

I have a really bad habit. When I am reading and an author repeats themselves, I skip it. It got me in trouble more than once in school because I didn't read the "repeat" except it was almost repeated, some things changed. You'd think I would have learned my lesson with that before going to Seminary. Nope, still did it and in fact, I could make even bigger mistakes because sometimes the repeat is in the same book, like today when Pharaoh's dream is shared as he is seeking the magicians and other wise men to come and interpret and then he retells it to Joseph. Then we have times when it repeats within a set of books, like Beatitudes which appear twice but not in the same book, once in Matthew and once in Luke – but they are different. In our reading today, because they are very similar we only read it once, when Pharaoh initially told the story.

This is our 3rd week on Joseph and the second set of readings with dreams. This week, more than ever, we see the role that dreams can have in life when they are put in proper context. But before we look overall let's start with the Baker's & Cup Bearer's dreams. These 2 individuals have done something that has landed them in detention. Throughout the text we read, prison, detention and waiting depending on which translation we read from. What is important for us to note is that the Baker & the Cup Bearer are waiting for Pharaoh to decide what it is to happen to them. They do not even know (or at least our text doesn't say) what they did but it's guessed that there was suspicion of an attempt to poison Pharaoh.

So the Baker & Cup Bearer each have a dream on the same night and understand that Joseph may be able to help them understand their dreams. So the Cup Bearer goes first and, not only gets his dream interpreted, it's good news. With that the Baker steps up and while he gets understands the dream it is not good news. The only thing that Joseph wanted in return, from the Cup Bearer is to remember him. The dreams become reality and

two years go by while Joseph continues to work, believing that the Cup Bearer had forgotten him.

Now it's Pharaoh's turn to have dreams that no one can explain. He summons all who may have the ability and no one can. In this moment the Cup Bearer remembers Joseph, from 2 years ago and in that moment everything changed. Joseph, with God's help could explain what was to come and Pharaoh responded by leaving it into Joseph's hands to plan and implement because God was with him. Dreams and now provisions.

It's easy when we look back on events to see what we learned and how we were prepared for the next steps. It's important, and I say it a lot, God did not will or cause harm or difficulty for Joseph. God was with him and then was able to use the situation for the glory of God and the fulfillment of promises. Joseph, no matter how hard or lonely or relentless never gave up. He just kept putting one foot in front of the other. He was ready when the time came not just to speak confidently what he knew but to act on the knowledge he was given.

In the book of Esther, she said that she was made for such a time as this. I've thought about that phrase for almost a decade. It comes at odd times but always makes sense. We were made for such a time as this. We are a community that is rooted and grounded in prayer, caring & loving each other and welcoming those near and far into our midst. There is not a place in the world I would rather be than here with our Faith family. That does not mean that any of this is easy, in fact we know that it is not. But we know that we can do anything together.

When we look at the big picture of the story of God and the story of us sometimes it does not make sense in the moment. While we may have understood why Joseph's brothers were fed up with him, we couldn't understand what good could possibly

come from it, that is unless we knew the whole story. In our readings this week we begin to see how God can and will use, even the difficult times of Joseph's time in Egypt for good. When we look and listen in and around our community we may wonder how God can and will use a time when there is such name calling and vehement disagreement. I know I wonder what good can come from it. I trust in the one who made us and called us good. God doesn't choose one side or another, but instead consistently and constantly offers a different path for us to choose. A path filled with love and light.

What do we do with God's dreams and provisions for us and for our world? Do we hide it? Do we keep it quiet because people don't believe in the one we call Lord and Savior? Or do we confidently and consistently share that we are people of the light who live love in all that we say and do. We have been made for such a time as this. We serve the one who created and is creating. God is not done with any of us and calls us to live boldly. In the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.