

Genesis 41:1–45

“God Who Humbles the Proud and Exalts the Lowly”

What are we to learn from Joseph’s meteoric rise from prison to palace? Pastor leads his family in today’s “Hopewell @Home” passage. In these forty-five verses, we learn that the Lord lifts Joseph up in such a way that he and we will know that our God is One who lifts up the lowly like Joseph while simultaneously bringing down the proud like Pharaoh and Egypt. This is His pattern in history, and even more so in redemption, in an ultimate way.

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Genesis 41 beginning in verse 1 going through verse 45, these are God's words, so let us be careful how we hear. Then it came to pass at the end of two full years. That Pharaoh had a dream. And behold he stood by the river. Suddenly there came up out of the river seven cows.

Fine and looking and fat. And they fed in the meadow. Then behold seven other cows came up after them out of the river ugly and gone stood by the other cows on the bank of the river. And the ugly and gone to cows ate up the seven fine looking and fat cows.

So far all walk. He slept and dreamed a second time and suddenly seven heads of grain came up on one stock plump and good. And behold seventh thin heads blighted by the east winds sprang up after them. When the seventh in heads devoured the seven plump and full heads.

So far oh and indeed it was a dream. Now I came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled. And he sent and cold for all the magicians of Egypt. And all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh.

Then the Chief Butler spoke to Pharaoh saying, I remember my faults today. When Pharaoh was angry with his servants and he put me in custody in the house of the captain the card both me and the chief baker. We each had a dream in one night he and I each illustreamed.

According to the interpretation of his own dream. There was a young Hebrew man with us there.

Her hair was messing up in her eyes and she was trying to wipe her hair out of her face and lost her balance almost fell backwards on my lap and I grabbed her to pull her back in my arm was not right there. We don't need an explanation just.

Required sweetie, finish reading. You're okay. I didn't mean to hurt you. Are you okay? It's really okay. I didn't want you to fall into hurt.

That's good. Give me a hug.

Are you able to?

Serve into the captain of the guard and we told him. And he interpreted our dreams for us. To each man, he interpreted according to his own dream. And it came to pass just as the interpreted for us so that happened. He restored me to my office and he hanged him.

Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon. And he shaved changed his clothing and came to Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Joseph. I've had a dream. When there is no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream to interpret it.

So Joseph answered Pharaoh saying it is not me. God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace. Then Pharaoh said to Joseph behold. In my dream. I stood on a bank on the bank of the river. Suddenly seven cows came up out of the river fine looking and fact. And they fed in the in the meadow.

Then behold seven other cows came up after them poor. And very ugly and gone. Such ugliness as I have never seen in all the land if Egypt. And the gaunt and ugly cows ate up the first seven the fat cows. When they had eaten them up no one would have known that they had eaten them for they were just as ugly as at the beginning.

So, I woke. Also, I saw on my dream and suddenly seven heads came up on one stalk full and good. And behold seven heads withered thin and blighted by the east wind sprang up after them. And the thin heads devoured the seven good heads. So I told this to the magicians but there was no one who could explain it to me.

And Joseph said to Pharaoh. The dreams of Pharaoh are one. God has shown Pharaoh, but he is about to do. The seven good cows are seven years. And the seven good heads are seven years. The dreams are one. And the seventh inn and ugly cows which came up after them are seven years.

And the seven empty heads blighted by the East Wind are seven years a famine. This is the thing which I have spoken to Pharaoh God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. Indeed seven years of great plenty will come through out all the land of Egypt. But after them, seven years of famine will arise.

And all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt. And the famine will deplete the land. So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following for it will be very severe. And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God and God will shortly bring it to pass.

Now therefore let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man. And set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this and let him appoint officers over the land to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that are coming and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh and let them keep food in the cities.

Then, That food shall be as I reserve for the land for the seven years of fabric, which will be in the land of Egypt that the land may not perish during the famine. So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh. And in the eyes of all his servants.

