



## CELL GUIDE

<b>TOPIC</b>	Joseph & The Providence of God	<b>SPEAKER</b>	Elder Mark Tan
<b>THEME</b>	Life Lessons from Character Studies	<b>DATE</b>	11 & 12 September 2021

# MESSAGE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

Elder Mark Tan opened with the troubled state of the world. He encouraged us to remember that God is in control and about God's providence. Providence is defined as the divine guidance or care God conceived as the power sustaining human destiny. The key verse of this message is taken from Gen 50:19-20 – But Joseph said to them, *“Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? 20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.”*

## THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

### 1. JOSEPH THE MAN (GEN 37-41) – GOD'S PROVIDENCE AMIDST SUFFERING

Joseph was the most loved son of his father, Israel, and was given the famous robe of many colours. When Joseph reported having dreams of his brothers, and even the stars and moon, bowing before him, their jealousy of Joseph grew into action. The brothers sold him into slavery to a traveling caravan of Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard.

In Egypt, the Lord's presence remained with Joseph, which enabled him to find favour with Potiphar and the keeper of the prison. Potiphar's wife unsuccessfully tried to seduce him and she made false accusations about Joseph. This caused him to be imprisoned for 10 years. However, God remained with Joseph. With God's help, Joseph interprets the dreams of two prisoners, predicting that one of them (the chief cupbearer) will be reinstated to his old position, but the other (the chief baker) will be put to death. The cupbearer forgot about his promise to Joseph, and he was imprisoned for another two years. Joseph then interprets the dreams of the Pharaoh, which predicts seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. Pharaoh recognises Joseph's God-given ability and promoted him to the chief administrator of Egypt. Throughout his highs and lows, the Lord was with Joseph all the time.

Learning points:

1. Our suffering will shape, refine and prepare us for His use.
2. God does not change our circumstances immediately, but His presence is always real. Joseph's final release from captivity came when he was 30 years old, 13 long years later.
3. God alone knows the future and is working all things for our good.

## 2. JOSEPH THE BROTHER (GEN 42-45) – GOD’S PROVIDENCE REQUIRES REDEMPTION

Food shortage in Canaan forces Jacob to send his sons to buy grains from the Egyptians. Benjamin, Joseph's younger brother remains at home as Jacob fears losing him, just as he lost Joseph. When Joseph finally encounters his brothers again, he deliberately conceals his identity. He accuses them of being spies and tells them to return with Benjamin or he will not sell them grain. The ongoing famine forces Jacob to reluctantly send his sons back to Egypt with Benjamin, and they are unexpectedly invited to dine at Joseph's house. Joseph then tests the character of his brothers by placing a silver cup in Benjamin's sack and falsely accuses him of theft. Joseph wanted to see if they would abandon Benjamin the way they did with him 20 years ago. When Judah (the fourth son of Jacob) offers to stay in place of Benjamin, Joseph knows that Judah's character has changed. Judah had been the one who suggested that they sell Joseph into slavery for profit. Joseph is convinced that he has changed and then reveals that he is their brother.

Applications:

1. Redemption is key to receiving God's promises.
2. Repentance precedes Redemption.
3. No one is beyond Redemption.

## 3. JOSEPH THE ISRAELITE (GEN 46-50) – GOD’S PROVIDENCE DELIVERS HIS PROMISES

Joseph explains they need not feel guilty for betraying him as it was God's plan for him to be in Egypt to preserve his family. Joseph and Pharaoh lavishly showered Joseph's father, his brothers, and all his father's household with food, according to the number of their dependents and "the best of all the land of Egypt".

Key takeaways:

1. We are placed in positions to bless those around us.
2. God will fulfil His Promises in spite of us.
3. God often works on a different time scale.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we are encouraged to remember that the Lord is not slack concerning His promises. He knows the future and is working all things for our good. Joseph's story is about God's providence. Though Joseph was faced with one trial after another, he remained faithful to God, and God blessed him for it. Though it seems unlikely that an Israelite could rise to become second in command of Egypt, especially after being in prison, God provided for Joseph by giving him the ability to interpret the dreams of the cupbearer and of Pharaoh himself. Once he became an advisor to Pharaoh, the Lord also gave him wisdom to oversee the food supply for the entire nation of Egypt so that eventually, he can provide for his father and brothers during the famine.

# QUESTIONS

1. What is the definition of providence? What are the three ways God's Providence is shown in Joseph's life?

2. Think about an area in your life where you have encountered God's Providence. Reflect on His goodness and share how it has encouraged you.

3.. What are the difficult situations that you are facing or the key worries or concerns that have been on your mind? How can you apply the Providence of God (as seen from Joseph's life) to see you through as you continue to trust in God and His timing?