

JOSEPH CAST INTO PRISON

Genesis 39-40

Lesson Memory Verse: I Thessalonians 5:18 "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

Lesson Aim: To teach the children to give thanks to God for the bad things that happen to them as well as the good things because they are all going to do us good if we are Christians.

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

KEY (for Attention): Does anyone here know what a prison is? (Let the children tell what they think a prison is. You correct their wrong ideas and add to their understanding of a prison, if necessary.) In our story today Joseph is thrown into prison for something he did not do. He did not like to be in prison, but he did not get mad at God and pout. Instead, he probably thanked God. The Bible does not say that he did, but whatever he did, he pleased God by doing it. And God is pleased when we are thankful, even for the troubles that come into our life. If you get mad about things that happen to you, you had better listen to our memory verse today.

HE (for Authority): Our memory verse tells us that we are to give thanks. I will read the verse, and you tell me for what things we are to give thanks. (For everything) "Everything" means "all things." Does that mean we give thanks for only the things that make us happy? (No) Can you tell me about some troubles for which we are to give thanks? (Let them name some. They will learn more by this means than if you told them of all the troubles for which they are to give thanks.) "Will of God" means the "plan of God." The "will of God" refers to the things that please God. It pleases God when you give thanks for everything because that is His plan for your life. "Concerning you" refers to those things "having to do with you." The reason why God wants us to give thanks for all things, whether it seems good or bad to us, is simple. It is His will or in other words, it is His plan for us. Some things may seem right to us, and some things may seem wrong, but only God knows what is best. We should trust Him, and when we do, we will give thanks for everything that happens to us.

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application): PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word. In our lesson today we will see that God's plan for Joseph allowed many things to happen to him that seemed bad, but they were really good for him because they helped him to become an important ruler for God in Egypt. When you hear what happened to him in today's story, ask yourself, "Would I give thanks to God if that happened to me?"

I. Joseph Ruled Potiphar's House (39:1-6)

A. Joseph was sold as a slave to Potiphar (39:1).

When bad things happened to Joseph, he did not become bitter and hate God. He did not know why God allowed him to suffer such bad things, but he trusted God and kept a good attitude toward Him. His good attitude shows that he had a thankful spirit.

WE: We would find it hard to give thanks to God if we were taken away from our home and sold as a slave to someone that we did not know, but Joseph did that, and he pleased God. How do we know that?

B. Joseph was blessed by God in everything he did (39:2).

God blesses those that are thankful because it shows that they trust Him.

C. Potiphar put Joseph in charge of everything he had (39:3-6).

Potiphar trusted Joseph because he had a good attitude.

WE: We will be blessed by God, if we thank Him for everything. Being thankful for everything will give us a good attitude, which we need to be successful in life. We all need to learn this important lesson.

II. Joseph Refused Potiphar's Wife (39:7-20)

A. Potiphar's wife wanted Joseph to join her in a wicked sin, but he refused to do it (39:7-12).

B. Potiphar's wife lied about Joseph and made him look like a wicked man (39:13-18).

C. Potiphar believed his wife and put Joseph into prison (39:19-20).

God tested Joseph again with more troubles. He did the right thing, but he was accused of doing a wrong thing by a woman that lied about him. Joseph needed to trust God and continue to be thankful.

WE: We need to trust God and remain thankful, even when people lie about us and get us into serious trouble. That would be hard, wouldn't it?

III. Joseph Received Mercy in Pharaoh's Prison (39:21-23)

A. God helped Joseph to gain favor with the prison keeper (39:21).

B. The prison keeper put him in charge of everything in the prison (39:21b-23).

God blessed Joseph, but He did not take him out of prison. Joseph could have turned against God because He allowed him to be put in prison. He could have overlooked God's blessings because the prison was not a nice place in which to live. He did not know if he would ever get out of such a bad place. But he did not stop being thankful; he trusted God and had a good attitude.

WE: We need to thank God for the good things that He gives us, even when we are put in a bad place to live. We must not overlook His blessings and forget to thank Him for these good things that He gives us.

IV. Joseph Interpreted Two Dreams (40:1-23)

A. Joseph interpreted the dreams of the Pharaoh's butler and baker (40:1-22).

Joseph helped others with their problems by the help he received from God. This shows that he had a good attitude.

B. Joseph's kindness was forgotten by the butler for a long time (40:14-15, 23).

Joseph asked the butler to remember him for his kindness in interpreting his dream, but the butler forgot about him for a couple of years. This must have been discouraging for Joseph, but he did not become bitter when he was forgotten by the butler. It seems he still believed God had not forgotten him. That is why God could make him a ruler in Egypt later in his life.

WE: When we help someone, and they forget about us when we need help, it hurts, doesn't it? Even so, we must not become bitter; we must keep a good attitude and thank God for whatever happens. We can do that, if we trust God to take care of us.

BE (for Action): Joseph had both good and bad things happen to him. Can you name the good things? Can you name the bad things?

Our memory verse says that we are to give thanks in everything. It should be easy to give thanks for the good things that happen to us, but sometimes we forget. Can you name some good things for which you should remember to give thanks?

But we must also give thanks for the "bad" things that come into our lives. This is hard to do, but God is in control of all things that happen to us, and for some reason the "bad" things are really good for us. God uses both good and bad things to make us more like Jesus. Will you ask God right now to help you to trust Him enough to give thanks, even for the "bad" things?