

Joseph

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Preacher: Rev Neil Shaw

[0 : 00] in our studies in this book. In his book, Expository Messages from the Book of Genesis, Robert S. Canlis, who was one of the disruption fathers of the preacher, writes regarding this part of the Book of Genesis.

For the most part indeed, comment serves rather to weaken than enforce the teaching of the spirit in this matchless biography. It really tells its own tale and suggests its own morals throughout, so clearly and so pathetically that it might seem best to leave it to make its own impressions, undiluted and unadulterated by the reflection, however sound, of ordinary exposition. And how much we do agree with what Canlis has to say there. And how inadequate we know any exposition of ours will be, as tonight we endeavour to learn once again some spiritual truth derives some spiritual benefits from the narrative before us here.

Now I feel that it is only right before I go any further also to remind myself and yourselves also that there are quite a number of reformed scholars who do not see Christ being typified in the person of Joseph at all. I am sure that some of you at least know that, perhaps all of you do.

There are those in the reformed church today who do not believe that Joseph was a type of Christ in any sense. However there are those who do, who do see in Joseph and his experience as much of what is analogous to what we find recorded in the Gospels, rather, concerning Christ.

For example there is Robert Candlish himself. I will quote him. He says, that his resemblances of a more or less typical character cannot fail to be observed between him, that is, between Joseph and Christ and between his varied life and that of our Lord.

[2 : 44] John Calvin says, in the person of Joseph, a lively image of Christ is presented in his commentary on the book of Genesis and chapter 37. Patrick Fairbairn, whose book, the typology of scripture, is a masterpiece which has not been surpassed by anyone, says, especially in the history of Joseph, the representative of the covenant in its earlier stage, was there given a wonderful similitude of him in whom its powers and blessings were to be concentrated in their entire fullness.

And I could go on and quote from other authorities with whom I myself agree and many others, but I thought it's only right that I should emphasize that there are the others who will not accept that.

Now turning together this evening to this chapter 39 in the book of Genesis, we notice that this here is not a mere continuation of what we saw in chapter 37 together.

In chapter 39 we have a new beginning in the type, as it were. And I want to look upon this chapter and learn from it much that is beneficial to ourselves in the example given, of our Lord Jesus Christ himself. And we see here first of all that Joseph becomes a servant. He who was the beloved of his father, at that special place in his father's favour, as we notice together, who was hated by his brethren, and who was sold by them, goes down to Egypt and there he becomes a servant. Joseph was brought down to Egypt and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the garden Egyptian, bottom of the hands of Ishmaelite, which brought him down hither. And the Lord was with Joseph and he was a prosperous man.

And he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian. He was in his house as a servant. And I think immediately we see the contrast, do we not, from what he had been to what he now is.

[5 : 17] From being in his father's house, and being favoured in such a wonderful way by his father, enjoying the comfort of that home life, the blessings of family life, now to be a servant in Egypt.

Now we must keep in mind all the time that Egypt was the very epitome of that. It was against all that the family of Jacob's support.

We know that in Egypt, we know that in Egypt, there was everything that was opposed to all that this godly family believed in.

And so we find Joseph, a servant in Egypt. We find him there in conditions that were totally contrary to what he had been accustomed to.

In other words, this is not his natural condition, as it were. He is not found as he had been since his birth.

[6 : 28] In a remarkable way, a most remarkable way, by a train of events and circumstances completely out of the ordinary, he is now subjected to this servitude, to be a servant.

Now why was this? How did it come about? Well, we read further on that he himself, that is Joseph himself, ascribes this to a divine act.

He tells his brother, be not greedy, nor angry with yourselves, that you sold me hither.

It was not you that sent me hither, but God. God sent me here. It is God, overruling in all matter, that accounts for my being here in Egypt.

And how great a blessing it was to be. It was already indeed as he spoke last to his brethren that God had done so.

[7 : 46] Because the purpose of God, in so sending him down to Egypt, bringing him into this state, was one of mercy and salvation.

It was not you that sent me hither, but God, he said, to preserve life, to save you life, with a great deliverance.

And surely, my friends, therein we see that which is illustrative of what was true in regard to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Because he is the one who was in the bosom of the Father. He is the one who is God and with God. The Word who is God. The Word who is with God.

But he is the one who took upon him the form of a servant, as Paul tells us in the epistle to the Philippians. He took upon him the form of a servant.

[9 : 01] God speaks of him, behold my servant whom I uphold. It was Christ who voluntarily became God's servant. And why? What was the purpose therein?

We see God's sovereign mercy. His love for a lost world. His care for sinners such as you and me. It was not you that sent me hither.

