Lessons to Learn in a Prison

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Smashwords Edition

Summary: At the age of 17 Joseph had a prophetic dream. That prophetic dream was a glimpse or an insight to what his future could be and there are ways you can position yourself to get prophetic dreams. Joseph learned how to operate in the gifts of the spirit in prison. Learn to hold onto God, remain faithful to Him in spite of what it feels like and what circumstance. Learn to love the people around you.

Great stuff - we're living in a great day, great opportunity, great to be alive. Man, I'd love to be a young person in today's hour - what a great day we live in aye? Got iPads and iPods and everything, every kind of gadget and gidget and whatever you need to make life a little bit easier and fantastic. I love them all. Trouble is in the midst of it we can actually lose our way and there's a whole generations lost it's way and I believe we're in a time when God is raising up a generation. We were reading this morning about Joseph and I want to talk a little bit about Joseph tonight. I want to share with you a simple message called Lessons to Learn in a Prison.

You've got to make decisions whether you learn anything through what's happening or whether you just go and have stuff happen. A lot of people drift along and just have stuff happen, but God has got His hand on our life and if we align with Him He is able to use every situation to advance us, to grow us, prepare us, develop us, all kinds of ways. So Joseph is a young man. At the age of 17 started to get prophetic dreams, 17. So if it could happen to Joseph it could happen to you at a young age, prophetic dreams.

One of our daughters was called up to heaven at the age of nine. God has not changed. It's possible for you to experience prophetic dreams where God opens heaven, begins to give you a glimpse of what He has in store or ahead for you. What an amazing thing for God to do that, but it doesn't just happen. Usually there's a hunger in a person's heart. That's what seems to open up heaven for us. Sometimes God just seems to pick someone out and for no reason at all bless them. I find that hard to handle.

I don't know about you, I really find it a bit hard to handle. Just seems so unfair, but God is not fair, He's just and He just does things like it pleases Him but He's operating according to principle - so at the age of 17

Joseph had a prophetic dream. That prophetic dream was a glimpse or an insight to what his future could be and there are ways you can position yourself to get prophetic dreams. I wonder how many of you here have had prophetic dreams. I've had some. I don't have enough of them, I'd like more. Some people have a lot. I feel a bit envious of that, I'd like a lot more and I don't seem to have enough of them.

However, I've been praying to God for increase that whole area. So there are times when I've had a prophetic dream, it's given me a deep insight to a situation around my life or something was coming up, so God is into prophetic dreams. In fact it says with the baptism in the Holy Spirit I'll pour My spirit out in you and you'll dream dreams and have visions, so it's your legacy and right to access the realm where God speaks to you and gives you insights about the future. Whether you do or not is your choice.

I'd just love to have a body of people, a generation of people who would rise up and say God, I believe You can speak, You do speak, You will speak and You will speak to me. You will give me glimpses of why I'm here on earth and what I'm called to be and to do. See without that you drift and today we're living with a generation that is drifting. They've lost values, lost standards, lost their way and drifting from experience to experience and not knowing how to succeed with their life. What a great hour to actually live, because I know in times like that God pours out His grace and pours out His spirit.

So I want to talk about what it is to be in prison - so young Joseph got a prophetic dream. Wasn't it wonderful to have a prophetic dream? The problem is God doesn't always tell you what's going to come between the dream and getting it fulfilled. I like the dream bit. I like the fulfilment bit. I don't like the bit in between. The bit in between is not very comfortable and so we're going to talk about - see, what Joseph did was Joseph like

this - man, I got a dream! I've got a dream! I've got a dream - and went to the older brothers and said I've got a dream! I'm going to be great and you'll bow down to me! ... [Laughter] ... They didn't like his dream. Then he came back and he said to his mum and his dad I'VE GOT A DREAM! Not only did my brothers bow down to me, you did too! That was the dream - and they didn't like it either.

