

Reading: Genesis 41:15-37

Theme: Pharaoh's pyjama panic!

It is rare in our days for a nation's leader to admit their need of wisdom or of God. It is rare for any world leader to say they are born-again of God's Spirit; converted to Christ. It would be an amazing thing if the head of a government would call on a foreign prisoner for help or advice. Here in this account is exactly what occurs! There was Pharaoh, this unreachable monarch, the most powerful man of his day and yet God was going to deal with him, bring him to a state of desperation so that he would seek help from someone he would never have considered before. Whether or not Pharaoh was converted is uncertain, but we can learn lessons from God's gracious dealings with him and see how He can work in our lives to bring us to Himself.

1. God Disturbs Our Comfort.

God was going to give Pharaoh a message of peace, a message to satisfy his desires and save the land from a great calamity. The first thing God did with Pharaoh was to disturb him - not only his sleep, but his ease. Pharaoh, although surrounded by all the luxury of the palace, was not at ease because his peace and tranquillity of heart and mind had been disturbed. Pharaoh was a mighty, a powerful man, but we see that even the heart of the king is in God's hands and He turns it where ever He wills (Proverbs 21:1). It was no accident that he dreamt as he did. Those dreams were sent by God to accomplish His purposes in Pharaoh and Joseph's lives.

Pharaoh was a mighty man, but he was only a man and God wanted him reached by the truth and reality of His existence.

Pharaoh had these dreams and he resorted to his wise men. They could not help him and no doubt he was more anxious and concerned as to what these dreams represented. He knew in his heart of hearts they meant something, but what? I suspect some answers had been given, but Pharaoh knew they lacked authority and he wasn't satisfied.

Perhaps we have come to this in our own lives. We may have everything and it is fine; have great comforts and yet something disturbs our peace and rest. We may have seen the corona virus situation, an illness, a death, a dramatic event in our lives, or in the lives of those dear to us and it has left us with a feeling of *"What is the meaning and purpose of life? What if it were me?"* You may have talked about it to those who you know and respect; those who have helped you in times of trouble before, but their answers and advice seems hollow. Listen up, it may be that God is troubling you. He is showing you that your true peace and comfort doesn't lie in friends, relationships, where you live, what you earn, what you have or are; it depends on Him and that true peace and comfort has to be found in Him. Augustine said *"Our hearts are restless until we find rest in God."* Yet not only does God disturb our comfort, even when all may, humanly speaking, be going well, but

2. God Designates the Messengers.

God was going to reveal to Pharaoh the future and his need to prepare for it. God uses two people to point Pharaoh to Himself as the One in control of all things. **Firstly**, the cupbearer is used. Even though the cupbearer didn't know God, yet he could repeat some facts from his own experience

that spoke of Joseph and Joseph knew this God. In God's providence the cupbearer was used as part of, a link in a chain to bring Pharaoh and Joseph into contact so Joseph could proclaim God's message to Pharaoh. **Secondly**, Joseph is used. Pharaoh meets Joseph; he tells Joseph he had dreams and wanted them interpreted and he must have been shocked to the core when Joseph said *"I cannot do it... but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires"* (v 16).

God can use either type in our lives. Perhaps someone has spoken to you and said yes there is hope, but you will have to see so-and-so to find out more. Any young believers can witness like this when faced with a person with a question or situation they do not know how to handle or answer; they can repeat the fact of their own conversion and deliverance and point to someone else who could answer or help; most certainly point to the Lord Jesus. The cupbearer did this *"I did wrong, but I was freed according to my dream, interpreted by someone and he no doubt can help Pharaoh"*

This is basically what witnessing is - telling others the facts of our conversion in plain, simple language that they can understand *"I was blind, but now I see."* Perhaps you are in contact with people who have been changed - they know it and you know it too and you may want to know more. Keep listening!

Perhaps you are like Pharaoh and have been spoken to by a servant of God - whether personally or by preachers over a long period. Pharaoh believed Joseph even though he knew nothing of him - other than he was a prisoner, one of his

prisoners, possibly he knew he'd been put there because of an alleged indiscretion with the wife of one of his officers, but any prejudices he had were put aside because he needed to know what the dreams meant. Perhaps you have been to church with biased and prejudiced ideas about the church, the people, the minister; yet you know in your heart of hearts that what is said is true, that as odd as the people may appear, they are true people, are not out to hoodwink or brainwash anyone, but are genuinely concerned for people and their total well-being. They become to you God's messengers - you do not always welcome them, nor do you like the fact that:

3. God Directs the Message.

Pharaoh must have trembled as his dreams were not interpreted by his wise men. They may have said things, but it was not the true interpretation and he knew it. Joseph is brought to him and when Pharaoh tells him that the dreams cannot be interpreted, Joseph says "*God shall give Pharaoh and answer of peace*" v16 (AV) "*answer he desires*" (NIV). God was working in Pharaoh who was troubled, in turmoil, but the purpose was to bring an answer of peace. The answer to give peace was to be found in God's word to him.

