

**First Baptist Church Merritt Island**  
**Senior Pastor Titus Green**  
**September 22, 2024**  
**JOSEPH: Our God Is Always Faithful (It's Not a Dream)**  
**Genesis 41:37-57**

This week, I checked and I have 5,398 pictures on my phone. Those are the ones that are hard to erase because almost all of them are of someone I love or of something that reminds me of someone I love.

And I know some of you are too young to understand that back in the dark ages we had to carry around cameras that could take a limited number of pictures. We had to buy film and then pay someone to develop it and wait to see if our pictures turned out ok or if we accidentally left the cap on. It was a different world back in 1998.

Before cameras were invented, you basically had to hire an artist to paint or sketch a portrait of your loved one, which was even more exclusive and expensive than cameras. But there has been a method around for ages that allows almost anyone to afford having a portrait of their loved one without breaking the bank. It's called a shadow portrait. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, shadow portraits were renamed "silhouettes" after a French man named Etienne de Silhouette who was so famous for pinching pennies that his name was synonymous with being cheap and the cheapest way to get a portrait made was using the shadow portrait method, or the Silhouette

Let me show you a few examples and see if you can tell who they are.



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And there are several things about shadow portraits I want to point out.

- First, though they lack certain details, they are accurate depictions of the real thing.
- Second, the more familiar you are with the real person, the more you are able to recognize their shadow.
- Third, the Bible is filled with shadow portraits.

As a matter of fact, in many ways the entire Old Testament is a shadow portrait of Jesus.

- *Colossians 2:16-17*  
*Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. 17 These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.*
- *John 5:39*  
*You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me,*
- *Luke 24:27*  
*And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*

Jesus is portrayed throughout the Old Testament. Every story whispers His name. And our text for today provides an amazing portrait of Jesus in the life of Joseph.

Joseph has just interpreted Pharaoh's dreams, revealing that God was going to bring 7 years of abundant crops to Egypt followed by 7 years of famine that would spread throughout the nations. Alongside that interpretation, Joseph offered Pharaoh a plan. He said that Pharaoh should appoint a wise and discerning man over the land to store up grain during the 7 years of abundance so that Egypt could be sustained during the famine.

Now, let's pick up at that point and read our text for this morning.

#### **Genesis 41:37–57**

***This proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants. 38 And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?" 39 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. 40 You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you." 41 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." 42 Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck. 43 And he made him ride in his second chariot. And they called out before him, "Bow the knee!" Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt. 44 Moreover, Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no one shall lift up hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." 45 And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphenath-paneah. And he gave him in marriage Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara priest of On. So Joseph went out over the land of Egypt. 46 Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went through all the land of Egypt. 47 During the seven plentiful years the earth produced abundantly, 48 and he gathered up all the food of these seven years, which occurred in the land of Egypt, and put the food in the cities. He put in every city the food from the fields around it. 49 And Joseph stored up grain in great abundance, like the sand of the sea, until he ceased to measure it, for it could not be measured. 50 Before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph. Asenath, the***

**daughter of Potiphera priest of On, bore them to him. 51 Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh. “For,” he said, “God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father’s house.” 52 The name of the second he called Ephraim, “For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.” 53 The seven years of plenty that occurred in the land of Egypt came to an end, 54 and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. There was famine in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. 55 When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph. What he says to you, do.” 56 So when the famine had spread over all the land, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. 57 Moreover, all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe over all the earth.**

This passage is so rich and full of significance. Joseph is beginning to experience the fulfillment of the dreams God gave him when he was a teenager in his father’s house. I can just imagine Joseph standing in the throne room of Pharaoh, thinking, “This morning, I woke up in as a slave in prison. Now, I’m the second most powerful man in Egypt. This has to be another one of my dreams.” Well this isn’t just another dream, Joseph. This is reality.

And, at the same time, it’s a shadow of a greater reality. This period in the life of Joseph provides a great portrait of Jesus, 2,000 years before He came into this world that first Christmas.

Let me show you several ways Joseph is a shadow of Christ, the greater reality.

- Verse 38 – Joseph is filled with the Spirit of God.
  - Jesus is greater. He is God in the flesh, filled with the Holy Spirit. (John 1:14; Luke 4:1)
- Verse 39 – Joseph is the most discerning and wisest man in the kingdom.
  - Jesus is greater. He is Wisdom Personified, with knowledge beyond our comprehension (1 Cor. 1:24; Rom. 11:33-34)
- Verse 40 – Joseph is given the authority of the king to reign over Egypt
  - Jesus is greater. He has ALL Authority over heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18)
- Verse 43 – The people of Egypt bowed their knees before Joseph.
  - Jesus is greater. One day, every man, woman, and child will bow before Jesus as Lord (Phil. 2:10-11)
- Verses 55-57 – Joseph provided physical salvation to anyone who came to him
  - Jesus is greater. He provides salvation from sin, death, and hell to anyone who will call on Him with a heart of faith (Romans 10:9-10; 13)

Joseph was an incredible man. His life is worth celebrating. It’s good that we would learn lessons from his wisdom and integrity. But, as real and amazing as his story is, it’s a shadow of a greater and better hero – Jesus Himself.