But his father was a spiritual man and he kept it in his heart. In other words just because he'd had this dream didn't mean it wasn't from God and sometimes the dreams that God gives us, we don't always understand all they mean and how they'll work out but they're about our destiny. They're about our destiny. I'd love to hear young people saying God's given me a dream. I have a dream in my heart. I've a dream of what my life could be. Listen, without that dream you're all over the place. Without that dream you're drifting. You're like a boat in a storm with no rudder. It's a horrible thing, you just can't go anywhere. You just go with the crowd, go with the flow.

So this dream he had was a dream of impacting a nation in his generation. The way the dream worked out was this - we'll see how it worked out. How it worked was this: He rose to become probably the greatest financial manager of a nation that the world has ever seen. He rose up and in the midst of a crisis, a financial collapse, the Bible tells us in the time of Joseph money totally collapsed. There was a financial collapse in the world beyond what we've ever seen. Everything collapsed and in the middle of it God gave him the keys how to transfer wealth and make his boss the wealthiest man in the world in that time. Now how about that - and he was 17 when he got the dream. How many 17 year olds have we got here? At least 17 hands are up. Okay, the rest are all younger than that. That's okay [laughs] so it was time we had some dreams then isn't it?

But what God didn't tell him - and this is the tricky bit of the things of God because He doesn't always tell you what's going to come up on the way to get to the dream being fulfilled and you've just got to learn how to trust Him. I want to share with you a few lessons that Joseph had to learn in prison and prison is a place of containment, confinement, so when God gave him a dream of being a ruler and his family all coming and bowing down what God didn't tell him was how he was going to get there. He didn't tell him about the injustice. He didn't tell him about the bad treatment, He didn't tell him how he'd be sold as a slave, He didn't tell him how he'd be betrayed. He didn't tell him how he'd end up in prison - didn't tell him any of that. God leaves all that stuff out, have you noticed?

If you've been walking with the guy you'll find He leaves out all that stuff. He leaves out the details of how He's going to get you where He's going to get you. You've got to actually trust Him on the way that whatever's going on in your life it's an opportunity for you to learn and grow. So we're going to look at his time in prison. Here it is, we'll pick it up in Genesis 39; and the master when He heard these words - Verse 19 - when the master heard these words which his wife spoke saying this is what Joseph, his anger was aroused. So the boss, the master took him, put him in a prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined, so it wasn't just an ordinary prison. It's a place where the worst criminals are put and confined him in the prison.

The Bible says he was bound with chains on his feet and it says but! - ha, ha - so he's in a prison BUT God was with him. That's the thing that makes the difference. God was with Joseph. God showed him mercy because God's a merciful God. God gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison and the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing. In other words even when he was in the prison he ends up in charge of the prison and that's pretty good isn't it aye? Especially knowing what he was challenged with.

The keeper of the prison didn't even look at anything that was under Joseph's authority because the Lord was with him and made whatever he did, the Lord made it to prosper. Now here's an amazing story. I won't go through all of that because I want to pick up the lessons that Joseph learnt and here's the deal; he's in a prison. He's got his feet in chains. He's on a false trumped up charge of attempted rape. Here he is at the bottom of the prison. Everyone hates him, despises him for what he's done and yet he comes to the top. Now it's pretty good if you can come to the top wherever you are. That's pretty good if you can come to the top wherever you are, but you know something? When you read it it looks like God did it all. Actually there was a vital part that Joseph played in it and I wanted to share with you several things that you can learn if you're in a prison.

So a prison a place where you're contained, confined, where it doesn't feel like the dream you've got is ever going to be fulfilled, where in fact actually what you experience is opposite to what you were hoping would happen. There's some limitations, there's pressures around you, there's constraints around you, misunderstandings around you and you're in a season in your life where it's difficult and it's hard and it doesn't look like ever you'll get out. That's what the prison is. See, you've got to think of it - we've read the story. We know what happens, but imagine from Joseph's point of view, he's gone through all these experiences and now he's in the bottom, bottom prison, the worst prison of them all. His feet are in chains. There's a trumped up charge of rape. He has got no idea how this is all going to work out.

