

## Proving His Power in the P places notes for a sermon by Jennifer Kathleen Phillips 16.11.2019

While Fayleen Sparks was speaking/praying at a Women of Courage meeting I was suddenly in the Spirit. Although I saw no jar, it was as though something smashed and I saw what looked like a thick lightning bolt shape. Sparkly gold light then began swirling around like a ripple going out, and when it reached me I had a revelation and the beginning of a sermon about Joseph. It was for me, but not only for me.

Have you ever heard sermons about Joseph? Who did they focus on? Did they focus on Joseph's character or Gods? Did they focus on pride or promise? Did they make you think God was throwing Joseph into dark places to punish, discipline or chase the darkness from Him, or to humble him? I always felt sad when I heard these kind of sermons, because I knew the favour of God. His favour to me was like Josephs richly ornamented coat.

In Psalm 105 there is a summary of Joseph's life and I think the moral of the story here is worth looking at. It's a God focus and maybe this should be our focus too.

*Give thanks to the LORD, call upon His name; make known His deeds among the nations.*

*Sing to Him, sing praises to Him; tell of all His wonders.*

*Glory in His holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.*

*Seek out the LORD and His strength; seek His face always.*

**Remember** the wonders He has done, His marvels, and the judgments He has pronounced ...

*He sent a man before them—Joseph, sold as a slave. They bruised his feet with shackles and placed his neck in irons, until his prediction came true the word of the LORD tested him. The king sent and released him; the ruler of peoples set him free. He made him master of his household, ruler over all his substance, to instruct his princes as he pleased and teach his elders wisdom. Then Israel went to Egypt; Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham. And the LORD made His people very fruitful, more numerous than their foes ...*

It wasn't about **p**ride, but God **p**roving His **p**ower to save. He used the **p**rophetic in doing this.

This is the story of God providing, about His ability to save His people by sending and empowering a person - Joseph. This is the story of a man whom God spoke to in a dream like he had to his father before him. This prophetic word was like a goldsmith refining him. It proved true in the **p**it. It proved true in **P**otiphar's household. It proved true in **p**rison and it proved true in the **p**alace—in all the **P** places including persecution.

We can take a low view or a God view of things. This is a story of God's great love and favour upon one who was persecuted, hated by his brothers, and falsely accused. It is about God's ability to save and raise people up, no matter how low they are. It's about God doing something radical, going against the traditions and cultures of mankind to make a slave, a ruler. It's about God making one who was not entitled as the first born son, to receive a first-born's portion. It's about a person being given the ability to dream like his father and then being given much more than he could ever dream possible. It's about God giving a person faith to believe the impossible and demonstrating His ability to fulfil it against all odds.

*"until his prediction came true, the word of the LORD tested him."*

Did you notice it doesn't say it was the persecution, the pit or the prison or even the palace that refined or tested him. Yet that is so often what we hear preached. It was the word of God. God proved His word true in all the **p** places. And why did God favour Joseph? Because He is love. He knew what was about to happen and He **p**rovided a way of salvation for His people. He provided food in the famine and Joseph co-laboured with Him to bring this about.

So why have people majored on pride? I think sometimes we have the wrong idea about what pride is.

Pride as sin is based on a lie.

God showed Joseph the truth about the dream. It wasn't based in a lie. His father had given him a richly decorated garment possibly similar to those worn by virgin royals, maybe a band of jewels above the hand on the sleeves. This proved to be a prophetic act. Pharaoh also gave him royal clothes. Joseph was being bullied by his brother's hateful words. Perhaps he despaired and God encouraged him with prophetic dreams like his father had. His brothers hated him before the dreams

and couldn't say a peaceable word to him. They tested his prophecies. "Will you indeed rule over us?" -later Joseph tested his brothers. The prophetic word of God in Joseph's dream also tested him. Did you know it is through God's promises that we share His divine nature? How does that happen? It happens when we stand firm believing the truth against all odds.

