus was the Messiah.
        - 1. John 1:29
        - 2. Matthew 11:3
    - (d) The apostle Paul wrote more books in the New Testament than anyone else; some claim Paul was the greatest Christian who ever lived.
      - (i) 2 Corinthians 4:8
        - 1. Paul stated that they were perplexed, that they did not understand.
- e) If we think that things will always make sense, then we will have trouble spiritually.
  - i) Isaiah 50:10
    - (1) The darkness can never put out the light.
    - (2) If there is no light, it is only because the light has been withdrawn.
      - (a) The darkness never chases the light away.
- f) When we experience darkness, it does not mean that the devil has prevailed.
  - i) We simply need to trust God and not demand to understand.
    - (1) When we are walking in darkness, we can say, at least, that God has allowed it.
    - (2) There are some things that we are not meant to understand.
- g) Joseph did not understand what God was up to.
  - i) When we get to the end of Genesis 50, we see that Joseph was part of a great mosaic that God was working.
- h) Isaiah 55:8-9



- i) Just because it does not make sense to us does not mean that it does not make sense.
  - i) Just because it does not make sense now does not mean that it will not make sense later on.
  - ii) Try to understand if we can, but we should not demand to understand.
  
- 3) DON'T FAIL TO BE FAITHFUL (Genesis 39:21-23)
  - a) Joseph did not sit and sulk while in prison, but he continued to serve the Lord.
    - i) He was faithful during a time of darkness and persecution.
    - ii) In Genesis 40, we find that Joseph served the Lord by serving the butler and the baker.
    - iii) Joseph was not a fair-weather Christian; he did not pout or get angry with God.
  - b) Even when things do not make sense, we need to continue to serve the Lord.
    - i) Keep singing.
    - ii) Keep praying.
    - iii) Keep giving.
    - iv) Keep witnessing.
    - v) Keep submitting to the Lord.
  - c) Genesis 39:2
    - i) God was with Joseph.
  - ii) Genesis 39:21
    - (1) The same God who was with him in the good times was also with him in the bad times.
  
- 4) DON'T BOW TO BITTERNESS (Genesis 40:14-15)
  - a) In this passage, Joseph is speaking with the butler, who will be released from prison and will once again serve Pharaoh.
    - i) There is no bitterness or complaint found in Joseph's statements.
    - ii) Joseph did not even mention the names of his brothers who sold him into slavery or mention Potiphar's wife.
      - (1) He was content to leave them with God.
  - b) 1 Peter 2:20
  - c) We need to be very careful not to get bitter when things go wrong.
    - i) It's easy to drop out and become bitter when things do not make sense.
    - ii) If we look to people to supply our needs and to recognize our worth, then we will be disappointed in life and will become bitter.
  - d) One of the greatest tests in life is not how we react when we're punished for doing wrong, but how we react when we're persecuted for doing right.
  - e) Joseph was not bitter because God was with him.
    - i) One of the reasons why God was with him was because of Joseph's attitude.
  
- 5) DON'T BE UNWILLING TO WAIT (Genesis 40:23)
  - a) God will bring us out in His time.
  - b) The butler, when he was released from prison, forgot about Joseph.



- c) Genesis 41:46
    - i) This passage states that Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh and was released from prison.
      - (1) Joseph was sold into slavery as a seventeen year old boy.
      - (2) Many of those years, between the time Joseph was sold into slavery at seventeen and the time he stood before Pharaoh at age thirty, he spent in prison.
  - d) We should not get hasty or impatient when we don't understand.
    - i) Psalm 37:5-9
    - ii) We are to wait upon the Lord.
  - e) 1 Peter 5:6
    - i) God has His schedule.
      - (1) God is never late, and He is never ahead of schedule.
      - (2) God is always on time.
  - f) We need to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God; in due time, He will lift us up.
    - i) Don't try to hurry God.
- 6) DON'T LET DREAMS DISSOLVE (Genesis 41:37-44)
- a) Joseph had a dream when he was a teen that one day the world's resources and rulers would be at his feet.
  - b) Genesis 41:37-44
    - i) Joseph has been released from prison and is now the Prime Minister of Egypt.
    - ii) The dream he had so long ago has now been fulfilled.
      - (1) It was a God-given dream.
      - (2) Joseph never forgot the dream, and God never forgot it.
  - c) Someone once said, "Don't doubt in the dark what God has shown you in the light."
  - d) God did not fail Joseph, and He will not fail us.
    - i) Joseph's hand is no longer the hand of a slave; he now wears a royal ring.
    - ii) Joseph no longer wears the prison garb; he wears the beautiful garments that Pharaoh has put upon him.
    - iii) Off come the iron chains, and on goes a gold chain around his neck.
    - iv) God is faithful.
- 7) CONCLUSION
- a) There is coming a day when God will make everything right.
  - b) Don't lose faith when something does not make sense.
    - i) Just because it does not make sense now does not mean that it will not make sense one day.
  - c) Serve Jesus; give Him your heart and your life.
  - d) Don't lose your dream.
    - i) Joel 2:28
      - (1) If you don't have a dream, get one.
      - (2) It is always too soon to quit, but never too late to start.



