

Greenways Benefice Weekly Devotional (No 23)

Sunday 23 August 2020

Bible Readings:

Genesis 41:14-46, James 1:2-4

Drawing from Joseph - Overcoming Success

Walt Disney was fired from the Kansas City Star in 1919 because, his editor felt, he “lacked imagination and good ideas.”

After a performance at Nashville the home of country music, Elvis Presley was told by the concert manager he would be better off returning to Memphis to his former career as a truck driver.

Thomas Edison inventor of the phonograph, movie camera and electric lamp was fired from his first two jobs for not being suitably productive and was labelled by his teachers as too stupid to learn anything.

In the story of Joseph we see how a despised teenager became Pharaoh’s right hand man instrumental in saving Egypt, his own family, and the surrounding ancient world from a severe famine.

In Joseph’s life we see the need of dependence on God in times of success as well as challenges and difficulties. As we read this amazing story we cannot but notice that every time Joseph takes a step forward he gets knocked backwards, or so it seems.

Do we ever feel like that at times?

His journey is a bit like a roller coaster ride where the sheer thrill of the ride is experienced when you travel at speed from the top to the bottom and back up again. When the ride stops people usually stagger to their feet with a sense of achievement mixed with relief!

Joseph’s success is seen in the highs and the lows of his journey because he has been divinely commissioned and called by God. His adventure is no accident or the result of fate but rather the sovereign will of God!

His brothers reject him as the favoured son of his father Jacob. It didn’t take much for their anger to boil over when he shared his dreams in which he took centre stage and his brothers bowed down to serve him. They quickly took the opportunity to destroy him and secretly sell him into slavery. Perhaps the first lesson he learnt was that this journey was not going to be plain sailing. However God did have a plan for Joseph regardless of their actions.

In Egypt Joseph continues to encounter more highs and lows. He finds favour in his new job as the slave of Potiphar an Egyptian officer who puts Joseph in charge of his household because he sees that God is with Joseph making him successful and prosperous in everything he does. Gen 39: 3,4.

But Joseph’s big dipper ride isn’t over yet!

From here Joseph lands himself in prison for doing the right thing and resisting the temptation to sleep with Potiphar’s wife who tries to seduce him, and then wrongly accuses

him of taking advantage of her. Although he is in a tight spot he responds in the right way.

Prov11:18 says, “ The one who sows righteousness reaps a sure reward.”

For Joseph being successful meant trusting God in the darkest place and doing the right thing not only when the spot light was on him but also in the shadows.

Oftentimes people are more impressed with people’s gifts and talents than they are with the quality of their character. If Joseph had been merely trusting in his own abilities alone, his good looks and tremendous administrative skills, he would never have become the blessing that God intended him to be.

In God’s school of life it is the formation of a person’s character that really counts for something. Whatever was happening in Joseph’s life he was leaning on God.

In the parable of the shrewd manager Jesus says, ‘He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much LK 16:10

Even in life’s most difficult circumstances being faithful to God provides the basis for true success. Joseph is once again in prison but we see the hand of God on his life.

This is now the second dungeon he was put in, the first was by the hands of his hateful brothers. Again Joseph finds favour with the prison guard who willingly entrusts him with the responsibility of the daily running duties of the prison and his fellow inmates.

Whilst in prison opportunity knocks yet again on Joseph’s door when Pharaoh’s cup bearer and baker end up there for offending the king. Joseph shows his dependency in God’s ability to bring the interpretation of the two dreams they have, adding a request that they bring his innocent case before Pharaoh’s attention so that he may be released.

Eventually when the cup bearer is reinstated he forgot about Joseph!

Two years later when Pharaoh had dreams that no one could understand, the cup bearer thought back to Joseph and he was brought before Pharaoh. God brought the right people along at the right time to open the way for Joseph to fulfil his God given destiny.

Fully equipped by God he not only gave Pharaoh the interpretation of his dreams but was assigned the job of chief administrator in command of Egypt’s storehouses. What Pharaoh noticed about Joseph was a man in whom was the Spirit of God 41:38. Eventually he was reunited with his brothers and father showing them great kindness in his provision for them.

Joseph’s success was brought about by honouring and trusting in God, like Jesus who was rejected, went to the cross to save us, and is now highly exalted at God’s right hand!

A Prayer

Heavenly Father help me to follow your plan for my life, depending on and trusting you, in times of difficulty and success. AMEN

Blessings

Neil