You could read the book. You read the answer - but he's in jail. What do you think he felt? What do you think he went through? What do you think he had to learn while he was in that prison? This will be good for us to learn too, so let me just give you a few things that you've got to learn if

you're in a tight place. How many know what it's like to be in a tight place? Could be tight financially, tight relationally, pressure, constraint, can be really difficult.

Okay, so here's the thing. The generation we're in today needs to learn about commitments and holding on and persevering in trouble. See today if it doesn't work people tell them where to put it and move on you see? If there's pressure and trouble people give up because we're living in an 'I want it now' generation. Let me tell you this. The spirit of that will never work in making you a man and woman of God, so let me give you several things that you learn. Here's the first one. Number one, you have to learn to remain faithful to the Lord when it looks like He's left you. You have to learn to remain faithful to God when it looks like He left you.

How many know there's seasons and times in your life you don't feel God at all, don't even hear God at all? Believe it or not, I have those times too. I think you've left me with this church Lord and what am I going to do? Where are you, you know and He's not talking. He's not saying anything and it's difficult. Here's the thing; when God doesn't seem to be - when it looks like God has left you, when you've got a trouble in your family and it seems like there's this conflict won't go away and you're praying and God's not answering anything, it's a choice you have to learn to remain faithful to God and hold onto God in the midst of your trouble.

To hold on to God means you keep coming to Him in prayer, keep opening your life to His words and His promises. It means you remain faithful to Him. I've found people get a bit of pressure on them, they stop fellow-shipping, they stop coming to church, they're already on the way down because they've let go of holding onto God, holding onto the family of God. So number one, you need to learn to hold onto God in spite of the circumstances, so will you remain faithful in distress?

In Isaiah 41 He says this. He said don't be afraid. Don't be dismayed for I am with you, doesn't matter what you're going through, no matter what distress, what contrary circumstances. God says I AM with you whether you feel it or not. You notice this, that when you're going through temptation you can't feel the presence of God at all? Not at all, when you're facing a temptation, temptation to sin, you don't feel God at all. Does that mean He's gone? No. It feels like He's gone. That's why it requires faith, to hold onto the promise of God - God, You said You would never leave me, You'll never forsake me, You'll never abandon me. I will hold onto You and I won't let go. Number one lesson, learn to hold onto God, remain faithful to Him in spite of what it feels like and what circumstance.

Here's the second thing that Joseph did. Joseph learned how to operate in the gifts of the spirit in prison. That's an amazing thing. Even though he's in prison he's able to interpret dreams. He's able to flow in a gift of God. He's able to when people have a need, to reach out to them and in spite of the fact of him being in need, him being in prison, him being treated unjustly, he's able to reach out to others in the middle of it and flow in the gifts of the spirit. You say it's hard to flow in the gifts of the spirit. No it isn't, it's easy. Why on earth did you think it was hard? What caused you to think that? Who told you it was hard? Where did you learn that?

We've run seminar after seminar on flowing in the gifts of the spirit and how to move in the spirit. It's very, very easy to do it. It's not hard at all. If it was hard then only a few could do it.

No, it's not hard. The issue is whether you can stir yourself up and trust God and begin to hear from Him and flow with Him. That's the issue and

you have to learn to do that. Well, I just love to do it when we've got a lovely feeling, lovely atmosphere. No, no, you need to learn to listen to God and stir your gifts even when it's difficult.

In 2 Timothy 1:6, Timothy's going through a hard time. You know what the hard time was? He was young guy, everyone's putting him down, everyone's speaking against him, older people saying he's too young to be a bishop, how come - how come you're doing this? In the midst of it he became intimidated. When you're intimidated and when you're affected by the attitudes of people and shut down inside, your gift stops flowing. You can flow in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. You've just got to make a decision to STIR UP YOUR SPIRIT! See? You wait for God to do it? Ha ha! What are you dreaming? You're dreaming. You're thinking something crazy. God is not going to stir your spirit.

