

Joseph – and the Incredible Coat!

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Have you noticed it's just hard to keep up anymore? The world is simply spinning and we're spinning with it. Time has been speeded up as well and the question on many of our minds is: ***What's happening?*** The true answer is this: **the Kingdom of God is at hand!**

That was the first meaty statement Jesus made in His public ministry – “*the Kingdom of God is at hand*” (Mt.4:17). And He prefaced it by saying, “Change your mind” or “*Repent*” or “Turn around” “*The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.*” 2000 years ago? That's a long time to wait in anticipation for it to happen. But yes, it was more than 2000 years ago – and this world has been turning ever since with more rapidity each season. I honestly believe we're now spinning into *the last days*.

Let's read a portion of scripture and then I'll actually preach from a different passage. Isn't that clever? ☺ If you'd like to open your Bibles to check on what I say... ☺ turn to Second Peter, Chapter 3, The Amplified Bible, verses 10 - 18. “*But the day of the Lord will come as a thief, and then the heavens will vanish (pass away) with a thunderous crash, and the [material] elements [of the universe] will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up. 11Since all these things are thus in the process of being dissolved...*” Do you believe that? “...*what kind of person ought [each of] you to be [in the meanwhile] in consecrated and holy behavior and devout and godly qualities? 12While you wait and earnestly long for – expecting and hastening – the coming of the day of God by reason of which the flaming heavens will be dissolved, and the [material] elements [of the universe] will flare and melt with fire. 13But we look for new heavens and a new earth according to His promise.*”

Let's focus on that: “*according to His promise.*” You might even say that aloud – it's going to be a major factor in *your* lives from now until Jesus returns. “...*according to His promise, in which righteousness (uprightness, freedom from sin, and right standing with God) is to abide. 14So, beloved, since you are expecting these things, be eager to be found by Him [at His coming] without spot or blemish, and at peace – in serene confidence, free from fears and agitating passions and moral conflicts.*” Aren't those the things that get you down?

15“And consider that the long-suffering of our Lord, [His slowness in avenging the wrongs and in judging the world] is salvation, [that which conduces to the soul's safety]; even as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the spiritual insight given him, 16Speaking of this as he does in all of his letters. There are some things in those [epistles of Paul] that are difficult to understand...” This is Peter. I love his candor, don't you? He basically says, “Paul had a good revelation, but who could understand what he said?” ☺

Verse 17 – “...*knowing these things beforehand,*” (the things we just read), “*you should be on your guard lest you be carried away by the error of lawless and wicked [persons and] fall from your own [present] firm condition – your own steadfastness [of mind]. 18But grow*” – look at it, now – “*grow in grace (undeserved favor of God, spiritual strength) ... To Him [be] glory... both now and to the day of eternity – forever – Amen.*”

Grow in grace. I want to talk to you about “*growing – in grace.*” I shall do that by talking about a man whose name was – Joseph. The name means, “add to.” *Add to.*

One of the things that I think is a problem among believers today is that too many are still in the same place they were when they first met Jesus – or – when they first were baptized in water – or – when they first were baptized in the Holy Spirit. Hello? Now, those all are marvelous and necessary and foundational behavior patterns – salvation and the baptisms. Every believer *should* be thrilled with their

salvation, and every believer *should* be baptized in water. And *I* feel, all believers should be baptized in the Holy Spirit because it makes the walk so much brighter. ☺

Everything about the life of Joseph is very much like the life of Jesus. In fact, it is said by some of the older commentators that he is the most perfect likeness to Jesus. Now, if that is true, then I bring your remembrance to Jesus when He said to us, “I am your pattern. Everything I do is what the Father tells Me. Everything I say is what the Father says to say. I am going and I leave this work to you.” (see Jn.14:10-12). Moreover He said, “The Father has given Me all power (Mt.28:18; Jn.3:35, 13:3; 17:2). The Father has all power in heaven and all power in earth, and I am going away (Jn.16:5,7,28) so I will pray the Father, or ask the Father, to send to you that same Spirit” (Jn.14:12,16).

Now, that’s a very positive thing to think about. If all of that is true, and it is, then that means that I (and every believer) must represent Christ on earth by the power of the Holy Spirit as Christ represented the Father on earth (Jn.14:7,9). And if you don’t believe that, then you do not understand anything about the Kingdom!

You may have prayed this in the Lord’s Prayer – “*Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*” (Mt.6:10). You even may have prayed that all your life – with no understanding of what you’re asking. But, you see, He is going to answer that prayer. Not because you prayed it, but because His promise began way back before the beginning of time! It is *the plan of God* to establish His Kingdom here on earth. Do you believe that? That’s why Jesus said: “*When you pray, that’s what you pray*” (Mt.6:7-9). Because, *when you pray what God plans to do*, there is no question that God is going to answer your prayer. Hello?

I’ve had people wonder out loud, “Well, then, why should I ask? If He plans to do it, let Him do it.” We ask in prayer because that ***gives God the legal, moral right to act***. We are inviting Him to come into our earthly existence and establish His plan, His ways, His domain.