Surely we can say that concerning the Jews and Christ on the cross. They were the instruments in the hands of God. Guilty instruments. They cannot escape the guilt of their sins. But at the same time, surely, he was sent there according to the predetermined counsel of God.

Christ is the one who voluntarily came to be the servant of God.

Came into this world. Came to give himself a ransom for our sins. Christ is the one who is the servant of God. Who is as the servant of God, of Jehovah.

[10 : 08] Glorify the Father on our behalf. And entered into the sufferings that were his. For the good of our souls. Now, as we consider him then as the servant of God, there are certain things told us here about him that we mustn't overlook.

And the first thing we notice is this. That as a servant of God, he was a prosperous servant. And the Lord was with Joseph. And he was a prosperous man. He was a prosperous man.

Now, looking upon Joseph simply, first of all, as a man, we must recognize that God prospered him. He was like that man of whom we sang together tonight in Psalm 1.

The man who walketh not a strain counsel upon godly men. The man who sits not in the scorner's chair. The man who places his delight upon the law of God.

He shall be like a tree that grows near planted by a river weary. A man who is blessed of God. And therefore, a man who's of birth.

[11 : 18] Now, we believe that this is true both temporally and spiritually in regard to such as are the Lord. Or it may be that God will bring his people at times into conditions of adversity and difficulty and trial.

And denies them much of this world's would-be good things. But that doesn't really matter. And no matter whether they prosper are in prosperity or adversity. They are a blessed people, temporally. I don't believe the man of God ever looks upon his provident other than in the sense that he sees the good hand of God in it. Whether he is prospering or otherwise.

Of course, the words don't necessarily here apply to worldly prosperity. We believe they do. And that is, here they do refer rather to worldly prosperity.

But I don't believe that we have to apply them always in regard to worldly prosperity. These, Joseph said how? He prospered.

[12 : 18] God prospered him where he was. Even in Egypt. Among his enemies. And as a man of God, he enjoyed much, dare even, of this world's prosperity.

We believe that we must apply the truth of God regarding prosperity to spiritual prosperity in particular. There are none who walk in God's ways but will prosper spiritually. There are none who walk in God's ways but will know the blessing of Almighty God upon them. And if you and I are denied the blessing of God, we must ask ourselves honestly tonight. Is it because I'm not walking with God as I ought? You remember a time when you're dead. You remember well when, spiritually speaking, you were flourishing. You were like that tree that grows near planted by the river.

Which reels its fruit in season. You are decrying your lack of fruitfulness. Is it because you're not walking with the Lord, my friend? Is it because you've gone astray?

[13 : 24] Perhaps you've stood for a while with the world. It may even be that you've sat with this corner. If so, you needn't expect God to prosper you spiritually or otherwise.

But this man was one who walked in God's ways. Who knew the prosperity that the Lord gives to his own.

But surely we can apply this truth especially to our Lord Jesus Christ himself. And regarding him, God's words spoke that the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

And ah, my friends, it is good to know that that was true of Christ. Behold my servant, you see, whom I uphold. And he was upheld of God even in his time of trial.

In his time of suffering. There was never a moment but that God was with him. And he was with him as he went through all. But he had to endure as the servant of Jehovah.

[14 : 34] As the one who is the head of the covenant of grace. As the one who is the head of the church. And in a rumor said, suffered what he did.

But you will notice, secondly, that as a servant, Joseph here was made a blessing to others. And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, that is the man in Egypt, and for all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake.

Have you ever thought of that? Remember, God hasn't changed in his dealings with his people in any way. God hasn't changed. His grace hasn't changed. And he hasn't changed with his dealings in any way.

Oh, we're under the New Testament, yes. But that means that what he has done to the Old Testament is in measure. He is now doing to us in greater measure.

And here we have this man of God, Joseph, in Egypt. We find him there, serving in his house, greatly blessed of all, God, prospering under the hand of God, and others prospering because of him, because of his very presence there.

[15 : 52] I wonder if that is true of us. Are we, light shining in this world, blessed of God, and instrumental in blessing others, in bringing blessing to others?

It ought to be true of us that we bring blessings to others. He are the light of the world. The world is in darkness. He are the salt of the earth.

Without the church of Christ, the earth would rot, if you like. The earth, the world, is being preserved on account of the seed of the kingdom of God in the hearts of God's people in the world.

I am not talking of the physical world of God. I am talking of what is true in general, in the church, in the spiritual sphere.

Friends, are we shining light in this world? Are we bringing good to others? As we prosper ourselves, indeed, are others prospering with us? I have asked that, not in the temporal sense, necessarily, but even there we might ask the question, but I am asking it particularly in the spiritual sense.

[16 : 54] Do people profit from being in our company, spiritually speaking? Do we praise Christ to them? Do we tell them about Christ? Oh, no, you see, but I tell people they ought to go to church, but why?

