

GOD'S TRAINING

(Bro. Bakht Singh, Balance of Truth 1970 Nov, Dec, 1971 Jan)

Gen. 39:1 to the end Gen. 41:1-52

"Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savior of His knowledge by us in every place" 2 Cor. 2:14

That was the testimony of the Apostle Paul, and we, as believers in the, Lord Jesus Christ should have the same testimony by understanding God's purpose in our lives. The Holy Spirit has brought these words to our attention that we might be given the experience of their message, as we meditate upon them together. It all depends whether we ourselves desire that, with all our handicaps and failures, we should enjoy triumphant life. The Lord Jesus Christ has made ample and abundant provision for all of us but we must understand the divine laws that govern such a life.

First, we must be sure about our personal union with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. He forgives our sins when we call upon Him. We are literally bound by Him in a threefold manner as the Apostle Paul says in Rom. 6. We are grafted in His death, likewise in His burial, and in His resurrection. It is common in many countries to make a tree fruitful by grafting. Some trees naturally yield small sour fruits, and later the same trees yield large, sweet fruits by grafting. We are told here that when we accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, we are grafted in His death, burial and resurrection. The tree represents our hearts. A few of us have learnt the secret of how to appropriate oneness with the Lord Jesus Christ. In our daily life, with all our intentions to be victorious, we fail again and again, because we use wrong methods to try to conquer sin. We may use will power or fasting, or long prayers, or Bible knowledge. But everything fails. Victory comes by experience, experience by faith, and faith by our union with the Lord Jesus Christ, that is why the experience of Romans 6th chapter is very important.

The life of Joseph is an illustration of how we can become victorious, Gen.39; Gen. 41: 1-52. First Joseph was conscious that the Lord had chosen him. He knew beforehand that the Lord was preparing him for something great. Even at a very early age he had to go through all kinds of afflictions and hardships, which were necessary to train him for his future ministry. God may put us in any situation unknown to us, and lead us on till we are brought into the understanding of His plan.

Now Joseph was not brought to Egypt of his own choice. It was in God's plan. Even though his own brothers sold him because they hated him, God was responsible for what was happening to him. God can use all painful means to bring us into His plan and purpose. His ways are past finding out. His ways are perfect. In Psalm 18:22, He promises to make our way perfect. It is God that girds us with strength, and makes our way perfect. So as to bring us to the perfect path, He has to use all kinds of painful and hard methods. Even though in the beginning we cannot understand, it is only when we look back after many years that we can see that God's skilful hands moved on our behalf. We have to wait patiently.

In Gen. 39, we see how God brought Joseph into Egypt. In Egypt, he had to occupy a high position, and to be a source of blessing not only in Egypt, but too many nations. The Lord has chosen us also for a special purpose. We only think of our own happiness and our own self, but God has a far better purpose in choosing us. He wants all of us to be a source of greater blessing than we can imagine.

For example, take the case of Hannah. She had prayed earnestly (1 Sam. 1) because she was barren. She prayed: "Give me a child", but for many years God was silent. Then her prayer was changed. She discovered, after painful sufferings, that God had a need to be met through her as a co-worker. And the Lord gave her a son, who became the means of blessing to the whole nation and other nations. But she had to shed many tears before she got a child, and also suffered much reproach.

The Lord allows us also to go through painful experiences according to His own wisdom God knew beforehand that only in Egypt, could Joseph be used as His vessel, because the Scripture says: "God knows the end from the beginning" (Isaiah 46:10; 41: 35). He knows before hand what is going to happen to us after many years, and, keeping that in view, the Lord takes us through many situations. It was God who brought Joseph forward in the house of Potiphar (Gen. 39:1). His brethren had a wrong motive in selling him. They wanted to get rid of him because he reported things to his father. They thought that if he was away from them, nobody would go to their father and bring an evil report about them. But God had an entirely different purpose in view and He overcame all the devices of the enemy. "The wrath of man shall praise Thee". (Psalm 76: 10). The brethren of Joseph were full of wrath and anger against him. The very sight of him brought anger in their hearts. As they saw him in the distance, anger and hatred surged in their hearts. They would say "Look at that man coming, he is coming in order to take to our father an evil report

against us". So they were very angry. But the Lord used the very same wrath to take Joseph away from them, so that God might take him to a better place, where He had planned to use him. That was a time of training for Joseph.