Satan would stand nearby and undo every prayer I pray – if he was able to do so. As he tried with Job, he wants to slander us before God (Jb.1:6ff). “Don’t answer *her* prayers – she, um, didn’t have good thoughts last night.” “Don’t answer her prayers – she’s not victorious.” You see, the devil is the accuser (Rev.12:10) and he usually has some element of truth mixed in with his accusations. That’s how he makes them at all plausible. If it was possible for him to stop our prayers before they could reach heaven, he’d try it. Or, if it was possible for him to accuse *God*, he’d try that but fail: “You don’t have a right to establish Your Kingdom there – Your Kingdom-people aren’t even asking!” But you see, what happens is, when we pray as Jesus taught us to pray (Mt.6:5-15; Lk.11:1-4), we give that royal, moral and legal right for God to do what His people ask!

Years ago, I had a mental vision of asking God for something specific and my prayer going upwards. I saw people around there in heaven saying, “No-no! Don’t answer her prayer!” But Jesus said, “Yes, Father. I told her that if she asked anything in My Name, You would do it” (Jn.14:13,14; 15:16; 16:23, 24). Now, what I was *asking* for, I was *not ready* to receive. I was asking for greater power. I could see all the angels standing around shaking their heads “no.” ☺ Then, I saw the gavel of God come down with a big bang, and the statement that came forth from Him was, “Petition granted! – but put a hold on it while we get her ready!”

I tell you about that vision because it was so true. I could not have handled that increased responsibility. If I had any more power at that time in my life, anyone driving slower than I on the freeway would have been bounced off! ☺ And maybe a few other things that we will not stretch our imaginations to consider! ☺ The truth communicated is that God is methodically and strategically placing His people and getting them personally prepared to fulfill His ultimate plans.

But Joseph. I’m going to presume you know the story. Joseph was a young man that came into existence as the answer to the prayer of his mother, who wanted so desperately to have a child. When he was born,

he was the favorite of the father (Gen.37:3). How many of you know that you are the Father's favorite? We really are! I love it when I read scriptures that say, "Touch not Mine anointed!" (Ps.105:15; 1Chron.16:22). You see, that's the Father! The Father stands above all, and He sees (and understands) the things that are happening in the world – all of the attempts to stop the Church from praying and crying, "God!" – and all these crazy things that are going into legislative positions for a vote that should never happen. I hear the voice of God rumbling across the world: "*TOUCH NOT MINE ANOINTED! AND DO MY PROPHETS NO HARM!*" Now, the world can laugh at that if they will, but that Voice is like the sound of many waters (Rev.1:15; Ezek.43:2), and that IS a Divine threat!

I love to talk about the love of God and His goodness, grace, and mercy, and every good thing the New Testament shows us. ALL of that is absolutely true! But I want you to remember that we sing to Him, over and over, "Holy. Holy. Holy. You're holy! You're holy! You're Holy! You are Holy!" Yes, He is Holy! And He will not endure unholiness – forever.

Thank God when He looks down on the world, He *chooses* to see Himself. Hellooo. He wants us to *mirror Him* in such a way that you can't see *me* without seeing **Him!** (Rom.8:29; Eph.5:1,2). Jesus made that possible! He said, "If you come to Me – if you'll receive Me..." (Jn.1:12,13). And Father said, "*If you'll receive Him*, that will be the only last-time judgment I will pronounce" (see Rom.6:10; Heb.7:27b; 9:28; 10:10; 1Pet.3:18). The only sin in the last day – the eternal sin, if you will – the unpardonable sin – is that you or I would not accept God's provision for us to be like Him (Jn.3:33,36).

You know the story of Joseph (Gen.30-50). The first likeness I see in Joseph is Christ – but today, I want to see him as being *the Church*. He starts out just by being **formed**. The Bible says, "Before you were *formed* in your mother's womb, I knew you. Before you ever knew Me, I knew you. Before you *were*, I knew you" (Jer.1:5; Ps.139). That's way beyond my ability to comprehend (Ps.139:6). Is that true for you as well?

The fact that He could plan *me* (Is.49:1,5; Jer.29:11) – eons before I was planted in a womb to be given life to come forth in this very specific hour – in this generation – that's so amazing to me! God is pleased that I'm living *today* – whether you're pleased or... ☺ *He is!* And He's also pleased that *you're* living today. He planned *you* as well! So don't let the enemy say, "You're useless. You should have. . ." or something like that – because you are the plan of God and a plant of God (Eph.1:4). We are spies! We have eternal knowledge (Col.1:9) – and God formed us and allowed us to be born in this very hour and moment because of what we *know!*

When Jesus was talking to His disciples, they were just standing there almost stammering, not really certain they understood everything He was saying. Jesus said, "Let me tell you something boys, the prophets of old would have given *anything* to hear the things you're hearing right now" (Mt.13:16,17). We need to understand that we are so blessed! We are living in a time that is blessed! There are many pastors today preaching the pure and powerful Word of God. There is great revelation coming to us from the heart of God! More than in previous eras. And if you are a part of a church where your pastor receives that depth of understanding from God and passes it on to you – you are blessed!

The Scripture says, "*And God remembered Rachel and hearkened unto her and opened her womb*" (Gen.30:22). I could preach on that truth alone! – God has NOT forgotten you! And what's happening today in the church (*the church within the church*, if I dare say that) is He is opening the womb – the womb of understanding – things we never knew before – things so great! (Jb.42:3). We are learning, but we're not learning with the intellect only. We are learning with the Spirit's input – divine impartation. You know that. It happens to you. When you open the Word now and read some scriptures you've memorized before, verses you know so well, and we say it like this: "*all of a sudden*," you see things you never saw before! You say, "Oh! That is so rich! God, when did You put that in there!" ☺ Yes, it is rich! Because you were formed "*for such a time as this*" (Est.4:14) and God remembered you and He remembered those who prayed before you.