See, they don't ask you why you ask them to come to church. I wish they would, and I hope you have the right answer. Tell them that Christ is preached in the church, and that salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ, and faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God.

Tell them that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the means God has appointed, whereby people are saved from their sins and the consequences of it. Don't just tell people they're sinners.

It's good to tell them that, but perhaps they already know that to a measure. But what we ought to tell them is this, that Christ is saved from sins, that he is the saviour of the world, that he can save to the uttermost.

God can, all who come to him, by Jesus Christ. We know that the world has been blessed for Christ's sake.

[17 : 58] Not just one household, as it was true of Joseph, but the whole world. In him shall the world be blessed. People shall be blessed, and they shall bless him.

And that is what is so wonderfully good tonight to know. And to keep in mind, on life's way, that the blessings of the covenant of grace, the promises of the covenant of grace, are all yea and amen in Jesus Christ.

And that through him, God has purposed to bless this sin-sick world in which we live. And bring out from among all nations in this world, a people who throughout the ages of eternity will sing the praises of the Lamb.

Have you begun to sing it yourself, my friends? Have you begun to sing the praises of the Lord? Do you know the joy of the Lord? Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you rejoice in Christ evermore? That's what God's word tells us to do. And again I say rejoice. How can you rejoice in Christ if you don't know Christ? I find that's not until you do.

[19 : 12] But you will notice, and perhaps this is what comes out most clearly of all in this chapter before us here, that Joseph was of a noble character. What a beautiful character he was.

What an example to all this man was. See how the very enemies of God's people in Egypt treated this man on account of his character.

First of all, his master saw that the Lord was with him. And that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand.

And Joseph found grace in his sight and served him. And he made him overseer over his house.

And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake.

And the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in his house and in the field. He left all that he had in Joseph's hand and you do not all he had save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person and well favoured.

[20 : 31] He was distinguished from the very outset. From the moment he went into that house there was a certain air of distinction about him. He had character.

The character that comes from a godly life. We talk of a dynamic personality. What do we mean by that? I hope we mean a man filled with the Holy Ghost.

Strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Who is not ashamed to own his Lord and to honour his law. That is the law of his God. This is the kind of man Joseph was.

An upright man. There was a certain divine gracefulness about him. He stood out. He was a type of man who won men's hearts.

His master thought much of him. That's why he left everything in his hands. He didn't he had no worries or concerns but because Joseph was in control.

[21 : 36] That is the kind of man he was. And of course he was a man highly esteemed by God himself. That is what made him what he was. A goodly person. A well favoured man.

Ah we look for the favour of the world my friends. And we think a lot of being thought highly of in the world. By the world. It doesn't matter one which what the world thinks about it my friends.

Providing God thinks much about it. And you can rest assured of this if you walk in God's way. And if you obey the word of God and serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not that you will seek honour if you do that but you will receive it. People will take note that you have been with Jesus and they will see something about you. They will recognise in your character in your personality one who is dependable.

Have you ever noticed for example when you go into some stores particularly in the city and perhaps it's not so noticeable to some or to others of us who have old office in the church but I very often find that once a person recognises you as one who is a Christian I'm not saying that people in general in the world and in stores and super stores do recognise Christians in the highest sense of that word but I know that whenever I show my identity as a minister of the gospel more often than not people will they trust you and it should be so it should be so that as the Lord's people we can be trusted it should be that wherever we are people can say well that person is the Lord and he or she

can be trusted why because why should we not because of anything in us but because God has fabled us and given us his grace and made it to be something but of course again these words are so illustrative in particular of what is true what's true of our Lord

[23 : 48] Jesus Christ is true of him is there anyone to compare with him all none my friends he is the fairest of all he is the altogether lovely one who in his life couldn't do no sin did no sin there must have been a nobility about our Lord's character whilst here on earth that ought to have captivated the hearts of all men but because of sin they weren't captivated by him just as it's true still that no matter how much we may preach Christ no matter how much we may praise Christ how much we may show his glory force us revealed in scripture men and women will not believe in him they see no form they see no pummelness in him they see no desire that they should that they should worship him they see no beauty nor pummelness in him he to them is as a root out of a dry ground and it was so in his the days of his flesh not that he didn't have that nobility of character and having said that