- e) Jesus Christ is the key; do you know Him?
- f) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- g) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) Acts 16:31
  - v) John 3:16



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Be finding Genesis chapter 39, would you please. And the title of the message today, “Practicing the Presence of God: When Nothing Seems to Make Sense.” I didn’t say when nothing makes sense, when nothing seems to make sense. Practicing the presence of God.

There’s an old story, but a good one, about a man who was a brick mason, a brick layer, and he had too many brick on top of a building, so he decided to retrieve the brick, bring them down to the ground. He went up to the third or fourth story, put a yardarm out from the roof and put a pulley in it, tied a rope to it, hoisted a barrel to the roof, loaded the barrel with the extra bricks, went down to the ground and untied the rope.

At that time, he realized that a barrel full of bricks was heavier than a man. So when the bricks started down, he started up. Well, he said he made a mistake; that he forgot to let go of the rope. He held on until it was too late. And so, half way up, he and the barrel met, and the barrel struck him on the shoulder, gave him a severe wound. But he said, “I managed to hold on until I reached the top.” And then he said, “I wedged my fingers in the pulley.” Said, “At that time, the barrel hit the ground and the bottom came out, left all the bricks, therefore, making the barrel lighter than I.” He said, “Then I started down and the barrel started up. This time the barrel met me at the shins and gave me another severe wound,” but he said, “I still managed to hold on until I fell on the ground and hit that pile of sharp-cornered brick.” He said, “It was then that I lost my presence of mind, let go of the rope, the barrel came down and hit me on the head.” The man applied for a few days off. Now, I think sometimes we feel that way. We’re up and down. We don’t know whether to hold on or let go, and we’re getting hit from every side.

Now, with this man, his problem was easily discerned. Number one, he wasn’t very good at physics. Number two, he wasn’t very bright. And his problem was his own problem. He made his problem. But what do you do when you’re doing nothing wrong, when you’re applying proper principles and nothing seems to make sense? You’re being battered from every hand. What do you do when life doesn’t make sense?

Now, we have a lot of little clichés, “When you get to the end of your rope, tie and knot and hold on.” That’s a real blessing, isn’t it? Or somebody says, “Just grin and bear it.” Or, “Cheer up. It could be worse.” And generally it does get worse, doesn’t it? Well, what do you do?

Well, this chapter in the book of Genesis, chapter 39, is going to tell us some things that we can do, some principles that we can apply when life doesn’t seem to make sense. This is a chapter, I say, in the life of Joseph. Joseph, who was a man of God, who loved God with all of his heart, found himself in great difficulty. He had been sold by his brothers as a slave. He’s carried down by a caravan into Egypt, and there he is bought by a man named Potiphar. And there he is a slave in Potiphar’s household.

Let’s look, if you will, in Genesis chapter 39 verses 20 to 23, and I believe that will give us what we’re talking about. “And Joseph’s master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the



king's prisoners were bound; and he was there in the prison." But now, notice verse 21, "But the Lord was with Joseph." There he is in prison, but the Bible says, "But the Lord was with Joseph."

I want to give you some prison principles, how to practice the presence of God when you are in a dungeon, in a prison, and it is not your fault at all. Joseph here, as I say, was a slave. He was bought by Potiphar. He was put in charge of Potiphar's household. Joseph was such a man of integrity and such a man of industry that even as a slave, Potiphar found himself trusting Joseph more and more, and Joseph is rising higher and higher in Potiphar's house until finally he is taking care of all of the affairs of Mr. Potiphar. Potiphar so trusted Joseph that he said, "The only thing I know that I really own is the food in front of me. It's all in Joseph's hands." Joseph was an incredible individual, and even as a slave, God was with him, and he is ascending higher and higher and higher.

