What Difference Does God Make? October 1, 2023

*Genesis 41:1-16 Series: God at Work When We Can’t See Him*

To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible. — Thomas Aquinas

Intro: What drove Ricky Gervais away from faith in Jesus

1. He can give you peace when you feel powerless
2. Even powerful people will be made to feel their weakness

vv. 7-8 *And the thin ears swallowed up the seven plump, full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and behold, it was a dream. So in the morning his spirit was troubled*

v. 8 *… he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was none who could interpret them …*

1. Even weak people can experience strength in God

v. 15 *And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “… I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.”*

v. 16 *Joseph answered Pharaoh, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.”*

John 16:33 *I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation.*

2 Corinthians 12:9 *But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”*

* Joseph promised Pharaoh a “favourable answer.” In what sense was it not very favourable? In what sense was it favourable?
* What did Jesus mean when He says that in Him we can have peace even in a world of tribulation?
* How can God’s grace be “sufficient” in times of weakness?

1. He can make you fruitful in your affliction
2. Nobody is spared affliction

vv. 30-32 *The famine will consume the land, and the plenty will be unknown in the land by reason of the famine that will follow, for it will be very severe. And the doubling of Pharaoh's dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about.*

1. God helps us cope with affliction

vv. 35-36 *And let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine that are to occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine.*

1. God can make us fruitful in affliction

v. 52 *The name of the second he called Ephraim, “For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.”*

2 Corinthians 1:*6 If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer.*

* Why do people assume that God’s no good if He doesn’t fix our problems?
* What are some of the ways that God helps us to cope with affliction?
* In what way had God made Joseph “fruitful” in his afflictions?
* What are some of the ways that God can make us “fruitful” as we go through trials?

1. He’ll redeem all our losses
2. One day, the wait will be over and God’s relief will rush in

v. 1 *After two whole years ...*

v. 14 *Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they quickly brought him out of the pit.*

1. One day, all of God’s promises will be perfectly fulfilled

v. 42 *Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck.*

Revelation 19:8 *… it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.*

v. 43 *And they called out before him, “Bow the knee!” Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt.*

1. One day, our suffering will just be a footnote to glory

v. 51 *Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh. “For,” he said, “God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house.”*

Revelation 21:4 *He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.*

* What would it mean for Joseph to be clothed in fine linen and a gold chain after having the robe from his father torn from him and the robe from Potiphar left behind?
* In what sense could Joseph not forget all that he had been through? In what sense did he forget his hardships?
* How will we be able to spend eternity without crying given all that we suffer in this life?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Genesis 42:6-22

Notes