And it would be well worth our time to dig into every truth about Jesus that is portrayed in the person of Joseph. But our text isn’t just a shadow of Jesus, t’s a shadow of Christ in us, a picture of what Jesus does in the lives of those who trust in Him.

Let me show you a couple of quick examples.

**Verse 42 - Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck.**

Joseph is clothed with a new, royal robe and a signet from Pharaoh. In Christ, we are clothed in a greater robe with better power, the righteousness of God. *Ephesians 6:14* says we have a coat of armor that is the righteousness of God. *2 Corinthians 5:21* says we have become the righteousness of God in Jesus. So, as you see Joseph bestowed with glory in his royal robes, you need to know that in a better and greater way, you are bestowed with more glory in Christ's righteousness.

**Verse 44 - Moreover, Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no one shall lift up hand or foot in all the land of Egypt."**

Notice how Pharaoh makes sure to clarify that he is still Pharaoh, but he elevates Joseph to a place of ruling alongside Pharaoh.

In Christ, the day is coming when we will reign with Him in the Kingdom He will establish on the earth.

*Revelation 5:10* - ...you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth." This is a reference to the people who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus. Or, those who have placed their faith and trust in Him. Like Joseph, but in a greater way, we will reign with the King of Kings.

So, in the exaltation of Joseph, we get a glimpse into the work Jesus makes possible in those who trust in Him. And, in the time we have remaining, I want to focus on three things in the life of Joseph that are a shadow of what can happen in your life if you will place your faith and trust in Jesus Christ and those three things will be our big idea.

**Big Idea: In Christ, we are able to live in fullness, forgetfulness, and fruitfulness.**

1. IN CHRIST, WE CAN LIVE IN THE FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT

**Genesis 41:38-39**

**And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?"**  
**39 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are.**

Joseph has just interpreted both of Pharaoh's dreams, something none of the magicians or wise men of Egypt could do. The Spirit of God lived in Joseph in a way that enabled him to live a uniquely different life. As a matter of fact, last week we saw that only God is able to interpret dreams. But, somehow, Joseph interprets 4 dreams from 3 people in 2 chapters. So, how is Joseph able to consistently do something only God has the power to do? The answer is that the Lord was with him in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And, in an even better way, the work that Jesus does in those who trust Him allows us to live our entire lives indwelt, secured, and empowered by the Holy Spirit of God. That's how Jesus lives in and through our lives, by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Have you ever watched someone who was really good at something and tried to imagine what it would be like to do what they do?

This week, I was watching some scenes from *Les Mis* with my girls. Some of you know I have a long-standing dream of playing Jean Valjean on Broadway...of the Cocoa Playhouse. As I watch Colm

Wilkinson portray Jean Valjean, I imagine what it must be like to have such an amazing singing voice. Sometimes, when I'm riding in my car, I put on Les Mis and try to channel my inner Valjean. What comes out sounds more like Kermit the Frog than Jean Valjean. I just don't have it in me.

But the gift of God through Jesus is infinitely more powerful than being able to emulate professional athletes or musicians. We can live a kind of life that only Jesus is able to live. And the way that happens is through the power of the Holy Spirit.

*John 16:7*

*Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you.*

*Romans 8:9*

*Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him...*

The moment you place your faith and trust in Jesus, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in you. But there's a difference between being indwelt by the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit.

*Ephesians 5:18*

*And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,*

The phrase "be filled with the Spirit" is written in the original language of the Bible as a command that refers to a continuous action. In other words, it means "be being filled" with the Holy Spirit. It's something that has to happen over and over again. My buddy Jim Johnson says that one of the biggest problems most Christians have is that they sober up. They don't perpetually pursue the filling of the Holy Spirit. And that brings up a really good question: Are you perpetually pursuing the filling of the Holy Spirit?

Friends, Jesus lived and died and rose from the dead so that He could raise you up to live every day with the same power that brought Him from death to abundant life. What a shame to be given such a gift and neglect to receive it.

And some of you may be wondering the same thing I wondered for years: how do I pursue the filling of the Spirit? Let me give you four words that go along with Being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Yield.

*Romans 6:13*

*Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.*

Just like someone yields the control of their senses to alcohol when they get drunk, those who are going to be filled with the Spirit have to yield their lives to the control of God through His Spirit. We yield to the Holy Spirit when we submit our entire lives to His control and desires. It means we are willing to do whatever He desires.

And many believers fail to be filled with the Spirit because they refuse to lay down their entire lives to His control. They grab hold of one or two areas of their lives and effectively say, "You can do whatever you want, Lord, but these are off-limits to you."

Is there an area of your life that you are unwilling to yield to the Spirit of God? Your plans? Your dreams? Your finances? Your time?

### Meditate. (on the Word)

The Holy Spirit wrote a book called the Bible. It's the primary way He speaks to God's people. You can't yield your life to the Spirit if you don't know what the Spirit has to say.

And the only way you know what the Spirit has to say is to immerse yourself in His word, the Bible.

Compare these two Scriptures: Ephesians 5:18 and Colossians 3:16.