But Joseph was a young man, handsome, the Bible tells us, and virile. And Potiphar's wife began to lust after Joseph and tried to seduce him. Joseph refused Potiphar's wife. She took him by the coat and tried to drag him into bed with her. He refused with such vigor that he left his coat and escaped, fled. Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned. She was so insulted and so embarrassed that she decided she would get even with the young man, and she began to scream that he had assaulted her. And she disheveled her hair. She perhaps tore her clothing a little bit, maybe even scratched her face. I don't know, but she still had Joseph's coat in her hand and she told the other men there, "This young Hebrew tried to do this terrible, horrible thing to me." When Potiphar came home, it was reported to Potiphar, and Joseph is now cast into prison. He is totally innocent. He has been serving God. And now, nothing seems to make sense. There he is in prison.

Now, I want us to look at this story today, and I want to give you five principles. If things happen to you one day that do not make sense, they will sometime happen to you.

Number one. When you're in a situation like this and things don't seem to make sense, don't demand to understand, don't demand to understand. Now, Joseph had not sinned against God. Joseph had done absolutely nothing wrong. What Joseph was doing was right. I imagine at this time when Joseph was doing right, when he was serving the Lord with all of his heart, and he got cast into prison, he's lied about, falsely accused; that Satan whispered in Joseph's ear and said to him, "Now where is your God? What good does it do you now to serve God?" There're going to come times in your life, my friend, when nothing seems to make sense.

Now, I'm not saying that you should not try to understand. If difficulty comes your way, try to understand. But here's a verse I thought about as I was studying this passage of Scripture. Many people use this verse as their life's verse. Proverbs 3 verses 5 and 6. The Bible says, "Trust in the Lord with all of your heart, and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." He shall direct thy paths.

Now, notice what it says. It says, "Lean not to your own understanding." There will be things that you do not understand and do not demand to understand. May I give you a companion verse? Isaiah chapter 50 verses 10 and 11. The prophet Isaiah asked this question, and it's a good question. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. Behold, all ye that kindle



a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of the fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of Mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.”

Now look at that verse, look at it, Isaiah 50; listen to it. What does it teach? It teaches that you can be serving God, you could be obeying God’s Word, and still have darkness. You can come to a time of perplexity, a time when you don’t understand, and yet you have done nothing wrong.

Do not get the distorted idea that the Christian life is all joy and sweetness, and that you’ll always understand. Sometimes we give the wrong impression when we tell people they need to come to Jesus, as if their life, if they come to Jesus, is going to be on an ever ascending scale of joy and life and victory in youth and a serene old age and a happy family life and a glorious exit into Heaven. It does not happen that way. And as you study the Bible, you’re going to find out that many of God’s greatest saints were walking in darkness part of their lives.

Job, one of the greatest characters in the Old Testament, lived in a time of darkness and he was perplexed. He couldn’t understand. As a matter of fact, he wanted to argue with God. He demanded to understand, and he was wrong when he did. It was if he said, “God, You owe me some answers.” Now, Job did not understand, but God understood.

You can read about the prophet Habakkuk. Habakkuk, a great prophet, a man of God, could not understand why history was doing what it was doing, why God was allowing the Chaldeans to get away with all of their sin, why there was so much violence and brutality. Have you ever wondered? Have you ever picked up the newspaper, as we’re wont to do, and read the newspaper, and read about what is happening in Hollywood, read about the dope, the vice, the corruption in politics, and we say, “God, where are You? God, why don’t You do something? Lord, I don’t understand.” Habakkuk was that way.

John the Baptist. Jesus said, in Luke 7:28, there was not a greater born of woman than John the Baptist. John the Baptist was the one who baptized the Lord Jesus, a mighty prophet, and yet Herod took John the Baptist and put him in prison. John was so perplexed in prison, he began to wonder if Jesus were even the Messiah, read John 1 verse 29, the one who had already said, “Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” John the Baptist sent messengers to Jesus, saying, “Are you really the one who should come, or should we look for somebody else?” Matthew 11 verse 3; John the Baptist was perplexed.

The apostle Paul wrote more books in the New Testament than anybody else, the greatest Christian who ever lived, wrote to the Corinthians in Second Corinthians 4 and verse 8 and said, “We are perplexed.” Do you know what perplexed means? It means we don’t understand.

