

GENESIS 40:9-15, 23 THE FURNACE OF WAITING

⁹ So the chief cupbearer told Joseph his dream. He said to him, "In my dream I saw a vine in front of me, ¹⁰ and on the vine were three branches. As soon as it budded, it blossomed, and its clusters ripened into grapes. ¹¹ Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup and put the cup in his hand."

¹² "This is what it means," Joseph said to him. "The three branches are three days. ¹³ Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your position, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand, just as you used to do when you were his cupbearer. ¹⁴ But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison. ¹⁵ For I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon."

²³ The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.

Once again Joseph experiences the unreliability of humankind. Our neighbors, whether they be brothers, superiors, fellow sufferers or even those for whom we have done a great favor, cannot be relied upon to deliver us. In fact, for Joseph the experience with those around him was often just the opposite.

Joseph had to wait still longer for God to deliver him. Waiting for God's perfect timing is a lesson that Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, and later David, all had to learn if their faith was to be strong enough to witness to God's sovereign providence. In our own lives, waiting while all other sources of answer are exhausted is often what leads us to dependence upon God. But for those of faith it is also the school through which God trains us and hardens our faith into an unbreakable witness to his love and mercy.

Faith has as much to do about waiting for the proper timing as it does with believing that God will act. Where believing that we will receive what is promised is tinged with our human desire, waiting on God for his timing is focused on God and God alone.

Father, give me the faith-filled patience to be content waiting for you to act in my life. Although I need to petition you continuously through prayer, strengthen me to live with the goal of glorifying you and in the assurance of your perfect timing. Amen.