Rachel conceived and had this son (Gen.30:23) and when she had him, she said, “I’m going to name him, “Added to” (Gen.30:24). That’s what we’re saying when we pray, “*Enlarge my coasts* (1Chron.4:10; Isa.54:2). Enlarge me, Spirit of God. You take over. Build me upon the things – the truths – the foundations of God. And teach me the things I need to know but don’t.”

You didn’t “just happen” into existence. You were *formed* – like an artist takes a piece of clay and molds it and waters it (that’s the breathing of the Holy Spirit) and *forms* it. If you’ve ever watched a sculptor, it’s just an amazing thing. I have watched them and think, “Oh, look. He’s making an – elephant. No, he’s making a – house.” And the person that is doing the sculpting looks at you like, “Aw, you don’t get it!” “Oh, yeah. I see it now. It’s a horse!” And they just keep moving their hands, working the clay, forming their piece of work. I hope this is making sense to you – because that’s exactly what’s happening in your life (Eph.2:10). The Holy Spirit is working with the hand of God to form you into what He planned for you to be, and what He planned for me to be. “Oh, thank You, Lord for that!” The Psalmist said, “*My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in the secret place; when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body.*” (Ps.139:15)

Now, maybe you’ve known the Lord for 10 – 20 – 30 years, or perhaps only 2 years or 1 year. Or you were saved just last week. It doesn’t matter. His eyes saw you, and He is working on you with great precision. You don’t know it because when we think of the hands of God molding and bringing forth what He wants, we think of it as happening in times when we feel so surrendered, like during our worship. Hello. “Oh, yes, Lord. Mold me. Make me. Fill me. Use me. This is so good!” He says, “I will, I will. Wait till you get home!” ☺

The forming doesn’t take place in these marvelous moments of worship. **The forming takes place outside the doors of the church – where the church walks.** We are so favored by Father that He puts a *wall of fire* about us (Zech.2:5) – His protection – a wall of fire! Have you never been in a situation when you simply saw people back off from you? And you hadn’t *done* anything but breathe in and out? ☺ That’s because He forms you within the path of protection. You may think, “Well, it doesn’t always *feel* that way to me. It doesn’t always feel like His protection is around me.” I’m not talking about *feeling*, dear ones. We’re talking eternity.

Joseph. The father, Jacob, says, “Oh, I have all these 11 other sons and they’re just wonderful. But Joseph! He was born to Rachel, my precious Rachel. Oh! *Joseph!* He is – aw – he’s just so special... I see the potential in him,” – now hear it, Church! – “I see the potential of royalty in this boy!”

When you skip over to the New Testament, what do you read there about royalty? “*But ye are a chosen generation!*” All these others – they’re okay – but “*YOU are a royal priesthood*” (1Pet.2:9). Our Father says, “I see the potential in you – of you ruling and reigning and being successful in your business, in your home, in your life, in your community. I see the potential of people seeing *Me* as you move. “*In Him we – live – and move – and have our being*” (Ac.17:28). That’s what happens when we say, “*Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner*” (Lk.18:13). BOOM! Just like that! He puts you right inside Christ! Hallelujah! In other words, from that moment on, you are *wearing* – Christ. “*Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ*” (Rom.13:14; Gal.3:27). Are you okay? Are you wearing Christ so it is He who is seen on you?

Everywhere I go, I wear something unbelievers do not wear. The father said to Joseph, “I have made you a *royal coat*. It’s many colored” (Gen.37:3 – and there is a great deal of symbolism that could be preached with just that much). “It is of manifold colors and when anyone looks at you, they will know that you are” – listen! – “*potentially royal.*”

In his young years, Joseph was the only of the 12 brothers who had the coat. And with his youthful exuberance, he had only a thimbleful of wisdom ☺ in which to wear that coat. Have you ever been *there*? This preacher has. When the giftings of God and the beauty of God come but we don’t have the wisdom **to demonstrate Him** by wearing the coat – it’s really not a good place for testimony.

Now, this is a spiritual young man at only age 17. He's just wearing his coat. I mean, he's not strutting – sort of ☺. But then, in addition to the coat, he has this marvelous spiritual vision, a dream (Gen.37:5ff). Oh yes. People who have visions can be so “spooky!” ☺ Joseph dreamed that the brothers were gathering the wheat sheaves and all of theirs “*made obeisance*” to his. This represented to him (and rightly so) that one day his brothers would bow down to him.

Joseph was so excited to have had the dream! “Oh! This is magnificent!” Now sometimes, that's what happens to Christians when they come to really understand the power – of influence. “Do you know who I am? Bless God. You better not cross me! I serve a BIG God!” Well, let me tell you something – they may not cross you, but with that attitude, they don't want your God either!

