

December 08, 2020

Where You Belong

Shalom,

Every one of us, at some point in our lives, will face trials that will be a test to our faith. We have within us what it takes to overcome, to trust in God and claim the victory He has promised. Wrong choices can make every challenge an opportunity for defeat. This faulty thinking makes people victims, feeling sorry for themselves and blaming others for their plight. It is wonderful to know that those who recognize the grace of God and His power working in them will, instead, be strengthened to resist evil and realize the great potential within themselves. This is seen clearly in the life of Joseph in the Torah portion for this week found in **Genesis 37:1—40:23**, which is called **Vayeishev**, and is translated, **“And he settled.”** In studying the words used in this text, it is indicated that this settling has to do with Jacob returning to home, or the place where he belonged. Jacob returned to the land of Israel, to the place God had set for him. Jacob was severely tested during his time away from the land of promise, and his sons were witnesses to the testing he endured. Although Joseph was younger than all but one of his brothers, he seems to have had a remarkably close relationship with his father, listening to him and watching him, as Jacob drew closer to God.

This relationship must have given Joseph understanding of God’s way of doing things and greatly influenced his sense of godliness as he paid attention to Jacob and patterned his life in the same manner. This becomes evident in the way he handled adversity, for Joseph’s circumstances, through many years of his life, were anything but easy. Notice how, during difficult testing, he endured and remained steady in his trust in God, bringing the favor of YHWH into every difficult situation he encountered. He yielded himself to being used as an instrument to do good in times of pressure, and was qualified by testing to accept a place of amazing responsibility over his former captors. He is a powerful example of the grace invested in those who truly submit themselves to God.

The life of Joseph, as recorded in Scripture, is a reminder that, even though God had chosen Joseph and showed him what was in his future, the fulfillment of the dreams seemed slow in coming, and every indication in the natural made the dreams appear impossible. Joseph, because of his training and adherence to the instructions Jacob had imparted to him, was diligent and **self-disciplined** to the point, that even when in a strange land and culture, under the adversity of slavery and the temptation of immorality, stood firm in the Torah of his father. It is true that his deliverance and promotion came in one day, but **the patient endurance in following a lifestyle of discipline** lasted through years of severity and mistreatment, separation from the ones he loved, hard-labor, and imprisonment. Even as a slave and a prisoner, Joseph stood for God and His teaching. Yes, Joseph had a great call of God upon his life, but don’t miss the fact that, as he endured hardship, **he was never a victim**. Joseph, because he chose to walk in God’s teaching and instruction and, because he never let go of the assignment God had given

him, through many temptations, made his calling and election sure. God had, in every difficult circumstance, seen to it that Joseph walked in victory until he became Prime Minister of Egypt.

For it is a grace when someone, because he is mindful of God, bears up under the pain of undeserved punishment. For what credit is there in bearing up under a beating you deserve for doing something wrong? But if you bear up under punishment, even though you have done what is right, God looks on it with favor. Indeed, this is what you were called to; because the Messiah too suffered, on your behalf, leaving an example so that you should follow in His steps. (1 Peter 2:19-21 CJB)

We have all been given grace and amazing gifts to fulfill the ministry God has placed upon us. There will be attacks leveled at us to deter us from fulfilling our ministry in the Body of Messiah, but when we submit and are disciplined to endure, the promised harvest will be gathered.

So let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we don't give up. Therefore, whenever we have an opportunity, let us do good toward all—especially those who belong to the household of faith. (Galatians 6:9-10 TLV)

Yes, you yourselves planned evil against me. God planned it for good, in order to bring about what it is this day—to preserve the lives of many people. (Genesis 50:20 TLV)

Abiding in Him,
Terry

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