

Lenten Devotional February 25, 2018

Scripture

Genesis 41:14–45

¹⁴Then Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was hurriedly brought out of the dungeon. When he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came in before Pharaoh. ¹⁵And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.” ¹⁶Joseph answered Pharaoh, “It is not I; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.” ¹⁷Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “In my dream I was standing on the banks of the Nile; ¹⁸and seven cows, fat and sleek, came up out of the Nile and fed in the reed grass. ¹⁹Then seven other cows came up after them, poor, very ugly, and thin. Never had I seen such ugly ones in all the land of Egypt. ²⁰The thin and ugly cows ate up the first seven fat cows, ²¹but when they had eaten them no one would have known that they had done so, for they were still as ugly as before. Then I awoke. ²²I fell asleep a second time and I saw in my dream seven ears of grain, full and good, growing on one stalk, ²³and seven ears, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprouting after them; ²⁴and the thin ears swallowed up the seven good ears. But when I told it to the magicians, there was no one who could explain it to me.” ²⁵Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “Pharaoh’s dreams are one and the same; God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁶The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years; the dreams are one. ²⁷The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, as are the seven empty ears blighted by the east wind. They are seven years of famine. ²⁸It is as I told Pharaoh; God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁹There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt. ³⁰After them there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; the famine will consume the land. ³¹The plenty will no longer be known in the land because of the famine that will follow, for it will be very grievous. ³²And the doubling of Pharaoh’s dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about. ³³Now therefore let Pharaoh select a man who is discerning and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. ³⁴Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land, and take one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plenteous years. ³⁵Let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming, and lay up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. ³⁶That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine that are to befall the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine.” ³⁷The proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants. ³⁸Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find anyone else like this—one in whom is the spirit of God?” ³⁹So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has shown you all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. ⁴⁰You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command; only with regard to the throne will I be greater than you.” ⁴¹And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.” ⁴²Removing his signet ring from his hand, Pharaoh put it on Joseph’s hand; he arrayed him in garments of fine linen, and put a gold chain around his neck. ⁴³He had him ride in the chariot of his second-in-command; and they cried out in front of him, “Bow the knee!” Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁴Moreover Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no one shall lift up hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.” ⁴⁵Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-paneah; and he gave him Asenath daughter of Potiphara, priest of On, as his wife. Thus Joseph gained authority over the land of Egypt.

Devotional

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When Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream, he was not being called to do something new. He'd done it before. This wasn't even the first time he'd done it right. The first time he'd done it right, it got him into

some seriously hot water. His brothers didn't appreciate that previous interpretation, nor were they fond of their father's favor of Joseph. As a result, they shipped him off to Egypt in the hands of slave traders and acted as though he were dead.

I wouldn't blame Joseph if he'd just packed it in right there. "That's it! I'm not interpreting any more dreams. It's not worth the trouble!" What courage it must have taken for Joseph to continue to interpret dreams for those around him—to help others see what it was God was speaking to them through their dreams. And yet, he continued.

Here we see that, in spite of the trouble that speaking God's word to others caused for Joseph early on, eventually he was recognized for it. Eventually, it bore clear fruit and made a huge difference. In fact, had he not warned Pharaoh of the coming famine, Joseph's own brothers who had betrayed him would have starved. What strange but wonderful ways God works in through our courage!

Prayer

God of all, thank you for the way you speak in our lives. Make me a vessel of your Word, so that, through my courage and willingness to speak up, others' lives might be touched by you and changed. Grant me the strength to speak your Word, even when it's difficult or unpopular.