Do you realise that your way to true peace lies in listening to what God has to say to you in His word? Joseph knew this as he answered Pharaoh. I know it - as I speak to you of the gospel which tells us of the Word made flesh - the Lord Jesus who can give you the peace that passes all understanding.

Pharaoh spoke of his dream and no sooner had he stopped then **Joseph speaks with authority** - the authority of a man

who knows his God and God's word. As Joseph spoke, things started to fit together - the dreams are one even though Pharaoh had 2 dreams, but as Joseph explains them it was obvious, they were one and everything fitted together and made sense.

Many of us here in the church have experienced this - at one time Christianity made no sense, nothing seemed to fit, our reason for being here did not matter, our lives may have made no sense and then, as we heard someone speaking, as we read, it was as if they were speaking only to us, it all fell together, clicked and we realised who Jesus was and what He had done, why He came, lived, died and rose again. We, perhaps suddenly, realised that the Bible made sense - it wasn't all the disjointed thoughts of 40 writers, but a book with one Author and with a perfect unity.

As God directs the message to our hearts and minds, we may see we are not complete - we are a many faceted person, with much lacking and things disjointed in our lives, but we also see that the Lord Jesus came to make us whole - not only spiritually, but as human beings and so fulfil and meet our deepest needs, help us develop into more rounded, whole persons and not torn apart inside.

Incredibly when God directs the message, He **directs it to us personally** c.f. v25 where the emphasis is on what God is saying to Pharaoh, because God was addressing him personally. If God is speaking or has been speaking to you, it is because He is concerned for you and your future - not 7 or even 14 years in the future, but for your eternal future. The

Bible tells us that God deals with us as individuals in a personal way by His Holy Spirit. He doesn't do it to any other part of His creation, but to men and women, young people, boys and girls and does so with the purpose of showing a person's need of Jesus as their own Saviour, their need of forgiveness of their own sin, their need to be at peace with God and know the peace of God in their lives.

Has God's word been speaking to you in any of these ways? It may cause much heartache, unrest, unease, but God wants to do a great work in your life and He is speaking for you to see your need. He may confirm things - He did here with Pharaoh (through 2 dreams v32). Perhaps God has been speaking to you in various ways and means, underlining the fact that you have to trust the Lord Jesus as your Saviour. God doesn't leave it there - not only does He disturb our comfort, designate the messengers, and direct His word, but

4. God Demands Action.

Joseph had spoken to Pharaoh, interpreted the dreams as required and said as the dream was doubled, it was firmly decided by God. Joseph didn't end there. He pressed the need for action. This is what will happen. God hasn't let you know the future to satisfy your curiosity, but He has done it so that you can take wise action, therefore v 33-36 *""And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept*

in the cities for food. This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine." Pharaoh knew the truth and it was to be used by him to take the right action in making provision for the future - for his and his people's welfare.

God doesn't speak to us to satisfy our curiosity, to frighten us, to shame us. He speaks to us in our circumstances of life to challenge and to encourage us, to show that He requires action of us. If you're not a Christian and you have been aware of God speaking to you over a period of time, or even in this message, then listen and do as He requires. Maybe you are troubled, afraid of the future and what life may hold; especially afraid of death and what that will hold for you. You have heard in this message the need to trust in the Lord Jesus, of your need to repent and turn to Him in faith. Listen you will not be saved unless you repent and turn to Christ in faith. God demands this from all people - "*God commands all men everywhere to repent*" (Acts 17:30). If you do not act on the messages of God to your heart, they will be used as evidence in your condemnation and your punishment will be the more severe because of those messages you have ignored.

Perhaps you are a Christian and yet you know you are not where you should be as you are in a backslidden and cold-hearted state with God, perhaps doing what you want to do even though you know it's wrong. It could be that we have something against another person, even another believer in Christ; we may hold bitterness and resentment against another; or we look down on others with pride and we are glad

we are not like them. We are to realise God demands action from us – return to Him, confess and forsake our sin and coldness, a restoration of relationships with those we have separated from.

God is able to work in all of us, in all of society, even those we fear may be unreachable and humanly speaking they may be, but with God that is not the case. If you have been "*unreachable*" and now God is working, then come to the Lord as your own Saviour. If we are believers, we should be serious in prayer, as we know our God can answer and work in great, surprising and mighty ways, reaching even those who seem unreachable to us. He can surprise us by doing things in an amazing and awesome way that we could never dream of, think of or imagine. When He does so it will be clear that the glory has to go to Him and Him alone. It is such an encouragement to us to be able to call on this mighty God to work for His glory and His honour.