

## Excerpt from “**What Just Happened?**”

Living the Redeemed Life When All Hell Breaks Loose”

By Tracy Graves Stevens

Much like Joseph in our Scripture passage, though he was still imprisoned, he is being utilized by the warden of the prison to manage some of the other prisoners and the daily workload. His compassion, in noticing the Cupbearer and the Baker were sad when they had their unusual dreams, probably came from being in such close proximity to them on a day to day basis. I suspect Joseph could empathize with them because the longer he was in prison, he probably wondered if he would ever do the things he did in his previous life again. Now here he was using a gift he probably didn't even think of as a gift; assisting the Cupbearer and Baker with interpreting their dreams. There are times in life when we will go through seasons where we would rather pull the covers over our head in the morning and stay in bed. It is in these moments that we discover what we are made of.

That's when we find ourselves working and doing those things necessary for survival *and*, in the process, helping others. God can and will use us for ministry/fellowship/service – even if it is at a time we can't even minister to ourselves.

### *Don't Isolate*

I think God makes us look outside ourselves to keep us from looking too hard within. Looking within makes us depressed and frustrated when we think of our challenges (and sometimes failures) in comparison to how He looks at us. After all, our main purpose in this Christian life is to love and lift up others – it is all in the Bible. God

knows this is part of the cycle that keeps life in our spirits. Why? Because if we only focus on our failures and struggles, it opens a door for the enemy to get in our heads and start the slow process of separation – separation from family, friends, community and, more specifically, God. Proverbs 18:1 says:

*“A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire;  
He rages against all wise judgment.”*

When we are broken, we do broken things. That is why God suggests the community and fellowship of others. If we are the only person we seek for comfort when we feel sad or overwhelmed, it is like rehydrating a sponge with only our tears. There is not enough moisture to bring it back to life. Similarly, looking outside helps us maintain a sense of purpose and accomplishment. Joseph could have chosen not to assist the Cupbearer and the Baker, but I imagine it elevated his psyche a little by helping them to interpret their dreams. Helping and ministering to others really is good for the soul and somehow allows us to take the focus off of our problems, even if it is only for a season. Ministry also broadens our perspective that we are not alone in facing the challenges of life.

#### *Listen and Look out for the Presence of God*

There is an aspect of Genesis 40:5-8 that I think we overlook when reading about Joseph – God was silent with him, too. Joseph did not have God-encounters like Moses experienced. No booming voice. No burning bush. We really only see Joseph praying to God. Joseph prayed in faith.

In God's silence, Joseph never lost faith. Joseph had to listen out for God in other ways. God was the first one he turned to when faced with the task of interpreting his prison-mates dreams. We go on to read that God responded to Joseph by giving him the meaning of those dreams, but we don't read that Joseph had a "burning bush" meeting with God in the middle of the night. Joseph just knew God was there. I believe when God seems silent, we need to remember – God is never silent. He is always with us. That is His promise. We just have to look for the other ways He communicates. Guidance only comes when you spend time listening for and to His voice. Joseph did not have a Bible to read like we do now – he had to rely on a place deeper inside his spirit - his faith. Sometimes, those quiet times are the only encouragement we can get when dire events are happening around us.

Take the time to seek God and listen.

Keep looking up!