Was it pride that made Joseph share the dreams? I don't think so. It is more likely the only way he could stand up against his brothers. I imagine them being merciless in their hateful words, their put downs, so he blurted out the dream.

I know a lady who was hated like this. One day she was with a group and people were taking photos. One person yelled out, "Get out of the way. We don't want you in our photo." How do you think the person felt? Full of pride? No more like rejected and downtrodden. She went away to be alone with the Lord to regain her composure.

We are told that Joseph pleaded with his brothers to listen to him. He wasn't a no-body. God had spoken to him in a dream like God had spoken to his father, and Joseph needed to stand on that promise. Although everyone around him might think him insignificant, God didn't. It's the same with us. No matter what others think, we are all significant. God has a purpose for each one of us.

Isaiah 14:12-14 gives some light on what pride really is about. "You said in your heart: "I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my **throne above the stars of God**. I will sit on the mount of assembly, in the far reaches of the north. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; **I will make myself like the Most High.**"

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Pride turns from God and focuses on self. It places self on the throne. It believes a lie that we can make ourselves a perfect or better person, that we have the power to rule and don't need God. The power we have is Christ Himself in us.

We know that pride came before a fall for Satan. He believed a lie about himself. He turned away from God, not realising he only reflected the power and the glory of God. The truth is ours is not the glory and the power. Pride says, I don't need God. By my own strength I am where I am. It says, I'm a self-made person. Many self-help books are based in pride speaking wisdom apart from relationship with God. The truth is, apart from Christ we can do no good thing.

Pride places oneself above God and wants to rule apart from His rulings and His relationship. Adam and Eve wanted this too. They wanted to be like God and have their own wisdom. In other words they wanted the wisdom without the relationship needed for it. They believed the lie that there could be wisdom apart from God.

We are not called to fix up the old nature, but make room for the new. The old nature was crucified with Christ. It was buried in baptism. Now we are a new creature, not by our own making. Now we make room for the Spirit of God. It's like turning on the light instead of chasing away the dark.

Should Joseph have shared his dream? His father had. We have a record of it. Isaiah shared his vision. We have a record of that too. Other prophets were told to write theirs down. There is nothing wrong in sharing the dream. Was Joseph's timing out? It is presumption and speculation to say so. We aren't told. But he did need to remind himself about what God said about him, and not believe the lies his brothers probably spoke to him. His brother's certainly purposed to lie to their father and spoke in such a way that their father believed a lie.

Was this a story about God flogging the pride out of Joseph? Pride is based on a lie and Joseph didn't lie.

The dream was not a lie. It was the truth. No matter where he was, God's favour was upon him. Nothing was too hard for God. God's favour would stay on him no matter what others did to try and rob him of it. God had favoured him for a purpose, so that he could in turn show favour to others including his family.

Did Joseph believe he had the power within himself to fulfil the dream? He tried to once by taking off his garment, the symbol of his slave status and leaving it behind with Potiphar's wife. In effect he was saying, "I will not be your slave." And he ran away. If he thought he could bring about the fulfilment of the dreams, he quickly saw he couldn't. He was placed in prison, which proved to be a safer place than Potiphar's household because of his seductive wife. Through his troubles Joseph may have come to know without a doubt that the power belonged to God. He certainly knew God was the one who gave interpretations and God was the one to go to for interpretations of the prophetic. Listen to what he says to Pharaoh:

*"Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it."*

*"I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "but **God** will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."*

*And Pharaoh's reply, "Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since **God** has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you."*

In this Bible Story, God shows the world that nothing is impossible for Him. Joseph shared a dream about something that went against his cultural traditions. A slave becoming a co-ruler with the highest ruler in the land? Not possible ... or is it? In Christ we become co-labourers, joint heirs and part of the most powerful royal family there is.

Let's take a high view, not a low one. We are God's workmanship. Stand on the word of God. Hold fast to His promises even in the most trying of times. Let them be proved true in you.