I believe Joseph was being sincere. I don't think he was strutting as much as he was ignorant. When his brothers came in he said, “Hey! Let me tell you about my dream! WOW! You guys are going to bow down to me some day – and I *am* royal!” We can sing it too, right along with him: “I'm a royal priesthood.” Well, these 11 brothers did not come and bow down before Joseph! On the contrary, they inquired of one another, “Is he crazy?” They were indignant and hated him all the more. “Oh really? We're going to bow down to you – puny little brother!” (Gen.37:5) It says, “*They hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words*” (Gen.37:8). Here's some good advice: **watch your mouth!** Not only what you say, but how you say it. We've *said* some things that we *don't demonstrate* and the reaction of the world is much like the reaction of the brothers here (see Gen.37:8).

Can you take one more heavy truth? The reaction of other believers – the *brothers* (and sisters) in the Body of Christ – is much like *these* brothers. I meet people, and so do you if you talk much with anyone, who were once very involved in church, or in churches, and they just have had it up to here with mouths that have spoken beyond their own living levels. We used the word “hypocrites” for years. Their accusation was: “Your church is full of hypocrites.” And then we'd joke back and say, “Well, not since you left!” ☺

But I'm not as concerned about the church here. I mean it's wonderful when we have many people in attendance on Sundays. And I think there should be more and more until our churches are full. But I don't have any problem with numbers. I have never been very excited about whether we had 300 or 3000 – I really don't care how many attend. If the truth be told, what I really get excited about is when I see Jesus in everyone that is there! That's the key! And I get even more excited when I see Jesus out in the marketplace – in restaurants and at the cleaners or the grocery store – at unusual times when you suddenly become aware – “There's Jesus!” And when Jesus is there, unhindered and free to move, they'll see Him in you!

There's a certain absolute unity that takes place when we all “wear” Him like a cloak. I've seen that, I suppose, hundreds of times in the over-40 years that I've traveled, when I would meet people I'd never met before, but there was – *::whish::* – just something familiar about them. What it was was Jesus meeting Jesus on this earth as a Kingdom-member!

But it's not by chance that clear over in the New Testament in James 1 it says (that's James the brother of Jesus reporting), “*If anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who upbraideth not*” – God is not going to put you down for asking – “*but giveth to all men liberally.*” I don't think a day of my life goes by that I don't ask God for wisdom. My nature and make-up and personality could be very crass and really disgusting *without His wisdom*. I just naturally say things like I see them. I can be pretty quick with a retort or response – I tend to shoot from the hip. ☺ And without the wisdom of God to know *what and when* – I wouldn't even know how to load the bullets! ☺ You can witness too long – at the wrong time – to the wrong person and bear no fruit for the Kingdom.

One plants – one waters – God gives the increase (1Cor.3:6,7). Sometimes, just a simple sentence of encouragement is what God wants from us, but we plow the ground – cram the seed in – stamp it down, and go for the hose! ☺ “There's a hell to pay, you know!” ☺ And here the Lord had these people

already “tilled” and simply waiting for just a little mustard seed to drop from us because He has someone else over there ready to water it who can do that so much better! And when that sort of teamwork happens, the question isn’t: “Who gets the glory?” That’s already spelled out in the Word. It is HE alone. God gets the glory! He’s the One that brings forth that which has been sown.

So – here’s Joseph. What he’s saying is the truth (Gen.37:7). He’s wearing a royal garment – he has a “right” to say it – but he’s not wise in doing so. And – as we say in our slang expressions – “he turned his brothers off.” Now a day or so goes by and his father says, “Go out to your brothers in the field and see if they’re okay” (Gen.37:12ff). They’re out working in the fields, tending to their father’s sheep, and Joseph goes out to them. He’s willing to be a servant to them – to carry things or messages – whatever is needed. And he goes out but he can’t find them (Gen.37:16f).

In the meantime, they’re having a little get-together (Gen.37:18) and they’re saying things much like we hear people who’ve left our churches say. Things like, “Do you think he was...” “Do you think it’s fair that...” “I mean, do you think that...” “Should father have put a robe on him?” “He wasn’t...” “And that dream...” ::*grumble – grumble*:: (Gen.37:19,20). “Shouldn’t I have exactly the same talents? I’m a Christian. I’m born again. I’ve given my life to the Lord. How come I don’t have what he has?” And that is the delightful (divisive) language of the enemy! He loves that! In fact, he stands on the sidelines agreeing when we start talking that way and says, “Oh, that’s right! You’re so right! Mmmm! Mmmm! Mmmm!” Just speaking agreement with *you*. That’s why scripture says, “*Gird up the loins of your mind*” (1Pet.1:13).

The brothers see him coming and conspire: “We need to get rid of that guy!” Now you may or may not agree with me about this, but I’m right of course. ☺ It is interesting to me, all through the generations of time, that the unbelievers as well as those who have turned against God (and there’s a difference between the two – some just don’t receive and others have turned against) these people, as a class if I may, really do believe they can destroy the Kingdom.

Why do you think certain issues are being voted on in our nation today? Like our Pledge of Allegiance? All my life – 76 years – I’ve been able to say: “one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” And now they’re saying – “There’s no *liberty and justice* for the Christian!” And I could mention other issues you already know about (should know about – if you’re literate at all! ☺). Read your daily newspapers! ☺ You do need to be informed! Ignorant, uninformed, uninvolved *Christians* have *allowed* certain of our freedoms to be stolen away from us because we just didn’t want to be tainted by the political arena of our land! We slept through crucial debates in the past – let us no longer hide our heads in the sand!

