

# Joseph and My Laundry

by Victor Zarley

There are many ways to look at Joseph in the Bible (beginning at Genesis 37). He has been seen as a favored child of God, but he can also be seen as someone under the rule of Pharaoh. Pharaoh symbolizes carnality or the ways of the world. What surprised me upon re-reading the story of Joseph recently was that he was directly the cause of much oppression of the Egyptians during the famine found in Genesis 47:13 on. Joseph seems to have forgotten God, at this point, and instead is loyal to Pharaoh and his coffers. Joseph seems very mercenary here and quite hard hearted in his loyalty to Pharaoh. I had been giving this a lot of thought, while we vacationed.

My wife and I were doing laundry as a team. Suddenly I got into a very task oriented mode, a state of mind in which the task was my total focus, and all else needed to be shifted to the side. This meant that the lessons the Holy Spirit had taught me over the years, were relegated to a subservient status, made lower on my priorities, dropped from my "present" frame of mind. I was acting almost like the good man, Joseph, mentioned at Genesis 47:13, who seems to have forgotten his love of God and people, becoming very task-oriented in fulfilling Pharaoh's job of management of the wealth accumulated during the 7 years of prosperity in Carnal-land, Egypt. He seemed to "forget" that he had come from humble beginnings. His dialogue with the people of the land showed he had no mercy for them as they, over the years of the famine, gradually were forced to sell everything, becoming basically Pharaoh and Joseph's slaves. What happened to our dream interpreting, God-fearing man, Joseph?

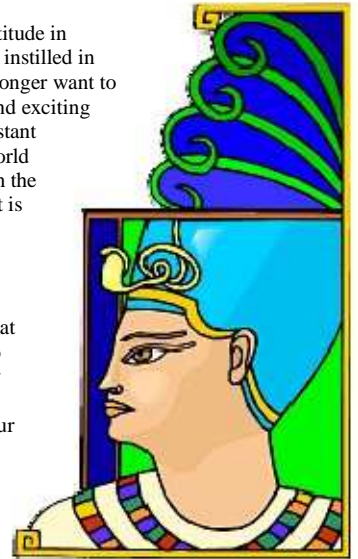
I, too, forgot what God had taught me about forgiveness and love, and non-judgment. I was KING of the laundry, I was wrapped up in achievement, and I felt it was my duty to correct my wife when I thought she had performed a task poorly. When I did that, she immediately let me know (because this is why God put us together), that I was off-task, as far as God's will was concerned (even though I was on-task in achieving my worldly goals).

When I corrected her, I set up a chain of events that would lead me to recognize a pride, a dark spot in my soul, that the Holy Spirit wanted cleansed. God wants us to be more like Him. I know this to be true. Without my wife to gently nudge me into what I REALLY want, this purification of my spirit, I would go through my life completely oblivious to dark spots God wants to remove from my heart.



I don't want to forget my roots. I don't want to forget that God does not want me to judge, or even correct (by MY will). As I focus only on Christ and allow His full presence in me, I come willingly into my

cross-bearing and non-resistant attitude in which I am made free by the truth instilled in my heart by the Holy Spirit. I no longer want to correct, but am driven by a new and exciting goal that is different from the constant criticism and judgment that the world demands. This new goal is love, in the deepest and purest sense, love that is kind, patient, and love that honors the souls of those around us, as they step, slowly and surely, into Christ, along with me. When they receive mercy from me, I know that God will eventually give mercy to me. It is our job to accept our new non-critical goals and make sure that pride is given no priority in our lives. When we do this, we open the doors to the Holy Spirit's corrective and convicting work in ourselves, which may or may not lead to a correction in others. But it needs to be understood, God's correction of others is not our concern. God's correction of us is our only goal.