And Pharaoh said to his servants. Can we find such a one as this a man in whom is the spirit of God. And Pharaoh said to Joseph in as much as God has shown you all this there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house and all my people shall be ruled according to your word.

Only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you. And Pharaoh said to Joseph see I have set you over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck.

And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had and they cried out before him bow the knee. So he set him over all the land of Egypt. Fair also said to Joseph I am Pharaoh. But without your consent no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

The sense this reading of God's inspired and. Earned word, yes John. At the end. He means that Joseph is in charge of everyone and everything that everyone does no man may lift hand or foot and all the land of you did. So except for according to which Joseph says.

All right, so.

I'm beginning of the chapter. Joseph thinks it's gonna be three days. Until he gets lifted up out of the dungeon and sent back. To his homeland but it says it came to pass at the end of two full years the reason it says full ears in your New King James because the original actually says two years of days.

Often years as approximate when it says two years of days, it's saying it's as exactly two years. So that can mean two full years. Here and it will be important when we come to talk about Pharaoh that it was exactly two years, but it also if you're thinking from Joseph's perspective as.

I think as humanly speaking as our primary perspective in this section in the book of Genesis. Two years of days reminds us that it's very many more than three days. 730 days three days and three days and three days and three days until you have done that. 243 times plus one.

Okay, so as a long time, well Joseph ever be lifted up. And then by the end of the passage. He says, I am Pharaoh, but without your consent, no man may lift his hand or foot. In all the land of Egypt. And he gives him a new name when he gives him a wife who is of a high plate of high position.

I class and Joseph goes out over all the land of Egypt. So basically Joseph Farris says, I will retain the name of Pharaoh but you will have all of the authority of Pharaoh. Sometimes in ancient Egyptian politics and government there was a man called the Zir. And the Vizier depending on who the Pharaoh was at the time would have approximately half the duties whatever the Pharaoh

didn't feel like doing.

And he would answer to the Pharaoh for how he was doing in his half of the duties and then Pharaoh would do the half of the duties that he liked the best. Pharaoh is saying I know that we're just supposed to get a man to oversee the collecting of the green tax during the full years so that we would do well during the famine years but I've decided to do one better than you have recommended to me and chosen you for that position.

I want you to do all of the ruling in all of the land and I will just keep having the name of the pharaoh and taking the credit and enjoying myself. I'm not going to enjoy any of the work. I'm going to enjoy all of the perks and you do all of the work.

So Joseph starts in the dungeon and ends for all practical purposes like a second Pharaoh. Over all the land of Egypt and this is in large part an account of how it is God who lifts Joseph up. And Joseph wants Pharaoh to know. That it is God who does these things is very important for Joseph himself to know that it is God who does this because Joseph is would be at one point in this passage very tempted to make it sound like Joseph is good or Joseph is great.

He's been lifted up to some extent halfway through he's no longer in the dungeon anymore, he's in the palace. He's no longer rough looking shape like a homeless man prisoner, whatever he is clean, shaven. He's no longer in his nasty torn worn clothes, he's been given new clothes. But he's standing before Pharaoh and it's similar to like the chief baker right the chief.

Baker got lifted halfway up. But only his head went all the way in the previous chapter, that was not good. And when he's in this halfway position. Pharaoh says, I've heard it said about you. That you can do this now the temptation at that point is to say you're right.

I sure can. I'm the guy for you they told you right you will not regret pulling me out of that dungeon. But does Joseph make it sound like it's in him the ability or the wisdom is in him he's no. Joseph answered Pharaoh saying it has not me. God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace does that sound familiar?

That's because it's our memory verse now there's some translation work we need to do here because he doesn't actually even say it is not in me he just very abruptly answers in the Hebrew not me.

And the word that's translated peace is shalom but shalom has a broader sense of completeness and wholeness and perfection and Joseph is saying. Not me. God will completely answer you you'll answer every aspect of what you need answered that will all come from God and none of it will come from me.