Paul wrote to Timothy, stir up the gift of God that's inside you by the laying on of hands. Fire it up man of God, don't forget who you are. I don't care who's putting you down, who's speaking against you. Fire up the gift of God! How do you do it? Get praying strongly in tongues. You start to pray in tongues, your spirit is praying. You become energised in your spirit man, your head clears and you start to hear the voice of God. See, you can't wait for someone to do that for you. You've got to do that for yourself. I don't feel like it. Enjoy your prison then. See?

We need to learn how to stir the gifts of God so wherever we are we can start to feel the presence of God activate. You've got the Holy Ghost inside you, you can stir up the gift of God any time you wish. You see the problem is that we tend to live and we live under the feelings, impressions, the sensations, the imprisonment and we don't actually live from our spirit where the life of God is. The life of God is in your spirit.

Now of course what happens is the stuff that gets in your thoughts, in your soul and your emotions can shut down your spirit, so you have a spirit. You have the Holy Ghost inside you. You can speak in tongues. You can activate the gift of God. You can active your spirit man and stir up your gift so God begins to flow through you and when you do that the gifts start to flow. Gifts are not for you, they're for someone else, so in order for the gifts to flow you have to stir yourself up and be committed to helping other people. In the midst of the prison he learned to stir the gift of God. It was his prophetic gift got him into trouble in the first place and now his prophetic gift is the very thing that'll get him out of prison.

You know something? It was his prophetic gift that got him in there, it was his prophetic gift got him out of it. See, so if you let the gift of God shut down in you in the midst of difficult experiences how will you get out of those difficult experiences? Because you need the flow of God's presence and the flow of His power to get out, so the thing is when he rose up and he began to help people, he began to help people with his gift, he began to serve them with his gift and the gift of God flowed; he began to interpret the dreams of this guy, interpret the dreams of that guy, both the guys got out of prison and eventually one of them remembered and a situation came and he was called on to exercise his gift. Imagine missing your moment because the time - suppose the king just suddenly said okay boy, I hear you can interpret dreams, come and tell me what my dream is. Ooh, oh well I've been in prison, you can't expect me to do much. That was the place to be learning to stir your gift. Hey, what are you doing in your difficult time? Are you stirring the gifts? When was the last time you prophesied? When was the last time you heard a word of God? When was the last time you felt God flow through you? When was the last time you heard God speak clearly something to encourage someone?

See. Stir up the gifts of God. Don't wait 'til you feel something. You've just got to stir them up anyway, it's stirring your faith, declaring the word of God. Here's another thing; you need to hold on and believe for a better

future. You need to hold on in faith and believe God your future's going to be good. See the Bible says in Psalm 105 until the time His word came the word of the Lord tried him. In other words he held on to God's word in the face of difficult circumstances and what the trial was was this; my circumstances disagree with what I believe. I believe I'm going to rise and be a leader, but what I'm seeing is different and how do I handle what I feel when what I see is so different to what God told me? At that point many people quit, they give up. They say what I'm experiencing is so different to what God told me I can't ever believe that God's going to come through. I must have been dreaming, I must have been crazy - and you lose the word of God. You have to believe that tomorrow will be better than today, that for you I know the plans that the Lord has for you. He says I know the plans I have for you - Jeremiah 29 - plans for good, not evil, give you a great future. Your future is great from God's point of view. It may not be from your point of view. Well there's a recession. Well God's not worried about recessions. He uses them too. There was a great recession in Joseph's day and God used Joseph to deal with the whole thing.

So here's the thing. Here's another thing you can learn - learn that God will bless you in spite of what you're walking through. God still wants to bless you. Notice here it says in Verse 21; the Lord was with Joseph, showed him mercy, gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison, so God blessed him. Notice this; he said whatever he did the Lord made it to prosper, so here's the thing a lot of people don't realise, that even if you're in your prison you can still do well. You can actually improve the prison you're in. See, most people want to get out of prison rather than actually change the prison and then they get out, so He blessed - whatever situation you're in, I hear this over and over. People come complain about their job, complain about school, complain about their family but you'll never get anywhere doing that. You've got to say if this is the place I feel contained and restricted and limited, how can I change it and make it a better place? When you've done that, that's when you're ready to be promoted.

