

**The Rock: 05-24-2020**  
**Long-term faithfulness:**  
**The journey of Joseph**

**First reading:** Romans 8:35-39  
(offering)

**Title:** The Grand Weaver

**Scripture:** Genesis 41:17-36

**Theme:**

In the circumstances of our lives, God is always at work. Sometimes quite clearly, while other times we have to rest in the silence.

But God weaves all these events together, along with our obedience, to place us in the right place at the right time for the right reasons.

**Introduction:**

Last week I found out that Ravi Zacharias, one of my heroes of the faith, is coming to the end of his race. In just processing that thought, I realized that for all of my Christian walk, he has been one of those men whose has simply "always been there."

To know that he won't be any longer,  
just gave me pause, thinking of the  
impact of his ministry in my life.

And I was reminded of a story from his  
book: The Grand Weaver (I'm  
paraphrasing)

-When you walk into the room there  
isn't much there. A huge weavers loom  
takes up most of the space.

At one end sits a master weaver, and on  
the other end, sits the master's son,  
learning the trade for himself.

At that moment they are just beginning  
the process of weaving a wedding dress  
(Sari). What looks like a bunch of  
strings having colored yarn woven  
through, eventually turns into a  
beautiful piece of artwork.

As the pattern emerges out of all the  
colors, one begins to see what is  
actually the vision of the master  
taking shape right before your eyes.

The interesting thing is what one sees  
in the room as you watch this process.  
The father, and master weaver, has the  
design in his head and knows just what  
to do to create a master piece.

All the son needs to do is watch for the nod of his father, and he moved the loom arm to the right spot. Obedient to simply watch for the nod, and do the next thing.

As I studied this chapter again, I thought of the life of Dr. Zacharias, and realized, Joseph has really just been following the nod.

Every up and down moment has been perfectly woven together in order to get Joseph to this very place before Pharaoh.

### **The Story:**

"Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Behold, in my dream I was standing on the banks of the Nile. Seven cows, plump and attractive, came up out of the Nile and fed in the reed grass. Seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and thin, such as I had never seen in all the land of Egypt. And the thin, ugly cows ate up the first seven plump cows, but when they had eaten them no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they were still as ugly as at the beginning. Then I awoke. I also saw in my dream seven ears growing on one stalk, full and good. Seven

ears, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprouted after them, and the thin ears swallowed up the seven good ears. And I told it to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me.”

**-Genesis 41:17-24 ESV**

All of the twists and turns of life - to get here and hear of a dream, or two dreams rather -one about cows and the other about corn. Strange perhaps to us, but not to anyone listening then.

Honestly, as I read these things, these dreams aren't what amaze me about how things are unfolding, as much as it is the grace of God poured out upon all His creation.

Think on this for a minute. Pharaoh has never done anything to deserve the attention of the God of heaven.

In fact, he didn't believe in him at all. And yet, a person who does, Joseph, suffers in order that Pharaoh can experience God's goodness and grace.

Let's take a moment to just rest here and think that through, before we move on. Especially if and when we have the

mindset of the wrathful, judgmental God. One who, some think, who sends a Covid-19 virus to punish.

Because what we see here is a loving God who sends a believer to Egypt, to suffer in order to be in the position he is in now, so that a non-believing Pagan can experience God's grace and blessing.

In fact, this entire story is full of people who experience God's goodness and grace when they don't deserve it. And that is really God's story in a nutshell.

We are all just broken clay pots journeying toward the Son. And He has given us the ministry of reconciliation as the mission for the Church. To make Jesus known.

Paul in his second letter to Corinth:

"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

**-2 Corinthians 5: 20-21 ESV**

Joseph has his opportunity to show who God is and he wastes little time in reminding Pharaoh again that it is not about him, but about God:

"Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do."

**-Genesis 41:25 ESV**

Amazing, the change in Joseph. At seventeen, immaturity and arrogance were the drivers which put him here in front of Pharaoh.

The difference is clear. Three times in this chapter Joseph is going to remind Pharaoh that it is GOD, and not him.

What a difference, as we reflect back to Genesis 37: (read only the bold)

"Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. He said to them, "Hear this dream that I have dreamed: **Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf.**" His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you

indeed to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, **"Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me."**

**-Genesis 37:5-9 ESV**

What do we see here? A whole lot of I and me. It is amazing what age, experience and obedience will do. Learning to listen to and submit to God in humility was obviously something he focused on these past thirteen years.

Joseph's dreams were true, that meant he had knowledge. He knew they were right, but he lacked discernment and wisdom. How do I share them? When do I share them?

This is true for all of us. Far too often we know a lot of stuff and yet have very little skill and discernment.

Life needs to happen for all of us, if we are to gain wisdom. And wisdom comes when we prayerfully seek God through it all. It's clear that Joseph did.

You see, I am amazed at how much smarter I was at 17 than I am now. I

knew everything then and had the answers to all the questions.

Now there are days when I can't remember why I walked into the kitchen.

