UPC Family Devotional

October – Week 4

Memory Verse of the Week:

The LORD was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master.

-Genesis 39:2

Oct 24 Monday Genesis 39:1-10

Joseph is sold as a slave to part of Potiphar, an Egyptian officer, but God remains with him during this volatile time. The Lord blesses Joseph so that he gains favor with his master and prospers in all that he does. His brothers may have betrayed and abandoned him, but God's blessings are abound all the more in Joseph's life. We tend to associate the favor of God with health, wealth, and prosperity, but sometimes we experience the blessings of God most powerfully in seasons of adversity. Though our circumstances may be far from ideal, we can still be in the center of God's will and feel his presence amid our pain.

When have you sensed the presence of God amid painful circumstances? What blessings of God are you thankful for today?

Joseph proves to be so good at his job that his master entrusts him with everything in his household. Potiphar’s wife also takes notice of Joseph – but for different reasons. She finds Joseph physically attractive and attempts to seduce him. But Joseph shows great wisdom in that he understands that while he has been trusted with much, there are still things that are strictly off-limits. He cannot betray his master by sleeping with his wife, and more importantly, he refuses to commit such a wicked sin before God. In Joseph, we see an example of how to be a faithful steward of God- given success. We must not let it get to our heads but remain humble before the Lord, our Master and King.

What boundaries have you set to help you resist the lure of sin? What helps you remain humble when you achieve success in the eyes of the world?

Oct 25 Tuesday Genesis 39:11-23

Potiphar’s wife seizes a moment when Joseph is alone in the house with her, but Joseph flees, leaving his cloak behind. With cunning and spite, part of Potiphar’s wife accuses Joseph of attempted assault, knowing that her word will win against a slave’s. A commitment to moral integrity will often put us at a disadvantage in a world where people gain power and the profit by lying, cheating, and stealing. But God calls us to be obedient to Him no matter the personal cost. Our devotion to Him may jeopardize our worldly prospects, but when wicked people bring us down, God promises to lift us up again. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to empower us with wisdom and courage to always do what is right.

What unpopular decisions have you made because of your commitment to Jesus? In what area of your life do you need more courage to do the right thing?

Potiphar receives the false report from his wife and throws Joseph behind bars. Under these circumstances, Potiphar could have easily put Joseph to death for his alleged crime, but in this relatively lighter punishment we see that God is preserving Joseph's life. Even in prison, God's presence and favor remain with Joseph. Though it might seem like all of Joseph's hard work and success in Potiphar’s household have amounted to nothing, God is not done with him yet. When we suffer for doing what is right, we must start to wonder if God has abandoned us. But Joseph's story serves as a reminder that when the world punishes us for our commitment to Christ, God remains close to us, working out His plans in our lives.

When have you felt deeply discouraged in your spiritual walk? How does Joseph's story inspire you to remain faithful to God?

Oct 26 Wednesday Genesis 40:1-8

Joseph experiences the same blessing and the favor in prison as he did in Potiphar’s household. He is put in charge of two new inmates, who are in prison for offending the king. Joseph's life demonstrates that regardless of where we are, there is always plenty of work to do for the Kingdom of God. Every day is filled with opportunities to serve. We do not have to wait for conditions to be ideal or for some great mission to arise before we can start being useful to the Lord. Rather, anytime God brings someone into our lives, we have an opportunity to share His love with them. Let us commit ourselves to everyday faithfulness, serving God and others with the abilities and the resources that are available to us.

What kind of people has the Lord brought into your life recently? How will you demonstrate His love to them today?

The two officials under Joseph's care have dreams on the same night. But stuck in prison, they do not have access to the king's magicians or wise men who might be able to interpret their dreams. Joseph finds the servants dejected and his reply to their complaint reassures them that interpretations belong to God. Prison walls are no barrier for the presence and the work of God. When we face a dilemma and become frustrated at our lack of understanding and the limitations of earthly resources, let us trust the Holy Spirit to help us discern the things that only God can reveal.

When have you found yourself frustrated because of a lack of insight or guidance? To whom do you tend to go when you are dealing with a complicated dilemma?