The thing that God wants you to change now is the thing that's really irritating you. That's the thing people don't understand. The thing that's bugging you the most is the thing that God calls you to influence change and bless. He's got to make a decision that's what I'm going to do and it's challenging because some problems don't go away - they last a long time.

I know some prisons or some problems that people have last a long time, feels like God's never going to answer but you know, if you hold on and believe for a better future it'll come. It will come. It does break through. It's just a matter of whether you can last the distance or not. You've got to hold on to God. God will bless you. He's blessing you where you are now. Sometimes we get so miserable in our feelings we just can't see we're being blessed, but God has blessed us with good things. That's why the Bible tells you to be grateful and thankful. Have a look around, start to see what can I be thankful for? Well I'm alive, got two eyes even though I'm wearing glasses. I can stand, I can speak, I've got energy, got life, got friends, I've got - and you begin to thank God. Thanking God shifts your spiritual atmosphere. Bless God. Bless God.

I'm amazed when I come into meetings how little people have got to give to God, see, because we haven't practised giving something to God. Practise, practise, practise! Oh God, thank you! Today I am blessed. I am blessed today! I'm blessed in everything I do! I'm blessed when I come in! I'm blessed when I - I hope you would pray that prayer of you. That's a great prayer to pray. That's a prayer of a person of faith. That's a person who believes that God is with me and His purpose is to bless me, so even dumb stuff, bad stuff and failures, nevertheless God uses them all for good.

I am blessed! I don't feel blessed, no. Do I look like I'm blessed? Sometimes no - BUT I AM BLESSED! Why? Because God is with me, He's in me, my life is in His hands. Oh, how can it get better than that! Come on, it's about an attitude, an attitude, so one of the great prayers you can pray when you get up in the morning everyday, I AM BLESSED TODAY! I thank you God, I am blessed. My life is a blessed life today. Whatever I put my hand to is blessed. I thank you Lord, you bless the works of my hand, you bless my health, you bless my relationship, bless my - I am blessed.

You say well I don't even feel like that. Nevertheless, if you will start to declare it those things will change around you. You start to see it differently, say I'm blessed. I can't believe how - it's a thing in New Zealand. I've been to Pakistan. Now if you want to see people in trouble then you go to Pakistan. Man, we were sick there and there's a lot of things to be very miserable - people carry guns because it's frightening and bombs go off and terrorists and yet in the midst of it I just see very many happy people. I come here and it's safe and there's all these things going on that are so wonderful for us and people are so miserable. Come on now, we need to say I'm blessed. I am blessed by God!

Start to make it your confession; I'm blessed, blessed in the morning, blessed in the evening, blessed every day in my relationship, everything. God blesses me, see? So when you are in the prison you have to learn to declare and to agree that God is blessing you, even the bad times will turn around and turn out for you good. Isn't that an interesting thing to realise? If you want to understand the pain of other people go through a little yourself and suddenly it changes your judgements and your harshness and you start to feel twinges of compassion. See before that you just feel oh yeah, go on, get a life, get a life, get on your feet, stop mucking around. You get a harshness and a judgement, but see when you go through a few things then you have a tenderness; say come on, we know you can do it. Go on, I'll come alongside you and help you. There's a softness comes, so the things that are causing you pain right

now are to soften you up a little so you'll feel a bit more about other people who are going through hard times. Isn't that right?

Come on, that's a lesson you can learn in prison. God blesses you, see? Here's another thing. Prison is a place where you learn to love the people who are rejecting you. Prison's a place to learn to love the people who reject you. Now how many people have experienced rejection? That'd be everyone here, see, you've had someone who just spoke against you, rejected you, turned you down, shut you off, cut you off, did some kind of - it just is part of life. Tell someone next to you, it's part of life. Get used to it - it's going to happen and it'll happen more. See? It's just part of life, just happens. Here's the thing; can you love the person or do you react against them? My observation is most people, they don't love the people who reject them. They just get angry inside and twisted inside and you'll get yours, you know? I know what I'll do, I won't talk to you any more. Well that's - big deal, you know? Good on you if you're going to do that. We've got to learn to love people and love has to flow out of a heart that's free, that's resolved pain. You've got to learn how to love people.