Now, Job, Habakkuk, John the Baptist, Paul, and you, sir, and you, gentlemen, and Adrian, and the rest of us are going to come to times in our lives when, friend, it will not make sense. Now, if you think it’s always going to make sense, you’re going to be in spiritual trouble. As a matter of fact, in this passage in Isaiah chapter 50 verse 10, he says, “Who is my servant that follows Me, obeys Me, and walks in darkness, and hath no light?” Listen to me. The darkness can never put out the light, never. So, therefore, if there is no light, it is only because the light has been withdrawn. The darkness never chases it away. Now, if you’re in darkness that does not mean that the devil has prevailed. If



God takes away the light, then you just simply trust God and do not demand to understand. If there is darkness, you can say this at least, that God has allowed it. There are some things that we are not meant to understand.

Joseph did not understand what God was up to. When finally we get to the end of this chapter, the end of this book, in chapter 50, we find out that what happened to Joseph was a part of a great mosaic that God was working. But listen to what the Bible says in Isaiah 55 verses 8 and 9. God says, “‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,’ saith the Lord. ‘For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.’”

Now, how far is up? You tell me. You can’t. How much higher are God’s thoughts than your thoughts? You tell me. You cannot. “As the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are My thoughts above your thoughts.”

Listen to me. Just because it does not make sense to you does not mean it does not make sense. And just because it does not make sense now, that does not mean it will not make sense later on. Not now, but in the coming years, it may be in the better land, we’ll understand the meaning of our tears, and there we’ll understand. The first principle when life doesn’t make sense: don’t demand to understand. Try to understand if you can, but don’t demand to understand.

Number two. Don’t fail to be faithful. Now, look in Genesis 39 verses 21 to 23, “But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph’s hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand; because the Lord was with him,” that is, with Joseph, “and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.”

Now, here’s a man for no seeming reason, actually for doing good, is cast into prison. And now, there in the prison, he is not sitting and sulking, but he is serving the Lord. He is very faithful. So faithful that he is a man of industry. He is a man of integrity. And there in the prison, in a time of darkness and a time of persecution, he is serving God.

In the next chapter we’re going to find him witnessing to the butler and the baker who have also been cast into prison, and we’re going to find out that he is a man who, in the prison himself, could put his arms around these pagans and kindle in their pagan heart a knowledge of Jehovah God. The point being this; even when Joseph could not understand, he was not a fair weather Christian. He did not begin to pout. He did not get angry at God.

I’ve seen it so many times in my pastorate. I’ve seen church members who are some of the most faithful church members we’ve had. They sing in the choir, they witness, they tithe, they’re faithful, they’re happy, they’re joyful. But let a grandbaby die, or let a husband die, or let a sickness come. Let cancer come. Let something happen that doesn’t make any sense whatsoever. Do you know what they do? They drop out. They quit serving. They fold up. Don’t do it. Even when it doesn’t make sense, continue to serve the Lord. Keep singing. Keep praying. Keep giving. Keep witnessing. Keep



submitting. Joseph did, and the Bible says that, “God was with him.”

In chapter 39 verse 2, when Joseph is in Potiphar’s house and everything seems to be fine, things have turned for Joseph. The Bible says, “And God was with him.” But you look now in chapter 39 verse 21, when he is in prison. The same God that was with him in the good times is the God that was with him in the bad times.

Now, when it doesn’t make sense to you, number one, don’t demand to understand. Number two, don’t fail to be faithful. Don’t drop out. Keep on serving God, even when you don’t understand.

Number three; don’t bow to bitterness. Don’t get bitter. Now turn to chapter 40 if you will and look in verses 14 and 15. Joseph is now talking to a butler. The butler has been cast into prison and he’s going to be released from prison. And Joseph knows that because he’s a butler, he’s going to serve in the presence of Pharaoh, perhaps he can speak to Pharaoh in his behalf. And here’s what he says, “But think on me when it shall be well with thee,” that is, when you’re out of prison, “and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house. For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon.”

He said, “First of all, I was sold as a slave, and now I’m in the dungeon. I’ve done nothing wrong. Mr. Butler, when things have turned for you, when it’s well with you, would you put in a good word for me, because I need to get out of this place?”

Now, as I read that I thought about Joseph’s spirit and what a marvelous spirit that he had. As you read this, there is not a note of bitterness or complaint that is found there at all. It is a remarkable statement. He doesn’t even mention the name of his brothers who sold him into slavery. He doesn’t even mention Potiphar’s wife. He doesn’t mention Potiphar at all. He’s content to leave them with God.

Now, when things go wrong, when you’re serving God, and you’re punished for serving God, don’t get bitter. Here’s a good verse. First Peter chapter 2 verse 20, “For what glory is it if, when ye are buffeted for your faults, that ye take it patiently? But if, when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.” What a great verse to describe the life of Joseph so long ago.

