

# *Order of Worship*

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost, September 20, 2020

WELCOME

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP                      Psalm 13                                      UMH p. 746

HYMN 139                      *This Is My Father's World*                                      TERRA BEATA

SCRIPTURE    Genesis 40: 1-8

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE    Genesis 40: 9-15

HYMN 368                      *My Hope Is Built*                                      THE SOLID ROCK

SCRIPTURE    Genesis 40: 16-23

MESSAGE                      *Are You Willing to Wait for God?*

GENEROSITY, INVITATIONS and CELEBRATIONS

HYMN 369                      *Blessed Assurance*                                      ASSURANCE

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

## Prayer Corner

- We lift up the “Grief Support for Children and Each Other” seminar held at church and online on Tuesday, Sept. 22 at 6:30pm. May it help heal broken hearts and strengthen our love for God, each other, and our community.

## **Are You Willing to Wait for God? Gen. 40 Pastor Rebecca Voss**

When my husband and I look for a movie to watch together, I admit that I make it difficult. I have a problem with suspense – the haunting background music, shadowy images, and eventual unwanted surprises are the last thing I want to watch. I know better than to spoil a movie's ending for anyone else, but I want to know ahead of time that it will all turn out well.

Even if you are the type of person who enjoys a thriller or mystery in film or print, you probably don't like it in real life. We anxiously await the acceptance letter, job offer, marriage proposal, pregnancy results, children to start school, children to finish school, retirement benefits, and "all clear" from the doctor. Our lives are burdened with waiting for the debt to be paid, the prodigal child to return, the boss to be fair, the disease to be cured, the fires to be quenched, and the proverbial air to be cleared. We often feel imprisoned in the "not yet's" of life. So today we're going to see what Joseph can teach us about how we can more faithfully answer the question, "Are you willing to wait for God?"

If we read Genesis 40 as Joseph lived it, here would be a short summary: *In jail. Two men. Two dreams. Two interpretations. One lives, one dies. One man forgets. In jail.* Many of you know how it all turns out for Joseph, but I won't spoil it if you don't. Put yourself in his shoes – he's thrown in prison on a false accusation. The high-ranking people who put him there are certainly not listening to the truth. His far-away father thinks he is dead, his brothers who sold him as a slave would never come to his rescue, and his fellow prisoners are confused, killed, and forgetful. He can't see a glimmer of hope on the horizon. Despite the circumstances, Joseph trusts that God is faithful. The first mark of waiting for God is learning how to be faithful in the waiting.

Last Sunday in Genesis 39 we saw the phrase, "The Lord was with Joseph" repeated four times. The reassurance of God's faithful presence and power in his life would be vital for Joseph to endure the suspense, loneliness, and shame of prison life. Would he be allowed to live another day? Would he have a chance to be vindicated?

Would he face the death penalty? Keep in mind that Joseph has no more knowledge of his future than you or I know our future.

In his book Be Authentic, Warren Wiersbe says, “God permitted Joseph to be treated unjustly and put in prison to help build his character and prepare him for the tasks that lay ahead. The prison would be a school where Joseph would learn to wait on the Lord . . . He would learn that God’s delays are not God’s denials”

How does Joseph find the will to wait and trust in God in these circumstances? How do we find the will to wait and trust in God when our lives have complications and complexities that sideline our hopes and derail our faith? Here are three things we can see in Joseph's time of waiting and learn to apply in our time of waiting. Joseph doesn't know how his future will unfold, but he knows who is ultimately holding his future.

*Sometime after this, the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and his baker offended their lord the king of Egypt. Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where Joseph was confined. The captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he waited on them; and they continued for some time in custody. (Gen. 40:1-4)*

What do you do when you are unjustly accused? What do you do when people you trusted turn against you? What do you do when your dreams turn to ashes? These are questions for all of us. The first question: **Are We Faithful** even when life seems to make no sense?

Related to the question of being faithful is the question of being ready. Will Joseph sleep away the days to numb the pain and banality of prison life? Or will he be looking for ways that God is moving and preparing Joseph to be ready to serve or speak whenever the opportunities arise?

*One night they both dreamed—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison—each his own dream, and each dream with its own meaning. When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were troubled. So he asked Pharaoh’s*

*officers, who were with him in custody in his master's house, "Why are your faces downcast today?" They said to him, "We have had dreams, and there is no one to interpret them." And Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell them to me."(Gen. 40:5-8)*

It's important to notice what Joseph didn't say. Joseph's own dreams had been the source of initial hope and pride that turned to family division and his exile and enslavement. Despite this, he didn't discourage them and tell them to forget about their dreams or tell them that they were insignificant. He also doesn't say, "Don't worry, guys – I'm an expert in dreams and can tell you whatever you need to know!" Joseph straddles the fine line between despair and false optimism as he says, *"Do not interpretations belong to God?"* (v. 8) His answer means something like this: "I don't have the answer in me, but I know the Lord and he can help you out." This highlights the second question: **Are We Ready** to point to God and ready to help others?

Joseph adds a personal request in verse 14 to the cup bearer whose dream reveals he will be released from prison soon: *"But remember me when it is well with you; please do me the kindness to make mention of me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this place."* Joseph is showing the first two signs of how to wait for God – He's faithful and he's ready to serve God. He's also showing one last but crucial element of waiting – he is bold. He knows God didn't make him to sit in prison without fulfilling his purpose. He is willing to accept the circumstances, but he knows that God is just and will eventually set him free one way or another. Last but not least: **Are We Bold** when asking both God and others for justice and mercy?

Joseph's experience in prison reminds us that God doesn't keep time the same way we do. In 2 Peter 3:8 we are reminded, *"But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day."* **How will you be faithful, ready, and bold while you wait?** It will look different for different people. Isaiah 40:31 reminds us of the value of waiting and trusting in God: *"but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."*