Not an answer of peace necessarily Joseph hadn't even heard the dream yet, he may not know but kind of answer it might be an answer of devastation and in some respect it will be but we need to remember. That God is the God who lifts up the downcast who lifts up the lowly and praise God, that's true because no one has gone so low.

As man who was created in God's image to have fellowship with God and we rejected him and brought ourselves under his wrath and made ourselves worthy of the hell prepared for the devil and his angels. And yet God for those who have come into that condition. That we all begin in.

Has given his son. Who went there with us and even though he knew no sin and himself became sin. Any suffered the wrath of the wrath of God on the cross for us. So God is the one. Who lifts up the lowly and he shows this many times throughout his working in providence where there have been many occasions in Scripture many occasions in history where those who are despised neglected mistreated.

God brings a great reversal. And he lifts them up and it is a general principle humble yourself in the side of the Lord and he will lift you up because he is God who looks upon the afflicted and the lowly. This is one of the great comforts in the Psalms because many of God's people find themselves in this life in difficult situations and in lowly condition and yet God has given us so much in his work to praise him for as far as his hearing the cries of the lowly.

That's why we'll be singing. Psalm 138 after the sermon. That's just it's just one of the many many Psalms in which that is a subject we god doesn't just lift up the lowly as he here lifts up. Joseph but God also humbles the proud. He humbles the proud. It's um, very important that this takes place at the river verse one.

Fair had a dream and finally he behold he stood by the river. The Nile was thought to give Egypt much of its life. In some Egyptian writings, they referred to the land of Egypt as the gift from the Nile.

Can't remember now the name of the God it started with an H and has a P in it but it's not Hippy um, Pepsi happy I think. Anyway, there was a personification of the Nile who was supposedly the God who had given them the land of Egypt and it is by the river that the fine-looking and the last time we saw that that particular phrase it was used of Joseph beautiful a form of an

appearance and before that it was used of Rachel.

And now we have fine looking and fat cows. Exactly as I should be if there by the Nile the Nile the Great River of the Great Egypt should produce great cows. In fact, when he talks to the Egyptians Pharaoh does not say not like I've seen in all the land of Egypt because everybody would have known that we don't have lean and ugly cows in the land of Egypt, but when he does end up talking to this Hebrew whom he has brought up to from the dungeon.

He feels like he has to explain to him why it would be so bad. So troubling. To see an uglier skinny cow by the Nile. An Egypt. We don't have ugly skinny stuff like that here. We are the great Egypt of the great Nile. So he's very proud, isn't he but he yes.

Mom just noticing he's not as proud as the Pharaoh who. Our. Because if you look at verse 38, he's a barista's servants, can we stand and find a man like this and who is the spirit of God, whereas the Pharaoh at? Moses's time says God is before you Raw.

Okay, well there were many gods in Egypt and Moses's time it was raw verse Yahweh. This pharaoh has been humbled because and here we're back to the two full years of days that it is on his birthday and this is a pharaoh who thinks that his birthday is something big, right?

It's very similar to annually at the feast in the time of pilot he would do them a favor and he would bring up a, Prisoner. For the greatness of the day of the feast to kind of show some superficial state honor to a 12 this pharaoh shows this state honor to himself on his birth day.

He had raised up the butler and the baker and now we have this exact period of time two full years or two years of days 730 days later and it's his birthday and who knows what great things he had planned for the next. Day and then he has these dreams.

Behold how silly? Puffed up easily deflated and brought down as the pride of man. Here's a pharaoh who thought his birthday is the great holiday of the year. And the whole thing is blown up because he had some bad dreams. Now to be true to be certain these were prophetic dreams, and since you've never had a prophetic dream and I haven't.

Then. We do not know exactly what it is like to have one. Certainly we know from the previous chapter that the Butler and the Baker understood that you know, they hadn't just had some bad fish the day before or whatever that their dreams meant something and Pharaoh knows his dreams mean something and he has brought very low brought so low in fact that he they have to get a Hebrew slave prisoner.