We need to be very careful about this matter of bitterness. You’re going to find yourself not only dropping out when things don’t make sense, but if you’re not careful, you’re going to get very, very bitter. Bitter people are not nice to be around. Sometimes pastors get bitter. I know of a pastor who served a church for many, many years, and for some reason the people in that church turned on him, and they began to criticize him, and finally, they dismissed him. And this pastor said over and over again, “How could they do that to me? How could they do that to me after all that I did for them, after all that I did for them? How could they do that?” And he was very bitter. I thought, the shame is that he didn’t say, “After all I did for God.” Not for them, but for God. If you look to people to supply your needs, if you look for people to recognize your worth, you’re going to be disappointed in life. And you’re going to get bitter after a while. One of the greatest tests of life is this: not how you react when you’re punished for doing wrong, but how you react when you’re persecuted for doing right.

Joseph had done right, but there’s not a shred of bitterness in the life of Joseph. Why? Because



God was with him. And one of the reasons that God was with him was the attitude that he had.

Now, number four. When you don't understand, when life doesn't make sense, number four, do not be unwilling to wait. Do not be unwilling to wait. God will bring you out in His time.

Notice in Genesis chapter 40 verse 23, "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him." Now Joseph had said, "Look, when you get up there, when you get back into the presence of Pharaoh, remember me." But now, here is Joseph languishing in prison and the butler forgot him. And then you go down to Genesis chapter 41 verse 46, "And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt." All of this time, this boy, who had been sold into prison as a seventeen year old boy, is there year after year after year is passing. Many of those years he spent in prison.

Now, when you don't understand, don't get hasty, don't get feverish, and don't get impatient. Psalm 37 verses 5 through 9, listen to it, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him, fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, forsake wrath; fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off, but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the Earth." Over and over again in the Bible we're told to wait upon the Lord. When you don't understand, don't be unwilling to wait.

I was speaking about preachers. Another preacher said to me, who was in a hard spot, he said, "I know that God put me here. I just wonder if He remembers where He put me." God knows where you are. The very hairs of your head are numbered. And the God that was with Joseph when he was a lad, the God who was with Joseph when he was serving in Potiphar's house was the God who was with Joseph when he languished there, forgotten in prison.

Another good Scripture that I found; First Peter chapter 5 and verse 6, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." God has His schedule. When you don't understand, don't demand to understand, don't fail to be faithful, don't bow to bitterness. Friend, don't be unwilling to wait. God is never late, but He's never ahead of time. The Scripture that I read to you from Psalm 37 says that, "He will bring forth your righteousness as the noon day." It's like the sun coming up. One thing about the sun coming up is you can't hurry it and you can't stop it. And that's the way God is. God is always on time.

One time I was visiting with Senator Jesse Helms. Senator Jesse Helms said, "Adrian, I want to tell you a story that Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn told me." Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn was that brilliant Russian literary genius and dissident. Many of you have read after Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, a brilliant and a godly man. But because he was a dissident, when Communism was so powerful, he was put into a prison camp.

Later he was released, and he told Senator Helms this story, and Senator Helms told it to me. Solzhenitsyn said to Helms, "I hope you never know what real repression is." He told about how he was put into this labor camp, and they took from him all books, all writing material. There was no radio. There was no television. There was no input from the outside world, and the prisoners themselves were not allowed to communicate one with another. All day long, laborious,



backbreaking labor with Russian guards standing there, armed and ready to shoot anyone who tried to escape. Solzhenitsyn said this went on day after day after day. "I wondered if anybody even knew that I was here, much less did they care."

He said, "Finally, I decided that I would end my life. But," he said, "my faith would not allow me to do that. I knew it would be wrong for me to take my own life. But," he said, "my mind then became twisted and perverted." He said, "I had the idea that perhaps if I would try to escape, then they would shoot me, and I would not have taken my own life. They would have killed me." He said, "I know that was wrong, but my mind was twisted."

He said, "I found the day that I was going to do it. I was sitting under a tree. They'd given us a few moments from the work. I was sitting in the shade of a tree. I saw the Russian guard with his gun." He said, "I was ready to spring up. I'd almost put my hands on the ground, ready to spring up and run, to be shot in the back when," he said, "another man, a man that I'd never seen before, and perhaps I will never see again, perhaps was an angel, I don't know, but he came and stood in front of me. Remember, we were not allowed to communicate, not even to talk. But he looked into my eyes with a look of compassion and understanding, though not able to say a word." And he said, "He had a stick in his hand, a twig, and front of me on the ground he drew a cross and walked away." Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn said, "I knew that that was a message from God, and what I was about to do was wrong, and I settled back down." He said, "Little did I know that all over the world people were talking about me and in three days I would be a free man in Switzerland, in three days."