None of us can attain a high position in God's service, unless we are properly trained. Worldly people think of worldly knowledge for God's service, and that is why we come across so many failures in their ministry. Though they have been studying in Bible School or college yet they seek after money, popularity, name and fame, because they depend upon worldly knowledge for God's service, hence they are unfruitful. We require divine wisdom for a fruitful, triumphant and victorious life

For the same purpose, the Lord took David through every kind of shameful experience and sufferings for many years to give him wisdom (1 Sam. 18:14). Because of jealousy King Saul was determined to kill David. Rather than being thankful to him for the mighty victory wrought against the Philistines, Saul had become jealous of him (v. 17), and on three occasions, tried to kill him. Yet God gave him special wisdom and extra strength to escape from Saul's plots. At the same time, God permitted all sorts of sufferings because David had to become a better king than Saul had been. Above all he had to receive from God's hand the heavenly pattern of the tabernacle, of which he testifies in I Chron. 28:19. To receive that heavenly pattern from God's hand for the temple he must have divine wisdom and to give him that wisdom God took him through painful trials (V. 18.) David wrote Psalm 18:17 to 24 after he had been through these trials for 18 years. By means of all these painful sufferings he was being prepared to receive the divine pattern.

Joseph was taken to Egypt so that he might receive the divine wisdom which was necessary for him. So he went to the house of Potiphar (Gen.39: 2-6). Potiphar was an officer in Pharaoh's kingdom and had great responsibility in that kingdom. When Joseph came into his house Potiphar began to see that God had begun to favor him. If we honor God in all we do, then others around us can say that "God is with us". Unknown to us God brings us into favor wherever we are, whether in schools, colleges, workshops or other places. Because Joseph learnt to honor and trust God (though he had every reason to murmur and complain against his own brethren) we find in the whole story there was no murmur or complaint on his lips against his brethren or anybody else. He wanted to honor God in all that he did and wherever he was. When God began to bless him so much in the house of Potiphar, Potiphar probably began to admire and perhaps also to praise him but Joseph would never

take pride in such praise for he knew that it was only God who was prospering him and his master saw that the Lord was with him. Joseph did not desire, any man's praise or honor and even though he was a stranger, yet, Potiphar was able to trust him and gradually the whole responsibility of Potiphar's household fell upon him.

If we really honor God in all our labors, then those who are working with us have to acknowledge that God is with us. God allows us to go through certain painful situations that others may know that we are enjoying divine favor and at the same time we are being trained for a higher position. So it was with Joseph. God had prepared him for a higher position than he thought or imagined. That should be our thought too, viz, that God has something better for us. We should desire only to obey and trust Him: At the same time, Joseph had to go through painful temptation. The devil uses many of his devices to mar our testimony and to prevent us from receiving divine power. Throughout our life time, the Lord has power to bring before us some wicked and defiling temptation, that we may claim extra grace and strength, and extra wisdom day by day to conquer our temptations.

In this story a warning is given to us. The devil tempted Joseph and he will do the same to every believer in a very subtle and cunning way. We must be very watchful, and learn how to appropriate His cleansing, and how to identify our selves in His death, burial and resurrection. For the same reason the Lord gave a very solemn warning in Luke 12:31 to 46. These words were spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples that they should be constantly watchful and prayerful. Only by watchfulness can we too conquer temptations. We can never depend upon past blessing or past knowledge or victory. It is a daily warning Joseph was made to go through many temptation for many days, but God gave him extra grace. Though Joseph had to pay a very high price when he was put in prison, that same thing was used to give him perfect training for a higher position (Gen. 39:20, 21.) Through all this painful training, he was given hidden divine wisdom to train him for, his future special high position.