Well, you know, I love the people I like. That's not love. The Bible says in Luke 6, it says around about 34 or something like that, it says something like this. It said if you're good to the people who are good to you where is the evidence of God's grace in your life? Even an unsaved person does that. If you're kind to people who are kind to you where's God's grace in all of that? No grace for that. Anyone can do that. Unsaved people do that. If you lend to people hoping to get something back, what's the big deal? There's no grace in any of that. Hey, even unsaved people can do that. But if you can love those who hate you, if you can pray for those who use you, if you can bless those who curse you - oh, now that requires grace because it goes against what you feel inside.

So prison's the place where you grow in loving people. Oh, aye? When you're in prison and you're in a bit of pain, that's when you choose to forgive, to bless and to love and you know what? God is watching that. He's preparing you for your enlargement. So you have to learn to love people, see because at the end of the day Jesus said all of the whole Bible is summed up in loving God passionately and loving people. So if you can't love people you're missing the lesson of the prison because that's the big lesson God's wanting you to learn, to love people.

You know what? Imagine how he actually loved the prison keeper who put him in the chains and hurt his legs with chains. He was able to serve him and help him and bless him and make him look so good and such a success, he just let go the whole control of everything and trusted Joseph with everything, never even checked a thing. How 'bout that? Doesn't that require a great spirit, that people who've hurt you and rejected you and you can love them and bless them, 'til the point where they're totally changed and they have changed in their attitude to you? Isn't that amazing grace? Isn't that amazing to do that, to love people.

I find it hard to love people sometimes. Do you find it hard to love people? It's something to learn, to learn how to love in the midst of difficulty. How do you go about learning how to love people when you're going through a difficult time? First you admit your pain. You have to admit your pain. If you don't you'll actually try to put on a behaviour that your heart doesn't agree with, so in a place of prison when you're in pain and you've been hurt by people, the best thing you can do is weep. Weep before God, pour your heart out before God and begin to feel His comfort and His love coming into you. Then choose to bless and release and forgive and pray God's hand for good upon their life. When it starts to flow from your heart naturally you know you've moved from death to life.

I found a lot of people don't learn that, so they stay pretty small and often stay in the prison of bitterness. We don't want to be in prisons. We want to be free people. Free people can love. Free people can love. Aye? Okay, last couple of things, then we get a chance for you to respond and see what God has been speaking to you about.

Here's the thing; so Joseph, we know that Joseph just refused to get bitter. Here's the last couple of things. You have to learn to serve. You have to learn when you're in a prison to serve. Whatever situation you're in if you want to become great learn to serve and make the people or the situation better. Learn to serve. Learn to serve. You want to be great? Jesus said do you want to be great? DO YOU WANT TO BE GREAT? Well I don't know - do you want to be great? Do you want to be great or do you want to be insignificant? ... [GREAT!] ... See, there's one person wants to be great. Good on you Danny, there you go, you're on your way already because you've got the right attitude, see?

Do you want to be a great person in the kingdom, see, or do you just want to be insignificant? If you want to be insignificant well you'll have a whole world around you helping you be insignificant. If you want to be a great person you've got God on your side. He wants you to become great. He said any man desires to be great, here's the way you make it happen. You make it happen by serving. You learn to develop the heart of a servant so wherever you are you step up and make it better for everyone around you and developing that heart of serving is what develops greatness in you. And Joseph did that. You notice he's serving Potiphar and what happens? Potiphar gets so blessed he lets go everything into his hands. Then what happens? He gets put in the prison. You know what he does? He serves so well there they let go everything, put it all in his hands and trusted him. You know what happens next? Then they put the whole nation's future financially in his hands. Well I'd like to have that happen. However, you've got to see what you can do with what you've got right now.