Wait on God. Don't be unwilling to wait. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. In due time, He'll lift you up. When you don't understand, friend, don't get feverish. Don't you hurry God.

Now, here's the last principle I want to give you when you don't understand, when life doesn't make sense. Don't let dreams dissolve, don't let your dreams dissolve. Joseph had a dream. That dream was put in his bosom when he was a teen. Now, what was the dream? The dream was that one day the world's resources and the world's rulers would be at his feet. His brothers thought it was a foolish dream. But I want you to look now in chapter 41 and begin in verse 37, if you will, with me and see what happened.

Now, I'm going to skip a lot of material for time's sake, but just remember this, that Joseph is now exalted. He's out of prison. He has now become the prime minister of Egypt. Genesis 41 verses 37 through 44, "And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said unto his servants, 'Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?' And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, 'Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art. Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.' And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, 'See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.' And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; And made him to ride in the second chariot which he had: and they cried before him, 'Bow the knee;' and he made him ruler over the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, 'I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.'" This was the dream that Joseph had had so long



ago. It was a God-given dream and Joseph never forgot it and God never forgot it.

I don't know who first said it, but a wise man said this, and it's one of the greatest statements I've ever heard. "Don't doubt in the dark what God has showed you in the light." The dark comes. Don't doubt in the dark what God has showed you in the light. God did not fail Joseph. And look up here and let me tell you something. God will not fail you! Did you hear that? He did not fail Joseph and God will not fail you. Don't you let your dreams dissolve.

No longer is his slave's hand a slave's hand. He's now wearing a royal ring. Off is the prison garb, on goes the beautiful garments that Pharaoh has put upon him. Off comes the iron chains and on goes a gold chain around his neck. God is faithful.

I've thought about it. You know what Pharaoh said? He said, listen, "Joseph, nobody in all the land is going to do anything, even move their hand, without your permission. Joseph, you're in charge of everything." Now, you remember it was Potiphar who was the head of the Egyptian guard. Can you imagine after the announcement is given, and here comes Joseph riding in the second chariot, and a herald goes out there, "Bow the knee! Bow the knee! Bow the knee!" And in all Egypt they're bowing down to this boy, this one who did not fail to be faithful, this one who did not demand to understand, this one who did not bow to bitterness, this one who was willing to wait.

Old Potiphar goes home. He and his wife are eating. He says to Mrs. Potiphar, "Wife, do you remember many years ago that you said there was a house slave that had tried to molest you? Do you remember that?" "Well, yes, I remember that." "Well, for your sake, I hope you were telling the truth. I report to him tomorrow." You think about it.

Oh, friend, there's coming a day, there is coming a day when God's going to make everything right. Don't you lose your faith when it doesn't make sense to you. Just because it doesn't make sense to you does not mean it will not make sense one day. Serve Jesus. Never quit. Give Him your heart. Give Him your life. And don't ever, ever, ever lose your dream. You say, "I never had a dream." Get one! Ha, ha, ha. Get one! The Bible says in Joel 2:28, "Your old men shall dream dreams." Get a dream. It's always too soon to quit, never too late to start.

Bow your heads in prayer. Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. Now, friend, you need to know Jesus because Jesus is the key to all of this. In the Old Testament, those saints looked forward to a coming Messiah. Today, we look backward to a Messiah who came. All of us look upward to Jesus when we're saved. Would you like to be saved? You can be saved today. Bow your heads and pray this prayer, "Dear God, I'm a sinner. My sin deserves judgment. But I want mercy. Lord, I do not want to die and go to Hell. I want to be saved. Jesus, You died to save me. You promised to save me if I would trust You. I do trust You. Come into my heart. Forgive my sin. Save me, Jesus." Did you pray that? "Save me, Lord Jesus. Save me, Jesus." Pray it. "Save me, Jesus, save me." Did you ask Him? By faith, thank Him for doing it. Say "Thank You, Lord Jesus, for saving me. I believe You've done it. I receive it by faith. I don't look for a feeling. I don't ask for a sign. I stand on Your Word. And now, Lord Jesus, begin to make me the person You want me to be. I'm weak, but You're strong. Help me to grow. And, Lord Jesus, I will make this public. I will not be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray. Amen."



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