



+ **YOU**

**Sermon Series:** How to Avoid Life's Pitfalls  
**To be used with Session 3:** The Pitfall of Injustice

**Sermon Title Possibilities:** Faithful in Unfavorable Circumstances

**Scripture:** Genesis 39:21-23; 40:4-8,20-23

**Connection with Unit Theme:** To complement the small group study “How to Avoid Life’s Pitfalls,” this sermon teaches us about fairness. There is a pastor who I greatly admire, and he often begins his sermons with the statement, “Life is sometimes unfair, but God is good all the time.” “The Pitfall of Injustice” can cause us to throw a pity party. But in this sermon lesson we’ll see that life’s unfairness cannot prevent God’s kindness.

**Introduction:** Despite his faithfulness (Gen. 39:4-6, 8-9), Joseph is falsely accused of attempted rape (Gen. 39:13-18) and thrown into prison (vv. 19-20). Faithfulness does not exempt us from false accusations nor life’s unfairness. Jesus told His disciples, “No servant is greater than his master (John 15:20).” If Jesus wasn’t exempt from false accusations (Mark 14:56) and injustice (Luke 23:40-41), should we expect exemption? The disciples rejoiced when they were treated shamefully for preaching about Jesus because they considered it an honor to suffer for His name (Acts 5:40-41). The apostle Paul declares, “The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God’s children, and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and coheirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him” (Rom. 8:16-17).

However, God is a God of justice. He justified Jesus’ faithfulness by raising him from the dead (Acts 5:30). He justified the disciples’ faithfulness by releasing them from prison (Acts 5:18-21, 42). He justified Joseph’s faithfulness by making him successful in prison (Gen. 39:23). There’s an old song that says: “Do not be disheartened, I have news for you. It is no secret what God can do. What he’s done for others he’ll do for you.” God will justify our faithfulness as well (Rom. 8:33). The question is, how do we remain faithful in the face of injustice?

### **1. Be faithful to your calling. (vv. 21-23)**

The word for “kindness” is the Hebrew word *chesed*. It can be translated “goodness, faithfulness, lovingkindness, etc.” It is similar to the Greek word, *agape*, God’s unconditional love for us. Joseph’s change in conditions was no indicator that God’s love had changed toward him. God’s love for us remains unchanged despite changing conditions.

A “calling” is a divine conviction toward a position, an action, or a responsibility. No matter the circumstances, Joseph had a supervisory calling on his life (Gen. 37:14; 39:4, 22; Gen. 41:40-41). A demotion from Potiphar’s house to the prison

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did not nullify God's calling nor prevent God from giving Joseph another opportunity. And Joseph did not miss the opportunity to make the best of less-than-ideal circumstances.

Many people allow the unfairness of life to blind them to God's favor (v. 21). Instead of focusing on your misfortune, focus on God. Despite your situation, God is still sovereign, and He can still make you successful. You may no longer be on the level you desire to be on. But whatever the level, God can make you successful, if you look to him.

## **2. Be faithful to your gifting. (vv. 4-8)**

Joseph had the gift of interpreting dreams (vv. 8-18). First Peter 4:10 says, "Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God." Joseph did not use "serving time" as an excuse for not serving others. Before interpreting both the cupbearer's and the baker's dreams, Joseph gave glory to God (v. 8). The apostle Peter says when we exercise our gifts, it is "...so that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ in everything" (1 Peter 4:11).

When the mob came to arrest Jesus, He used His gift to heal a person who came with the crowd to arrest him (Luke 22:50-51). There are no injustices that excuse us from using our gifts. Our gifts are not for us, they are given to serve others (even our enemies) and bring glory to God, regardless of our circumstances.

Proverbs 18:16 says, "A person's gift opens doors for him and brings him before the great." Be faithful to your gifting. You never know the door it may open. Joseph's faithfulness eventually "opened prison doors" and brought him before Pharaoh.

## **3. Be faithful even when people forget about you. (vv. 20-23)**

Our faithfulness to others is never based on their faithfulness to us. It is based on our faithfulness to God. Despite Joseph faithfully serving and interpreting the cupbearer's dream, he forgot all about Joseph (v. 23).

There will be people who will forget about your faithfulness to them. Nevertheless, do not let people who forget about you deter you from being faithful to them or faithful to others. It's God who rewards our faithfulness (Heb. 11:6). When we remain faithful even when others are unfaithful, we demonstrate God's faithfulness toward us (2 Tim 2:13).

**Conclusion:** The pitfall of injustice can cause us to throw a pity party. It's your party and you can cry if you want to, or you can dry your tears and perhaps you'll begin to see that even in unfavorable circumstances, God can move people to favor us and make us successful. Regardless of the situation, we are called to be faithful and leave the results to a "God who is good all the time!"

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