Years later, after Joseph was gone from the scene, a later Pharaoh began to treat the descendants of Jacob and Joseph in a way in which they, too, were stripped of all their land, livestock and reduced to being slaves of Pharaoh. Now the children of God, Israelites, were being treated horribly. A collective cry went up to God and God sent a deliverer, Moses, to release the Israelites out of their oppression. When Moses "rescued" them, they grumbled about it for many years, wishing often that they were still in the security of their oppression. But God does not want us to live in the security of this oppressive world. He wants us free and relying totally on Him and His miracles. He wants us to follow His laws and His rules ONLY and live only on the manna He supplies daily. He wants us to follow what Jesus said is the full condensation of all the laws given to Moses from God: He wants us to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, mind and strength and He wants us to love everyone as we love ourselves. That's it. That's all there is to it, but, O, the struggle and the strain and the grumbling we go through as we journey to the Promised Land. God wants us to "get it," to understand, at last, that with His help, we can be released from the oppression of Pharaoh, or the world which is ruled by Satan. Sometimes even God's rescuer (Moses) has to put up with grumbling from those rescued who wish that they were back in slavery where, at least, they could count on there being food on their table. Do we not do the same with our rescuer, Jesus, who asks us for a full commitment to Him and His way? Full trust? Do we not struggle to stay comfortable in our slavery to this world and its king? Do we not try to have the best of both worlds—the comfort of worldly security AND a deep, deep love of Jesus?

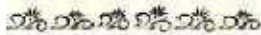
There is a well-intentioned spirit of Joseph within each of us. We often do not recognize the deception this world paints in our hearts as it is allowed to explain what our days on this earth are for and what we are to do, as we reside here in Egypt (or Carnal-land). We may be very spiritual, like Joseph was, but still be under Pharaoh's thumb, believing that his will must be done. Pharaoh is pretty smart. He knows that if he is to survive, he must have a Joseph working for him so he wisely hires Joseph to be over all the land. But, remember, Joseph is still only a hireling, working under Pharaoh. When we attempt to bring God into our plans rather than allowing our lives to be used for His plans; when we attempt to pray that our wills be done instead of desiring God's will to be done; when we struggle to survive under our own tainted perception given to us by Pharaoh rather than flourish under wisdom that is not of this world, we have made a graven image that we worship consisting only of our selfish desires

for our survival in this world. The abundant life Jesus promises, then, is pushed farther and farther away. We are, then, in the world AND of it. We are caught up in a spirit of "saving our lives" and, consequently, will lose them. When this happens, we are not able to hear Jesus giving us instruction that we are to "lose our lives" for Him, in order that our lives be saved.

In order to be truly free, we must leave the security this world (Pharaoh) makes us think we have and focus only on God's truth. Otherwise, we will be oppressed by the world, by Pharaoh, and become slaves to the world, unable to even recognize that we need a deliverer, unable to appreciate the freedom God gives us FROM the world of appearances. No wonder we grumble like the children of the Israelites, and wander in the desert almost aimlessly, always searching for the Promised Land, but never finding it. How can we know the power of God unless we give Him the opportunity to part the Red Sea for us? How can we know the power of God unless we hunger for food and water in our desert times, and see that He can, and He does, supply manna, even miraculously from the sky, and water, even miraculously from a rock.

Let's not spiritualize the world with God, but instead, let's leave the world, leave mammon, and focus only on Jesus and allow Him access to the darkness of this world through us. In other words, let's let His light shine, not ours. We must serve Him, and not try to make Him serve us!

Are you ready to quit trying to make the world spiritual and ready to allow God's spirituality (through Jesus Christ) to come through you? When we let go of the desire to make the world spiritual, and allow God to do His work through us, every day will be filled with serendipitous events, meetings and wondrous mergings with others. God's awesomeness will never cease amazing you. Let go of the strings you maneuver the world with and grab a hold of the hand that will lead you to freedom. The hand of Jesus Christ.



Find a quiet place and pray the following prayer:

***Dear Lord, give me Your hand now. I am so tired of trying to make it on my own. Take my heart and soul and life and help me let go of all the strings that Satan uses to manipulate me in this world. I want to fully trust You, Lord. But I have trouble letting go of this world and my attachments to it. Make a way, God. Make a way for me, Jesus. Free me from my bondage now, oh God. In Jesus' name, Amen.***



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We encourage those of the Christian faith to be sure their lamps are filled with oil and pray that God will prepare their hearts, minds and souls for the trials and tribulations that must come to make us ready. The Church in the east and other persecuted areas of the globe is already walking in this fire, and we believe the western Church will also walk in this, in the very near future.

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Thank you, and God bless you.

Victor and Eva Zarley

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