Oct 27 Thursday Genesis 40:9-23

The chief cupbearer and the chief baker have had dreams that trouble them. Joseph offers to interpret the dreams as he is aware that God can show him their meaning. He actively cares for his fellow prisoners despite his promise prolonged and unjust imprisonment. His faith in God also remains strong: after he interprets the chief cupbearer's dream, he says “*when* all goes well with you,” not “if.” he is certain of God's ability to interpret dreams and confident in the truth that God reveals. When we find ourselves in difficult or unfair circumstances, let us not lose sight of who God is. And as we trust in Him, let us serve him by attending to the needs of those around us.

How do you respond when faced with prolonged struggles or injustice? How can you remain caring toward others even when you are struggling?

Only when the baker sees that the cupbearer’s interpretation is favorable does he seek the meaning of his dream. He seems desperate for a guarantee of his safety, which perhaps hints that his imprisonment, unlike Joseph's, is as consequence of his own failings. Joseph predicts that the baker will be released only to be executed. Things go just as Joseph predicts for both inmates. The cupbearer, however, fails to show gratitude to Joseph and forgets him. When God lifts us out of a painful situation, let us not be so quick to get back to our usual routine that we forget what he has done for us. May we give God all the glory that is due to Him and show gratitude for all the people who helped us along the way.

When have you sought to evade responsibility for your wrongs? How can you cultivate a habit of remembering God's goodness in your life?

Oct 28 Friday Genesis 41:1-16

Pharaoh has two dreams, one of seven cows and the other of seven ears of grain. He does not know it yet, but they foreshadow the future abundance and the famine that will come to the land of Egypt. And behind it all lies the sovereignty of God, who has planned these events and now provides these dreams as an advance warning. Pharaoh is shaken to the core by these dreams and hurries to seek counsel from his magicians and wise men, who are unable to interpret their meaning. Some seasons in life can feel like a series of random, upsetting events and it is hard to find any meaning or purpose amid the chaos. But behind the scenes, God ordains each detail of our lives for the good of those who belong to Him.

When has God worked seemingly unrelated events into something good? What helps you remember that God is sovereignly in control of all things?

The cupbearer, whose dream Joseph interpreted in prison, finally remembers Joseph's ability. His eyewitness testimony of Joseph's wisdom convinces Pharaoh to send for him. When Joseph arrives, Pharaoh mistakes his divine gift for personal talent. Joseph, however, makes it clear that it is God who will provide the answer. This is a risky move on Joseph's part, or he is a prisoner in a foreign land, endorsing a deity that the Egyptians do not recognize. But this shows Joseph's reverence for the one true God, who has remained faithful throughout Joseph's unjust imprisonment. In our trials, may we be so steadfast in our faith that we will never hesitate to glorify God even where no one else acknowledges Him.

What do you tell others about God when you face seemingly unending trials? To whom can you share more about God's power in your life?

Oct 29 Saturday Genesis 41:17-36

God chooses to speak to Pharaoh, the powerful ruler of Egypt, in order to avert disaster upon the entire nation. Through Pharaoh’s dream and Joseph's interpretation, Egypt is able to prepare and protect itself from a devastating famine that will come in seven years’ time. This is just one of many examples in scripture where God graciously provides a way of escape for a multitude of people. The greatest example of God's saving grace is found in Jesus Christ. Just as the Egyptians did not deserve God's favor, none of us deserve the salvation that Jesus purchased for us on the cross - in fact, we deserve the very opposite! But God has mercifully provided a way for us to escape judgment through His son.

How did God reveal His saving grace to you? What is the proper response to this gift of salvation?

Joseph instructs Pharaoh to appoint a discerning and wise man to oversee the preparations for the famine. As Joseph describes the work that needs to be done, it becomes clear that he is the best man for the job. Knowing Joseph's history, we can see that God has raised him up for this very mission. The experiences in his life- both good and bad- have provided him with the wisdom necessary to take on the monumental task of leading a nation through a potentially disastrous season. Just as God worked in Joseph's life, he takes us through a different challenges and experiences that will shape us into the people he wants us to be and prepare us for the things he wants us to do.

What do you rely on more: your natural abilities or the skills you have learned through life experience? What lessons has God taught you in times of hardship?