You see, the difference between wisdom and knowledge is application and focus. In other words, I may know a great deal of stuff, but without wisdom, I haven't a clue what to do with it.

I have just discovered at 52 years old I am more confident and assured of what I actually do know, and can admit and live with what I don't.

Identifying that God's hand is in it ALL and he alone has called, gifted and set me down where I am. My job is obedience to use my gifts for his glory wherever He puts me.

That is true for all of us, just as it was for Joseph. It is now in humility; we see an upward and outward attitude:

"The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years; the dreams are one. The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty ears blighted by the east wind are also seven years of famine. It is



as I told Pharaoh; God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do. There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, but after them there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt. The famine will consume the land, and the plenty will be unknown in the land by reason of the famine that will follow, for it will be very severe. And the doubling of Pharaoh's dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about."

**-Genesis 41:26-32 ESV**

Victor Hamilton, in his commentary on this passage makes an observation here about the amount of times Joseph reminds Pharaoh that it is God. It's his humility, yes, but its more than that.

Pharaoh's uneasiness at the magician's lack of ability to tell him what the dreams mean is interesting. Here is a man who his people believed to be divine.

He believed it as well, and yet he has to call on an "unknown" Hebrew slave, with little to no qualifications in

order to bring some meaning and "peace" (Shalom) to his soul.

(Paraphrased from commentary on OT.  
V.H.)

Never lose sight of the fact that the best of men are men at best. Even those who think they are "divinely appointed" to fix everyone's problems. Be careful of attaching too much importance on any one person, or leader.

Back to Joseph -because we see here that he doesn't just tell him the dream and praise God for it, sit down and watch the show unfold.

No, he is a MAN WITH A PLAN, whose administrative skills have been honed for 13 years.

"Now therefore let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land and take one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plentiful years. And let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. That food shall be a reserve for the land against

the seven years of famine that are to occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine."

**-Genesis 41:33-36 ESV**

There is nothing wasted in the economy of God. Everything is purposeful and designed for our best, if we step in and take action.

Listen, unless you put wheels to all of your "dreams", they will never be anything more than that. A dream without a deadline and a plan is just a dream.

God's blessing, and bringing to pass the things he gives you to dream about, all too often look an awful lot like hard work and dedication to your craft.

Until we move from the dream stage and into the practical realm of getting things done, everything is just a dream. Long term faithfulness in the direction God leads you, is what breeds success.

Thirteen years to get here. An immature young man who received dreams, sold into slavery. Discovered administrative

giftings along the way and worked hard to develop them.

He found he could interpret dreams as well, and used both of those skills to get noticed by Pharaoh, all because of God's sovereign hand.

God is sovereign and His plans will come about. But it seems to me as I read the Scriptures more and more, that it doesn't happen absent OUR obedience to act.

Don't misunderstand me, we don't determine God's sovereign will, but it is clear that if we are His kids, we are to be the active agents in moving His will along.

Why? Because that is His chosen way of reaching humanity, of fixing His world and sharing the Gospel.

God calls whom He wishes, but I am not a believer in the statement, "God doesn't call the qualified, he qualifies the called".

While there is truth in that, we see in Joseph that he was actually uniquely qualified for such a time as this.

He needed to grow in maturity and gain wisdom, all the while developing the gifts God had already given him.

We cannot do anything we set our mind to. That is a recipe for failure. Each one of us is gifted by God and purposefully so in a particular way, and then placed within a community of believers to use that gift.

What is yours?

I cannot sing, no matter how much I set my heart to do so. Cats run away, afraid of the sound. It is NOT a joyful noise unto the Lord.

So that leads me to a couple questions for our application:

- 1- What has God gifted you in and given you to do?**
- 2- Are you faithfully obedient to develop and use that gift where He has set you down?**

For if not now, when? If it's not you, then who? Much like Joseph, you are set down here, in the community of believers, and your neighborhood with purpose.

Think again of the Indian Sari. Now think of your life and all the events

that have brought you to this moment,  
this place now.

God's hand has been in it all, both the  
good and bad. Working it all together  
for His good purpose, and your benefit.  
In the beautiful New Creation" chapter  
from Romans, Paul puts it so well, and  
with this I close:

"And we know that for those who love  
God all things work together for good,  
for those who are called according to  
his purpose. For those whom he foreknew  
he also predestined to be conformed to  
the image of his Son, in order that he  
might be the firstborn among many  
brothers. And those whom he predestined  
he also called, and those whom he  
called he also justified, and those  
whom he justified he also glorified.  
What then shall we say to these things?  
If God is for us, who can be against  
us? He who did not spare his own Son  
but gave him up for us all, how will he  
not also with him graciously give us  
all things? Who shall bring any charge  
against God's elect? It is God who  
justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ  
Jesus is the one who died—more than  
that, who was raised—who is at the  
right hand of God, who indeed is  
interceding for us. Who shall separate

us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

**-Romans 8:28-39 ESV**