I also say of course that it is true that generally speaking the world will not recognise nobility of character in fact it's something that's despised by many in the world just as they despise the Lord they will despise you also but being despite what he was we notice forcefully that this man was a man who was sorely tempted and it may be indeed that because of what he was he was sorely tempted and it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph and she said lie with me and so on how strong a temptation my friends for a young man but how strong he is in the hour of temptation compare this man with Judah in the previous chapter you can read it for yourselves when you go home what does this man say as he is tempted how can I go I do this wickedness and sin against God the temptation was there it was very real but he saw that to go in to give in to temptation to yield in temptation was not only a sin against his master and against himself but primarily it was a sin against God and that is one element that's left out in all people's reckonings in our day about morality it seems as if God is not but David you will remember having yielded to temptation comes confessing his sin and says against thee the only have I sinned the only have I sinned my sin is this that I have sinned against God because he's commanded that this is not to be and I've fallen in temptation and I'm in the sorry mess I'm in now but what is bothering me most of all is that this sin has been against God is that how you look upon sin my friend is that how I look upon sin or do I just not sin or not yield to temptation in case of what it does to me or my character or my home and family so it's good to not to yield to temptation because of that but my friends above all we should not yield to temptation why because we are accountable to God and he says be ye holy for I am holy when we come confessing our sins and repenting of our sins do we come confessing sins as against God primarily are we just sorry for our sin because of what it has caused in my own life what it has done to my own life and the havoc it has caused within my family perhaps as Christian people perhaps we even are sorry for sin because it has weakened us in our spiritual stand rather than be sorry for us as that which is against God we must search our hearts and ask ourselves honestly if we know what repentance is at all because unless our repentance is such as leaves us bemoaning sin as that awful thing that robs

God of his glory then we know nothing of repentance and let us my friends follow the example of this young man my young friend a not so young friend in temptation and there's plenty of it in the world today follow the example of this man no matter what the temptation is whether it be a woman or anyone else or anything else ask yourself can I do this wickedness and sin against God he yielded not in temptation how well he prefigured ah that one glorious person who was tempted as no one has been yet without sin we see him taken into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil and it is good to know that he yielded not despite all the temptation despite all the power of evil that was set abroad that on that occasion and on other occasions he yielded not why because he is the son of

God it was impossible that he yield but you will notice finally that this man was falsely accused falsely accused of a crime against God and man on false testimony Joseph has to bear the doom of the sin of which he is accused although he knew nothing of it scripture makes it quite clear that he resisted this temptation that he shunned it for the plague that it was and yet he is accused and condemned and he suffers for sin can you imagine the disgrace of such infamous imprisonment can you imagine him there in prison and being asked what are you in prison for oh I was accused of an unclean act with my master's wife you can imagine the scores of these fellow prisoners you can imagine the feeling he had knowing he was innocent knowing that he had not yielded to temptation

imagine the reproach of men and oh my friends how aptly that illustrates what our Lord suffered himself he suffered the reproach of men he says the reproach has broke my heart falsely accused falsely condemned to die and remember how in the

[31 : 41] Psalms we read of Joseph that his feet were hurt with fetters but bound with iron and that on account of something that he was not guilty of at all Joseph was numbered with the transgressors as our Lord was now there there are many who read much into much of what is in this chapter that I haven't touched on because I always feel that we are in danger of over spiritualizing things and I wouldn't like to do that but at the same time recognize that in him there is much that illustrates what was true in the life of our Lord himself and when we consider this man and how he was dealt with and so on it is good to turn our minds to think of the man the man of sorrows the man who is our saviour

Jesus Christ the God man there are these other practical lessons of course to be learned by all there is the lesson to flee youthful lust that war against the soul there is the lesson to argue as he did how shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God always there is also the lesson to learn to endure and hope however dark the dungeon may be and it was so for Joseph to praise the Lord even in the fire to be patient and wait for the outward working of God's purposes sometimes we wonder why this has to be so but God has a purpose for all his people weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning he was imprisoned humiliated the reproach of men but he was to be exonerated he was to be exalted all that

God had said concerning him was to be accomplished indeed all these providences were but opening the way as it were for the certain fulfillment of what God had said concerning him and that is true of you also my friend if you're a child of God God has promised great things concerning you and it may be through the darkness of the dungeon you know how it is at times you seem to be going through a dark tunnel and you're not seeing light at the end of it and then one day you suddenly see a glimmer of light and hope and gradually the darkness of the night turns to daylight and you realize well all is well with my soul after all oh yes the night was dark the trial was real but God had a purpose in it all but as Paul say I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us may God bless to us a few thoughts on his word let us pray we thank you this night oh our God for thy word which thou hast given us and we pray thee to bless it to our souls may it bear fruit in our lives and may we through our having read thy word sung thy word called upon thy name and meditated on the truth bear fruit accordingly oh eternal one leave us not to ourselves and deliver us from all temptation from all sins help us in our weakness that we may be strong in thee help every individual here who may be tempted who may perhaps feel their own weakness as never before to cast themselves upon the God of mercy who is able to give them a way of escape with every temptation so bless us all now and keep us by thy power and pardon us for Jesus' sake Amen