

SERMON STUDY NOTES

Sunday 17 March 2019
Speaker: Martin Armstrong

The Prison Test: Genesis 39:13-23 (Robert Morris)

1. Joseph had lies told about him, was falsely accused and thrown into prison! Obedience to God is no guarantee that bad things will not happen to us! Discuss
2. How do you respond when you are falsely accused or treated unfairly? Give an example of a time when it may be best to say nothing and allow God to be your vindicator.
3. **Romans 5:3-5** gives a formulae for growing in character: 'But we also rejoice in difficulties, knowing that difficulty produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us'. Are you able to rejoice in your difficulties? How?
4. Patience is 'keeping our heart right, while we wait for something'. How do you get on in the areas of patience & perseverance?

5. While suffering, our hope should not be that God will deliver us from our circumstances, but that God will walk with us through them. Discuss
6. Character is seen in our actions, and reactions. What's the difference? Which is the more difficult for you to deal with?
7. Sometimes we rush in and rescue someone from a trial that God is using to build character. It may be about managing finances, or concerning relationships with people. If we rescue people from their difficulty, they may not learn the lesson God has for them. Can you give an example of a case like this that you have experienced?
8. **Proverbs 13:12** tells us that *hope deferred makes the heart sick*. Deferred hope, is hope that has given up and turned into disappointment. Why does disappointment despair and depression seem to be increasing in our world these days?
9. Joseph did not let this hopeless situation stop him from ministering to others. Every day he looked for divine opportunities - even in prison. Our situation seems to change when we care for people who are worse off than ourselves. Discuss.
10. What trial or tribulation are you dealing with right now in which you need to develop perseverance to battle in the right spirit?

11. Thank God that His grace is more than enough for anything we go through in life. Ask Him to open your eyes to see His hand at work within your difficult circumstances. If you have responded with fear, bitterness, impatience or manipulation, confess it and ask Him to forgive you. Ask Him to complete the work He is doing in your heart.