#### *Ephesians 5:18-19*

*Be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart.*

#### *Colossians 3:16*

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

In Colossians 3, the command to *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly"* is substituted for the command, *"Be filled with the Spirit"* in Ephesians 5. That's because the indwelling of the word coincides with the indwelling of the Spirit. If you want to be filled with the Spirit, then fill your heart and life with His word.

### Believe.

In Galatians 3:5 Paul asked, *"Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith?"* The Holy Spirit is given to us in power as we hear the word with faith, as we believe it.

In Acts 6:5, Stephen is said to be a man *"full of faith and of the Holy Spirit."* In Acts 11:24, Barnabas is said to be *"a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith."* Faith and the filling of the Holy Spirit go hand in hand. So, as we fill our hearts with the word of God and live like we believe what God says, we experience the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

### Ask.

#### *Luke 11:13*

*"If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"*

Jesus says the Father gives the fullness of the Holy Spirit to those who ask. When was the last time you asked the Father to fill you with the Holy Spirit? Jesus says you have not because you ask not.

Brothers and sisters, you can live a miraculous, supernatural life. It's the promise and provision of God for you in Jesus. And it happens when you live a Spirit-filled life.

And, as we look at the life of Joseph, there are two amazing things that happen to him in as he is filled with the Spirit of God.

## 2. IN CHRIST, WE CAN LIVE WITH FORGETFULNESS REGARDING OUR PAST

### **Genesis 41:50-51**

***Before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph. Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara priest of On, bore them to him. 51 Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh. "For," he said, "God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house."***

As Joseph lives in the fullness of the Spirit, he has a son and names him Manasseh. The word "Manasseh" means "to cause to forget." Joseph said that God enabled him to forget all his hardships and all the pain that came from his father's house where his brothers (who made up the world's first cartel) hated him and sold him into slavery. Now, clearly that doesn't mean that Joseph didn't remember his pain or his brothers. I mean, he's explicitly referring to them here. This kind of forgetfulness isn't the same as not remembering.

What he means is that God enabled him to move past the pain. He didn't have to live in it. His life wasn't consumed by it or controlled by it. And, in Christ, we have the same blessing by the power of the Holy Spirit.

### ***Philippians 3:12-14***

***Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.***

In Christ, we aren't slaves to our past. When we live in the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus enables us to move past our past and step into the glorious future He has for us.

And many of us need to hear that, this morning. Your past doesn't define you. Jesus does. Your past isn't your identity, Jesus is. You don't have to live as a perpetual victim of your most painful experiences. You can leave behind your failures, and you can move beyond your pain. How? By pursuing the fullness of Christ's Spirit and experiencing His resurrection power in the places that have felt like death.

And when you do that, Jesus not only makes you forgetful, He makes you fruitful.

### **3. IN CHRIST, WE CAN LIVE WITH FRUITFULNESS IN OUR AFFLICTION**

#### ***Genesis 41:52***

***The name of the second he called Ephraim, "For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."***

After Joseph has Manasseh, he has another son – Ephraim. That name means "I will be fruitful." Joseph lived an abundant life, full of the fruit of God. And it wasn't because God transported him out of the place of his pain. It was because God filled him with power in the place of his pain.

Many of us think we could have the life we've always wanted if God would just change our circumstances, if He would just give us a better job or a better bank account or a better family. But God doesn't always change our circumstances...He desires to change us.

He desires to give a life filled with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control right where you are today, in the place of your affliction. And the way He does it is through a Spirit-filled life.

On July 30, 1967, a 17-year-old girl named Joni (pronounced like “Johnny”) was swimming in the Chesapeake Bay with a group of friends. She decided to dive in and misjudged the depth of the water. In a tragic accident, she broke her neck and was paralyzed for life. Confined to a wheelchair, she went into deep depression and struggled with thoughts about ending her life. Jesus didn’t restore her ability to walk, but He did a work that turned her tragedy into a ministry that has touched the lives of countless people around the world. Precisely because of her pain, she has been able to bring a message of hope and joy to people who are enduring unimaginable suffering.

I recently read a devotion she wrote on her 74<sup>th</sup> birthday, 57 years after her life-changing accident.

*I'm half-tempted to name one wheel on my wheelchair Manasseh, and the other Ephraim! My wheelchair is no longer a prison to me, instead my “wheels” are a reminder of all that God has brought me through—the Lord has honestly made me forget so many of my past troubles and dismal times.*

*I'm not saying that I've arrived, and this wheelchair is easy. But the awfulness of those times and troubles has dissipated. What's more, just as Joseph saw, God has given me the incredible privilege of being fruitful in the land of my suffering. For one thing, I've experienced abundant fruit, such as endurance and perseverance. But I can see the fruit of my labors, too. It brings such joy to sit in my wheelchair and see how God has used all that I've learned to encourage other people along the way.*

That’s called fruitful in affliction.

That story isn’t unique to Joni or Joseph. It’s your story, too. By the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus desires to make you forgetful and fruitful.

So, in the place of your affliction, pursue the One who turns prisons into palaces and sets captives free. In Christ, you can live a life of fullness, forgetfulness, and fruitfulness right where you are.