To help him. The whole life of the nation of Egypt comes to a screeching halt. And he has been humbled and there is his these seven ugly and thin cows show us the contrast with the pride of Egypt and is actually from Joseph that Pharaoh learns to say we need someone who in whom is the spirit of God.

Basically what he's saying there is alright you're explanation for why you understood this is that it was from God well we could use some more of that from God stuff to help us run things the next 14 years. So here's Pharaoh who is pantheistic Pharaoh who thinks that he himself is the raw God incarnate Pharaoh who thinks his birthday is this great day and in one quick strike.

God humbles him to the ground. Because he has brought home the certainty and the soonest that's what Joseph says about why there are two dreams he says there's two reasons why there are true dreams one is because it is certain it's friendly established in the plan of God and the other the other reason is that it's swift it is happening shortly and so Pharaoh is so impacted by how bad it was to see the the seven lean cows or the seven bloodless heads.

Swallow up what was before that he is he's willing to give it all up. So long as Egypt has not destroyed he understands that the existence of the land. Hangs in the balance so raw can't save it and the Nile can't save it. His he needs the God whose spirit is in this guy standing in front of him.

To save it and that's actually a great mercy to the land of Egypt, isn't it? Because of God had not graciously given Pharaoh not just to be humbled externally but also to be humbled internally Egypt would not have been saved. But because God paired the work that he was about to do and that he had done by the dreams God paired the work that he had done by the dreams with a work that he did in Pharaoh's heart, he did humble himself.

And the land of Egypt the land of Canaan Jacob. Leia. Bill has helped the boys. Dina the 70 who were all in Canaan, they're all saved in this way from the famine. And so not only are we to trust in the Lord and look to him when we are in a low estate knowing that when the time is right, he who has decided that he is going to lift us up all the way to being conformed to the image of his son.

He who is going to do that he's going to do that. But the counterpart to that is if ever we think highly of ourselves we need to kill that pride and humble ourselves and if ever we fear someone who seems to be high and mighty we need to kill that fear and

remember that God will devastate them in a moment as soon as the usefulness of their position has ended in the plan of God.

And whenever we're tempted to trust in or seek to trust in the favor of someone who is high and mighty like the government or even trust in for instance your dad. I am the highest and mightiest person in this house. And yet if God is gracious to me, he will give me humble heart like he gave Pharaoh by the end of this passage and one of the things that you learned from this passage is it although you be thankful to God for whatever he does through me and to whatever extent he gives you wise and good and godly leadership in the home through me yet you do not put your trust in me.

You do not put your trust in those on earth who seem to have position and power you do not curry their favor you do not try to get their their favor as your hope for things going well with you you serve them you honor them because God has set them over you but you put your trust in God.

Who is soon as the position and the influence and the prosperity has served its usefulness, it's purpose in his plan he will bring the high and mighty down. And he exalts the lowly. So that's the teaching of this passage those are the two main things for you to be listening for when we hear this portion preached tomorrow, that's probably.

Father in heaven we thank you that. Although the timing of your lifting Joseph up was not as expected yet it was perfect and we pray that you had grant to us contentment in low condition that we would not despair and be discouraged have confidence. Because you have revealed yourself in scripture and most especially so in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as God who lifts up the downcast.

And we pray that you would help us Lord neither to be proud of ourselves nor to fear those who are proud nor to trust in them or live to please them as opposed to trusting in you. And living to please you and how we are and surf. Before we know oh God that all rule and authority ultimately belongs to you.

So we rejoice to place ourselves in your hands and we do ask that whether for me in the home or the elders of the church or those who are in various positions of authority and leadership in the civil government that you would give to us that great gift of humbleness of heart.

That those who understand and decide and act in accordance with your wisdom and your word would be the ones who are entrusted with leading and administering in each of these spheres the home the church and the nation. We thank you Lord for the picture of yourself that you give to us in this passage.

And we pray that you would make us to remember always that it is not us but that your answer is always perfect and that ultimately in Jesus your answer is always peace for us. He is the Prince of Peace through whom we ask these things and in his name we pray.

Amen.