There was going to be a seven years famine and Joseph had to gather sufficient food and corn to provide food, not for one nation, but for many nations. In India we find that there is corruption everywhere especially among high officials. Though they are getting food from Australia and other places, they cannot find honest men for distribution. Here you find one man Joseph whom God chose to provide food for seven years for at nations with no favoritism. That required divine

knowledge, divine wisdom and divine strength. Now worldly knowledge is very different from divine knowledge. For example, compare Job 28: 1 to 28 and Mark 12. People in search of gold, silver and precious stones, work very hard in order to gather them, many go to different parts of the world and they are ready to suffer hardship to find these things. They can even make the earth to yield all kinds of crops and other fruits. But divine wisdom is not gained in this way. You cannot get divine wisdom by hard labor or the exercise of your human wisdom. Only God can give us such wisdom, and it is by such wisdom, that we can become victorious, triumphant and fruitful. It is by that wisdom that we can understand heavenly mysteries which God has for us. God gave Joseph such a wisdom which confounded all the wise men of Egypt (Psalm 105: 11, 29). Pharaoh found out that Joseph had divine wisdom, so he made him lord of the whole house and gave him authority to bind princes (v. 20). At that time famine was raging everywhere. Many of the princes and officers in the Kingdom of Pharaoh tried to make money by bribery or by other way or means as men do in many countries. There was corruption everywhere even in those days. Pharaoh did not know how to eradicate such corruption, so he gave the authority to Joseph saying: "Now I give you authority. You can bind all the princes at your pleasure. Wherever you find corruption, you can bind them and punish them." Joseph had to be a God-fearing, faithful and honest officer, and that required extra divine wisdom. Such will not come by Bible College or the reading of books or adopting of human methods. It is only by going through painful sufferings and trials and temptations that we are given wisdom. That is how God gave Joseph that wisdom. He waited very patiently for about two years. He was living there in the prison forgotten by them for whom he had done good (Gen. 41: 13). In the meantime God caused Pharaoh to have a dream. Now there are certain dreams which are brought by God to help us, but not every dream we dream. I know some are not from God. But the dream that Pharaoh had was from God as we shall see later on.

In the year 1945, in the month of November, I saw a dream. It was a very clear dream. I was standing on the side of the river. It was a very wide river full of water. I saw my father on the other side of the river swimming towards me. My father was a good swimmer in his youth. When he came to the brink of the river he was out of breath. I had to pull him up. I woke up. The dream was very clear. I said, "Oh! God, tell me the meaning of this dream." Lord spoke to me very clearly and said to me "The time of your father's departure from the world is very near. He has

to cross the river of death. He is not ready. You go to him." It was very clear to me. That dream came true. I had this dream in Madras city and my father at that time was in Punjab. I went there, but I did not tell him why I had come. However I asked him: "Has God spoken to you in any way?" He said, "Yes, the Lord has spoken to me that I must come to Madras to give my testimony in the waters of baptism." I had never said anything about baptism to him. It was he who said to me; "The Lord has asked me to go to Madras to take baptism." I came back to Madras. My father was 72 years old, but he travelled to Madras, and gave his testimony for about three hours that day, how the Lord had helped him step by step. That day we had 45 baptisms and he was one of them. I had the privilege of baptizing my own father. With a shining face he came out of the waters, and went back to Punjab afterwards. I have five brothers and he went to each one of them and told them that, as a father he had educated them and had done much for them, but had failed to show them the way of salvation. Now he asked for forgiveness from them for this and said that once he did not know these things himself, but now his sins were forgiven, and he felt it was his duty to tell them. Then he said, "If you want to be saved this way, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior and be sorry for your sins." He said the same to all the five brothers. That was in March, 1946, and the month of July of the same year he passed away to glory, exactly as the Lord told me.

There are dreams which are from God and are given to us, but we have to ask God to show us the meaning also. God can give us a message in a dream or instruct, or warn us or correct us, if He so wishes. It was through a dream the Lord spoke to Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar also dreamed and became restless. Nobody at that time could give the meaning of the dream of the king, but when Daniel and his companions began to pray together, God revealed it to them (Daniel 2: 14), and through that dream they were promoted to a high position. To be able to receive inward revelation, we require divine wisdom. It will not come by human wisdom or books. It has to come from God Himself. The Lord uses sorrow, suffering, painful affliction, trials and hardships to teach us that wisdom. God put Joseph in prison, and he was forgotten and forsaken by everybody for two years. He was alone and people whom he had helped, forgot him. But God did not forget him, and he was raised up by the Lord suddenly through the dream of the king. During those two years imprisonment, Joseph was hearing divine wisdom. We are not told what happened, but the way he spoke when exercising his power, is a proof to us. When King Pharaoh had this dream and told it to Joseph, he knew God would give him the

interpretation (Chapter. 41: 16). Joseph never took any credit for himself. When Joseph gave the interpretation, Pharaoh tried to give the credit to Joseph, but immediately, he said "No, the interpretation is not mine, but God's". He glorified God in the interpretation. Do not fail to honor God in your service. I know by experience that only when you trust God wholly and solely, the Lord will work on your behalf, so do not depend upon your own wisdom.