Here’s the good news: *they cannot stamp out this fire!* They can’t! We are, if we will be, the sparks that shower forth and light somewhere else. It must be more frustrating to them than to us because every time they take a law or situation and make a new law against it that is negative to the Christian church, we can spring up somewhere else! I love that! It’s just – you know – “Sunday’s coming!” You can deny us a church building over here – okay – we’ll go to a warehouse over there. Deny that and we will... We **will** – because we can’t help it – *if we’re living in purpose!*

So when Joseph comes out to the fields to find his brothers, they’re all there. They have plotted together – you know the story. Ultimately, two of his brothers save his life (Reuben and Judah; see Gen.37:21-27). Two of those who had been in unity with the others. They had agreement that Joseph shouldn’t be what he was, preferred and favored by the father, and they didn’t like him because of that, and now they’re going to bow to him? They were all agreed together until it came down to the end, and two of them saved his life. One says, “Why don’t we do something other than kill him? We can still get rid of him.” The other one suggested, “Let’s sell him to a stranger.”

Now, if I don’t get anything else across to you – I need to help you to see clearly: *not one of these things is outside the plan of God for Joseph!* Remember, he was born and named “added to” or “enlarged.” It

was all purposeful. Everything that happened. Joseph had the royal robe put on him long before he lived like royalty. Very long. Many years.

One brother says, “Put him in that pit.” Actually it was a cistern and *should* have been full of water. It should have been. Hello. It just wasn’t. I wonder why! ☺ Oh! Is that an amazing circumstance or what? ☺ I hope you can laugh at the satire. But now we must be able to look at our own lives and see how God is putting the pieces together of *our* jigsaw puzzles called “life.” One piece here and one piece there. Can you remember the many times you screamed out because no one could find the piece that fit? When *nothing* seemed to be right! ::*Whine*:: “Oh. I missed it. Nothing’s working. I tried. I lost my job. My marriage blew up. I’m sick in body. I can’t do the things I used to do... and... and...”

That’s okay! God still has all the pieces of your puzzle in hand! He gingerly picks up a piece – hear me – for *this space* and waits for our willingness to receive it, even if it looks like the wrong piece or that it would never fit. There are pieces to your puzzle that aren’t out on the table yet. And it isn’t because God doesn’t know where a piece is or where you are! The Lord remembers you! (see Gen.30:22; 19:29; 1Sam.1:19). This time of *seeming* confusion of purposes is because something greater is working in your life and circumstances to prepare you for that next puzzle-piece to be placed down in its rightful position. God knows what He is doing and what is needful for us and He knows the timing of it all. He is Lord!

So, you’re not only *formed* as Joseph was and you’re not only *furnished* as he was with this incredible coat – but you’re also *finding* what it costs to multiply. Joseph is down in the pit – and the brothers’ intention is to destroy him. One of them, who doesn’t understand at all why he’s saying it, suggests an alternative: “Well, there’s a caravan of traders coming. Let’s see if we can get anything for him.”

So the brothers pull him out of the pit and bargain with the traders, saying, “You know, he’d be a good worker. He’s young – about 17 – good looking....” Of course they stripped him of his coat (Gen.37:23) – except – they couldn’t really take it off. Did you get that? Today, in our present culture you should get it – you see all these *tattoos* today – everywhere – on both men and women. You could strip them naked – but their tattoos would remain. That’s the way we are with God and His favor. We’re *divinely tattooed!* We are so one with Him – our whole body is tattooed. It says: “Jesus!”

That’s why you’re uncomfortable when you go places you shouldn’t be. And everyone around you is uncomfortable too. You’re thinking, “Why? I’m just doing the same thing they’re doing” – whatever it happens to be. But you see the tattoo is like those little sparkles – that keep on glowing and glowing – like supernatural fiber optics! But we don’t always want to “sparkle.” Sometimes I even look for the “off button!” ☺ I don’t always want to be on duty! Sometimes I just don’t want to talk to anyone about anything and I don’t want people to recognize me when I’m just out and about – not because I’m being “bad” – sometimes I just want to be – nothing! ☺ Do you ever...? I hope not. Maybe you’re so much higher than I you never have those moments. ☺ But I can’t find an off button! He just – flickers – everywhere I go!

And so, Joseph is pulled out of the pit, sold and taken to Egypt. There he’s sold again to an officer who is the authority just under Pharaoh (Gen.37:36; 39:1). *Instantly* – this is amazing if you can hear it! – *instantly* he is put in charge of Potiphar’s whole household. He is over all the servants with oversight of everything in the house (Gen.39:4). Why? Potiphar just sees the tattoo (Gen.39:3) and believes “If this man has that divine tattoo, you can trust him.”

Oh Church, please hear it. You can be the best employee your employer could possibly have! He knows you won’t lie, cheat, or steal. The Bible says the only thing Potiphar knew from that moment on was what he ate (Gen.39:6). That is so funny to me – apparently he didn’t give up the menu! ☺ And as Joseph is running his house – *amazingly* – everything prospers (Gen.39:5).

Now I want you to hear this because in church we get the idea that walking the Christian life is ::*whine*:: so hard – and difficult – and we sing: “I’ve sacrificed a lot of things to walk this narrow way...” NOT!

