

THE BUTLER FORGOT HIM

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Daily devotions written by Pastor Thomas Smith

“Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgat him.”

Genesis 40:23

Joseph is one of the truly outstanding men we meet in the Scripture. The way he responded to mistreatment and adversity continues to encourage and inspire. Our text finds Joseph spending time in prison for a crime he did not commit. At the same time Joseph was in prison, Pharaoh put two of his officers, the chief of the bakers and the chief of the butlers in the same prison. While there, Joseph interpreted dreams for both of them. The baker would be hanged, and the butler would be released. Joseph asked the chief butler to remember him to the Pharaoh when he was released. As our text tells us, the chief butler did not “remember Joseph, but forgat him.” It seems that everything that could go wrong, as far as Joseph was concerned, did go wrong. The one person who had the opportunity to put in a good word to Pharaoh for him forgot Joseph. It would be two more years before another series of events would bring Joseph before Pharaoh.

This lapse of memory on the part of the chief butler brings several things to our attention. We see that men may fail us. The chief butler had every reason to remember Joseph to Pharaoh, but somehow it slipped his mind. God uses men in so many ways to be a source of blessing to us, but it is a mistake to put our faith in men alone. All men, even the best men, are only human. Men can make mistakes. Men may let us down. I have known many faithful men in my life, but it would not be wise to put all our confidence in men.

Our ultimate faith should always be in God, not in those who serve Him. We do not

trust in the arm of the flesh. We dare not put our faith in our programs or plans, but in the person of God Almighty. “It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man” (Psalm 118:8).

We also see in the failure of the chief butler a lesson concerning the consistent triumph of Joseph. How did he keep bouncing back when his family and peers failed him? Even though men let him down, Joseph continued to walk with God and serve people. He did not let his disappointments bring him to despair. He sought the assistance of men, but he would not allow man to be his ultimate source. He made his needs known to men, but His faith remained in God. Do not become bitter or disillusioned because someone has failed you. It is the Lord that we depend on.