

A WORD ON WORSHIP

Review of Message from June 11, 2017

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Genesis 41:39-40

So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has informed you of all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you are."

Many Christians today have made an arbitrary and unbiblical distinction between the "secular" and the "spiritual," or between "full-time" Christians and the "laity." Do you notice that God has brought about the deliverance of His people not through Judah, from whom Messiah would come, and not through Levi, through whom the priestly class would originate, but through Joseph, a paper shuffler, a desk jockey, an administrator? One's job is a matter of both gift and calling, not of spirituality.



As spiritual as he was, I can well imagine that many in our own day would have approached Joseph with words similar to these: "Joseph, as spiritual as you are, you should consider attending seminary and going into full-time ministry." How could a secular ministry ever be fulfilling to a man as spiritual as Joseph? God did not raise up a preacher nor a priest, but an administrator to deliver His people from extinction. Let us beware of categorizing occupations in such a way as to make some more spiritual than others. Everyone is a full-time minister in the Scriptures, but some are called to labor in one sphere while others are called to another. Spirituality is totally independent of one's occupation.

Joseph was not promoted by Pharaoh (in human terms) because he was spiritual, but because he was skillful and knowledgeable. Pharaoh recognized Joseph to be a man who had divine enablement, but he could have cared less who his "god" was. He was only concerned with finding a man who could do the job which needed to be done. Many Christians think that God is obligated to bless or that His people are bound to patronize people simply because they are Christians. During our recent elections it was sometimes implied that we should vote for a person solely on the basis of a profession of faith. When I go to a surgeon, I will go to the one who is the best, regardless of whether he (or she) is a pagan, an atheist, or a devout Christian. God is not restricted to working only through saints.

Many of us who are Christians are not very good at what we do, either because we are lazy, or we think that God is obliged to bless us only because we give testimony to our faith. Joseph's testimony would have had little impact if he had proven to be wrong or had failed miserably to administrate the collection of grain. Let us enhance our testimony by doing well what we do. As the writer of the Proverbs 22:29 puts it: "Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before obscure men." While I believe that God elevated Joseph because he trusted in God and obeyed, I am just as confident that Pharaoh elevated him because he was diligent and skillful in what he did. Piety without proficiency is folly. We praise God in our work as well as in our words. One without the other is useless.

Sunrise Community Church
Come acknowledge the Lord in our midst
EVERY SUNDAY BEGINNING AT 8:45 A.M.

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