You never have had it as good as when our Lord put that royal tattooed coat on you! It seems like things just begin to fall into place! Sure you've had some difficult times, but never have you lost the song inside. It's there! If you'll call on it, it'll spill right out! At some of my lowest moments, I almost make myself angry – by singing! ☺ At those times, I just want to be depressed! ☺ Things simply are not good! But I can't help singing! “Ha-le-lu-jah!” And in tongues! “Holy Spirit – turn off!” ☺ But tongues flow anyway! I can't turn Him off!! ☺ So I might as well join Him and sing a duet! ☺ And let the *glory* of the Lord rise within! (Isa.60:1). Just like Joseph!

That's Joseph – going through Potiphar's house doing his job, and doing it well. And he was a “hunk!” Well, maybe that's worded a little differently. ☺ The Bible does say he was handsome (Gen.39:6 NASB). And here he is walking through the house doing the chores and managing the household for Potiphar. *Managing*, of course. He's *royalty*! Potiphar's wife looks up one day. She's got too much time on her hands, her husband is a busy man, and this handsome young kid is... whew! Too much! “He wouldn't dare say ‘No’ to me! I'm his boss's wife.” And she makes an invitation she figures he cannot resist! She attempts to seduce him (Gen.39:7).

Here's a virile young man who has been rejected by his own people – he's a slave in a strange land – and this undoubtedly beautiful woman (that Potiphar with all his wealth would have chosen for his wife) is there offering herself to him. What will he do? He can't sleep with her – ***because he can't get the coat off!*** You see, it has nothing to do with whether he *felt* like it! Of course he *felt* it! ☺ It has nothing to do with *desire*. It's the coat! It just marks you! Joseph *knows*, “I just can't!” (Gen.39:8,10) And she grabs the coat (Gen.39:12) that she thinks she can rip off – the outer garment – but he fled, rejecting her advances.irate (scorned?), she determines, “Oh, I'll get even with you!” and she accuses him of rape! She calls for the servants of the house, shows them his garment and claims, “He tried to rape me. Look, I even have his jacket!”

It **was** rape! Hers! She raped her husband by what she did in approaching Joseph. And she raped the household of its blessing of his (His) presence. That can happen on a job when jealous co-workers get you fired. That's rape. But they rape *themselves*, not you. Come on, loved ones, not you! Don't let that kind of action take anything away from you. The favor of God is with you! (Gen.39:21).

Soon Potiphar comes home, hears the whole fabricated story, believes his wife and says, “Put him in prison! That's it!” (Gen.39:20). How would you feel? There – *in the will of God*, as we call it. Let's talk New Testament language: doing everything God told us to do, trying to live an upright Christian life, turning our backs on sin, refusing temptation, and suddenly we find ourselves in shackles – in prison – with people who *deserve* to be there!

Joseph barely arrived in the prison before the jailor put him in charge (Gen.39:22). What? Why? ***The coat!*** (Gen.39:23). He was only being himself, but he stood out, flashing like a neon sign declaring he was different from all the rest. There was *something* that labeled him: Ability – Power – Influence – Submission – Willingness. And the man in charge of it all said, “There's something trustworthy about you. I'm going to give you this quadrant. You're in charge of this whole group.”

Oh Church, if I knew how to make this clearer I would. You have no idea the *power* and the *magnitude of influence* He placed in you when He put the Lord Jesus on you! Everywhere you go, you can make a difference! You can walk into a peaceless situation and speak, “Peace! Be still!” (Mk.4:39). But we have the whole thing backwards! We think our relationship with Him is always: “Get! Get! Get!” We even wait for the altar call so we can come down and *get* some more! We think we need it. *::moan::* “I've had a very bad week. I need all I can *get!*”

Think back to the situation when you were there in prison. What did you do? Did anyone see your coat? Because divine favor *demonstrates* (You might as well agree – I'm right about this! ☺) You are *favored* of the Lord – highly favored. “*Blessed are thou among women,*” said the angel to Mary, “*Thou art highly favored*” (Lk.1:28). Why was she “highly favored?” I'm so glad you asked. ☺ Because she was going to

bring forth Christ – Selah! (that word that means “Stop and think about that!” Think about the ramifications of what was just said.). And that’s why I dare say to you, “You are highly favored.” Because *we’re bringing forth Christ!* We carry Him with us wherever we go! We carry the potential and power of influence and blessing. It’s the coat!

Now, one day – *just by chance* – by happenstance – two of the men that were in the dungeon or in the jail, or in the pit, in the prison with Joseph had dreams they could not understand (Gen.40:5ff). And Joseph, directed of the Lord said, “I understand them. You’re going to live – you’re going to die.” I strongly doubt they believed him right there on the spot. Every preacher can doubt that. When we bring the Word of the Lord, we can just about measure who votes “Yes,” and who votes “No,” and who votes “I’ll think about it later.” ☺

I don’t think the baker suddenly said, “Oh, I get it. That’s what’s going to happen to me – off with me head.” ☺ And I don’t think the cupbearer happily declared, “Oh, yea! I’m going to be reinstated.” I think they just heard him – they just listened. Now, if this message moves you to go beyond that position of merely listening to the words spoken, it will be worth all of our time together. Don’t just listen! RECEIVE! Receive the revelation!