Not long ago, I was coming from Tenali to Hyderabad by the Hyderabad Express. When the train arrived at the platform, I was told there was no room, though there was a first class bogie. So I enquired from the conductor. "Is there any room?" He said there was no room and that the train was full. Then I asked him if anybody was getting out and he replied in the negative. So I prayed and waited for a while. I knew God would provide. So I told the conductor that I would stand at the door. Then the train began to move, I said, "Lord I know you will never fail. So when we came to Bezawada, the conductor came to me and told me there is room and advised me to go to the third class compartment He said this twice to me and I told him that I was quite safe near the door. So I went on praying "Lord you will never fail me. You have never failed in the past years." After a little while the same conductor came to me and told me that one man had changed his mind and he and his wife were getting down. SO he was able to give me two berths! There was not the least doubt in my heart. I just depended on the Lord. We must learn to trust Him even in small matters knowing that the Lord will work on our behalf. Every situation, however difficult it may be and impossible in man's sight should be accepted by us as from Him. There is no use of getting angry or murmuring or losing our appetite or sleep. Let us eat well and the Lord will work on our behalf. He must work, but on our part we must believe Him. That is God's way to teach us divine wisdom for our future ministry or calling. I require divine wisdom, and so do you and all God's children without exception. Without this wisdom we can do nothing. Why do we come across unhappy homes these days? Because so many depend upon worldly knowledge for a happy married life, it is the same in the case of business or in any other walk of life.

Further in Gen. 41:37. 38 the testimony of Pharaoh said of Joseph "we can see in this man God's wisdom". Pharaoh had many wise men and magicians in his kingdom. First he thought that Joseph interpreted the dream by his own wisdom, but by Joseph's testimony and the way he gave his answer Pharaoh was convinced

straightaway that it was wisdom from above. He never questioned him, how there could be such a famine in the land or how that need would be met afterwards. Pharaoh had no doubt in his heart. He believed Joseph straightaway that if he was given authority, he would be able to meet the situation. In the same way many can depend upon you if you have divine wisdom. Do not depend upon your own wisdom for your prosperity. You may be very highly educated with a number of titles but that will not help you. If you are questioned you will find that you will fail. It is very sad thing to see that with all the wealth and knowledge of this world, life is a failure to many.

I met a man once, called Watson. He held a very high position, had written about 32 books, had travelled all over Europe and had a beautiful mansion. In fact, he had brought many things from many countries, yet he was unhappy. One day after a meal, I questioned him. "Mr. Watson, have you found true peace with all that you possess, and with all your experience?" His reply was "No!" I questioned him about his home life and whether he was happy, and he again replied that he was not. In fact he told me how he and his wife quarreled. For a happy home one needs divine wisdom, which does not come by worldly knowledge or wealth or experience, but by sufferings, trials and hardships, when they are accepted as from Him.

We see in I Kings 1 : 1 to 3 how God gave Solomon wisdom in a dream, This was God's wisdom, and the Queen of Sheba, having heard from afar of his wisdom, came to test him with hard questions (1 Kings 10: 1-3). It was by this wisdom that he could build the temple according to the pattern given by his father, King David. It was by that wisdom he was able to rule the people in his kingdom. This wisdom comes from above and comes by faith, and faith comes by suffering. The more the suffering, the greater the faith. Abraham had to go through sufferings for 25 years, and he received that faith. What we call faith is often not faith at all. God wants a strong active faith, and with that faith, we will go on receiving what we need. Then when we receive divine wisdom and divine power, we can enjoy our possessions in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Believe from your heart that all your trials, whether at home or outside, are allowed by the Lord to give you wisdom. You can enjoy your heavenly vocation like Joseph by thanking Him for every trial and hardship, temptation or suffering. Then

one day you will be promoted very high in God's sight and become fully triumphant, victorious and fruitful always, in every situation.

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