Of course it was fulfilled! (Gen.40:20ff). And just as they are both being released – one to have his head cut off, the other to be reinstated as cupbearer – just as they were released, Joseph said, “Hey! YooHoo!! ☺ Remember me to the king! Don’t forget me! I’ve been fair and honest and just to you. When this promotion comes, I want it!” ☺ They didn’t remember him at all (Gen.40:23). They just went back and the baker lost his head, the other went on doing what he did. And all the while, where’s Joseph? He’s in jail – innocently. Do you know that being in jail innocently is no less punishment than being in jail guiltily? If you *deserve* what’s happened to you, that’s no easier than if you don’t deserve it and it happens anyway – and vice-a-versa. That isn’t the point.

The point is higher than that. If you’re a Kingdom-man, or if you’re a Kingdom-woman, you know there is a *higher authority* at work – listen now – on your behalf! God is working *for* you. “*I know the plans I have for you,*” He declares, “*they’re plans for good and not evil*” (Jer.29:11). They are for good. And they’re BIG. God is holding a piece of our puzzle over every one of our lives. He’s just saying, “I’m going to see how they handle this” and later He says, “I’m going to see how they handle that...”

Then, another *happenstance* – you know I’m using the word facetiously! – *another moment of God’s intervention* in the life of Joseph – this time the king has a dream and can’t understand it (Gen.41). “No problem,” he says, “I’ll call in all my wisemen! (all the legislature ☺). “I will call them in and threaten that if they do not interpret this dream, I’ll kill them!” Now personally, I would have made up an interpretation! ☺ But, amazingly, not one of them did (Gen.41:8). “We don’t get it, O king.”

But *suddenly* (just by chance, two years later! ☺ – Gen.41:1,9ff) the cupbearer’s frontal lobe is set to remembering another instance similar to this one. “Oh, yeah! Uh, sir? I don’t know if this means anything to you, but there was an incident when the baker and I were in jail that *could* be of interest to you. We each had dreams and there was a guy down there in the prison that interpreted them – and they each came to pass, just as he said (Gen.41:12). Is that important?”

Oh, please, Church. How many times have we missed the important *nudgings* of the Holy Spirit? We miss them because we try to reason out everything. Our feeble thinking goes like this: “Well, why would I want to tell him this now? He’s got so much on his mind.” Helloooo. It’s just how we humans are and that needs to change! We must learn to listen to His quiet voice, His gentle nudgings, and respond on time. It’s part of the transformation from the carnal man to the spiritual one.

So the king says, “Bring this man up to me. Let’s see what he can do with this.” Joseph comes and God gives him the interpretation for the dream (Gen.41:16,25). The king believes him and says, “Now that’s royalty!” Aw, Church! Kingdom-people! We’re royal! Divinely tattooed with royalty! Everywhere we

go, we're royal. You're going to be very surprised at how soon that's going to be recognized in certain circles where you go. You're going to hear people say, "I don't know why I gave you the job and not him." "I don't know why I bought that from you and not her." "I don't know why..." And I can just hear some of you now: "Oh, please, Iverna, don't say 'it's the tattoo!'" ☺ But please know that it is! *It is His favor on you.* Understand and accept that and just be thankful. Then say, "I don't know why you did either, but thanks so much." It **is** the favor of God – because if you answer the other way and claim credit for the promotion, you lose it all!

So Joseph is put in charge just under Pharaoh, the king (Gen.41:39-44). And all the authority of the entire province was given to him. Amazing all by itself. But oh – the dream. What was it? Oh, just a little situation that brought God's revelation of what was soon to occur: "You're going to have seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine." And God incredibly gave Joseph a plan for how to prepare for those second seven disastrous years.

Now when that kind of information comes to us, we're glad to be living in the seven years of plenty. But we spend the whole seven years singing, "Thank You, Lord! Thank You, Lord! Thank You for my house – my car – my job! Thank You, thank You!" And He's cautioning: "DUH!" ☺ "Don't you remember what I told you was going to follow these years of plenty?"

And only the one with wisdom – only the *church within the church* – only the Kingdom-people understand. ***We have to prepare*** for the seven years of famine. What would happen to you, sir, if there no longer was a church service to attend? What would happen to *you*, lady, if every church door was locked and the only "religious" doors open were for those who spread non-truth? What *would* you do? What would you do in the seven years of famine with no Christian fellowship or support from those around you?

Too many of our church-goers would have to respond weakly: "Well, I think I'd *survive*." I see, you'd survive, and that's it, is it? I'm afraid I've already seen that – too many times. I'm old enough to look back and say, "In my lifetime I have seen that happen." Seven years of Revival and Blessing – followed by seven years of famine and people just trying to stay saved! Don't you understand that the seven years of famine is a divine set-up? The wisdom has been given to the Kingdom to know *how to store up* for the seven years of famine so there will be no lack. Not that you will merely survive, but that you will bountifully supply!

Out of my innermost being shall flow rivers of living water! (Jn.7:38) That's what the Lord's looking for! Men and women, young people and old, who will store up in those great moments of plenty so that they have the Word deeply ingrained within. We need that being accomplished now so they could rip away every Bible from our hands, but could never actually take His Word away from our hearts.

The Bible says about Joseph, "*the Word of the Lord tried him.*" (Ps.105:19). What does that mean? "The Word of the Lord tried him?" It means – have you a Promise? Do you *believe* what God said to you? "Oh, I'll tell you – I sure do! I'll say I believe God!" That Word He gave you is sure – and it's going to be tried! Not once – twice – but seven times in the fire (Ps.12:6). Once you've received a Promise (a dream?) from God, you're going to go through rejection. You're going to go through a pit. You're going to go through temptation. You're going to go through the prison. You're going to go through these things – just like Joseph – and the only thing you will have to hang on to, my Friend, is the WORD!

The Word! – The Word! – The Word! "*Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not miss it!*" (Ps.119:11). And when you have that quality and quantity of Word, it is sufficient to come out of the breasts of the Church to nourish and feed the little (and dependent) ones for however long the famine takes place. We can say to men and women and to young people out there who feel they are starving, "Come on in! Come to us! We have the provision and sustenance of His Word."

As his brothers came to Egypt a second time for food, Joseph made himself known to them saying, “I’m Joseph!” (Gen.45:3,4). And they were terrified (3b). “Oh, no! Now He’s going to kill us.” Listen to me, Church – **people always judge you from their own weak points**. If the tables had been turned around and Joseph had gone to them for help, they would have killed him. That’s where people judge you – from their own positions of weakness. “Oh, yeah, you’re just saying that...” Because *they* would just say that! Learn it well. Throw your heads up high, smile, and say, “No, you missed that one. I know God has purpose in everything in my life, and I will not retaliate against you!”

Joseph said, “Don’t be afraid of me. God sent me here before the famine came that I might have plenty (Gen.45:5). *We* have saved up in the time of feasting so that *you* will never have a lack in your lives!” Joseph – hear me now, hear all of it – brought them to where he was, fed them, nourished them, took care of them, sent for their father, the father came... and the whole time, *Joseph is wearing his coat*. He makes his family known to Pharaoh and those whom he’s been serving in Egypt (Gen.45:16f). And then, in time, his father Jacob dies (Gen.49:33).

Now listen and I’ll close with this. After all of that, after all that he did for his brothers, after bringing his father and the entire family there, after standing between Pharaoh and his family and giving them favor – LISTEN! – *Joseph gave favor because he had favor*. When Jacob died, the brothers conspired once more and said, “Oh, no. The only reason he was good to us is because the father who favored him was still with us” (Gen.50:15ff).

Now, you can read the whole story in Genesis – the father is gone. The brothers fear: “He’ll cut us off for sure!” Do you know the hurt of that? Some of you do for you have had that kind of hurt – from the brethren. When we have been so honest with people and so *royal* with them and all the rest – and then they turn and are suspicious of us, saying, “Well, the only reason you do this is that...” – therein is all the hurt, the dagger, that is in your spirit. Misunderstood and mistreated.

Joseph called for them when he heard of their distress. I honestly don’t know what I would have done in that same situation. Joseph had lots of power – he could have cut them off. “You didn’t believe me. You didn’t trust me. Fine! Make your own way!” But he didn’t do that. He called them in and said, “Listen. You need to know something. I know our father is dead, but I’m still in his favor. I wear a coat that cannot be stripped from me. And that coat demands that I give freely what has been given to me, wherever there is a need (Mt.10:8). I have had God’s wisdom to store up for these seven years and you will never want for anything” (Gen.50:19-21).

Church, don’t you know that’s what we call “the Gospel?” It’s good news. When we speak to people that don’t know Jesus, don’t dangle them over hell. What we should be saying to them is, “I have a gift for you. I know Someone who wants to give to you from now on and through eternity. He wants to bless your business, your life, your home, your body, your mind, your spirit – because He is a *blessor*! And I know Him and I want you to know Him!”

Oh, P.S. It wasn’t just a single family thing – the blessing wasn’t just for Joseph. This was the beginning of the fulfillment of the covenant to Abraham – “*I will make of you a great nation*” (Gen.12:2). Twelve patriarchs and Father God. Here they are in a strange land and they probably looked around and said, “Well, we’ve got all the cousins and uncles and brothers...” and so on. “How many do we have?” “Well, not very many.”

And God says, “Let Me tell you how many you have – you have *enough*.” That’s how God counts! When He gives a promise – like “*greater things than these shall ye do because I go to the Father*” (Jn.14:12) and we say, “Oh, but there’s not enough of us to do the job.” He corrects us: “There’s enough. I counted them.” There’s enough in every church to do what God directs. There’s enough in every family. If there’s just one believer and God, that’s a majority! You stop counting like David. He made that mistake (2Sam.24). Stop numbering things – “Well, I just don’t feel like I’m very influential and...” Forget it! God goes, “One – two. Enough!”

I have a question and I'm through. Can you honestly admit, "I have not *really* been a Kingdom-member? Have you really *worn* your *coat*, the Lord Jesus? Well, are you ready to pray this prayer now? "Father, I want to put on the Lord Jesus Christ so that He shows up brightly everywhere I go." Make no mistake, it will cost you something but I can attest that He is worth whatever the price is you may have to pay!

Now let me pray for you. "Father, You have favored these readers. You're the One that opened their ears to hear what the Spirit is saying in this message. I'm asking You to put those royal garments on them now – mark them with Your *divine tattoo* – so they can never deny Whose they are! Thank You for it, Lord. Let all the blessings that go with this come to them. Lord, I ask You to bless Your people. Bless them with prosperity! Bless them with liberty! Bless them with *boldness* that only comes from You, and let the Kingdom of God be seen! Amen."