So if you're serving right now and passionately making what's around you better, you've got the heart of a king, you've got the heart of Jesus. Here's the last thing you need to do. You need to learn that promotion comes from the Lord. There came a time it says when he got suddenly promoted. You look at Genesis, Chapter 41, and it tells - look at this - it said so his advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh - Verse 37 - in the eyes of his servants. The Pharaoh said to his servants where can we find a guy like this in whom is the spirit of God? And the Pharaoh said to Joseph inasmuch as God showed you all this, there's no one as discerning and wise as you. You'll be over my house, all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you. See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.

Now you've got really get the picture of this. Egypt was the major military, economic power of the day. It was the leading nation in the world and this guy goes overnight from the prison to next to the king on the throne. Now you see God can promote you. God can step you up and give favour upon your life and bring you before important people. God can open the door to promote you. See if God doesn't do it you've got to do it yourself and it's real hard if you do it yourself. It's easy if you let God promote you and to let God promote you learn the things you need to learn in the prison. That's how God promotes you.

So what happened was this; he became known because of the prophetic edge and the favour of God. How did he have the favour of God on his life? He did the things I told you he did and you know what? He put his whole heart into it. He just was quite an excellent person and so people heard here's a guy who's got a prophetic gift. Here's a guy who serves, here's a guy God's on his side. Everything he touches turns to gold. This kind of guy can help us - and he suddenly gets a door opened to him. So

God can open doors of opportunity for you. Paul says he prayed for doors of opportunity to be opened.

You want to become something with your life, why don't you do the things you need to do to succeed? Be great wouldn't it? Imagine looking back and you remember tonight and you remember all of the people sitting around you. Out of all of them you were the one that somehow rose up and the other all say oh, well God seems to have favoured that person. The answer's not so that He favoured them. You just put into practice the things you needed to do to position yourself for God to promote you.

Through the Bible God promoted people, promoted them, lifted them up, gave them all kinds of opportunities. God can do it. He can do it for you.

Why don't we just close our eyes right now. Father, we just thank you right now for your presence here, just get ready to pray - why don't we just thank you. Just close our eyes. Let's just open our hearts to the Lord right now. Maybe you're going through a difficult situation, difficult circumstance, difficult experience, a season of limitation. So your prison can just be a season where your activities are limited, what you can do is limited, maybe financial limitation, maybe a limitation maybe just at school. That's a limitation to you to some extent because you're just contained and confined within a learning environment for a few years of your life and most people when they're at school want to get out of school. Once they're out of school they wish they'd been back there and learnt something while they were there, so while you're in school it's the season of containment to learn something.

So you may not be in school. You may have come out but you're in different, older latter years of your life and you realise perhaps you're in a

prison contained by mistakes you've made, contained by perhaps the limits and restrictions around you in some areas of your health or whatever. It doesn't really matter what the prison is. God wants you to learn things in that prison. One of the people in the church who I love is Janice. Janice is not here tonight. Janice suffered greatly when she was a young woman, terrible abuse, passed from one family to another and no home, institutionalised and poor diet, all kinds of things. So she suffered in her body, suffered with sickness and to this day she's suffered with great weakness in her body, but inside is a heart of gold for God. There's an intercessor inside her. She prays and she hears God. She opens her home to have people in. She gives to other people who are in need. I admire someone like that.

So maybe there's a limitation around her in terms of physical health, but inside she's learnt great lessons and become a person in my life of influence. I really love and respect her. Probably some of you don't even know her, but I respect her because I know the day she walked down the drive of the church she'd been everywhere and there was no hope. Everyone said you can't do anything with her and she came, I can remember to this day her coming down our drive, God saying reach out to her and love her. See, God sees what you can become so I wonder today how many of you as you listen to some of those things I shared, lessons to learn in the prison. I wonder how many of you, God spoke to you about some issue tonight. Would you raise your hand and just acknowledge God is speaking to me tonight? God bless, God bless, God bless, many hands going up. God bless.

These are keys to grow, keys to learn. What I'd love you to do is just going to get into a flow of worship music. What I'd love to do is people tonight that felt God speak to them, I'd love you just to come forward, lift your hands to the Lord and begin to just speak to him; Lord, you were speaking to me tonight in my heart about this. Lord, I just repent of bad attitudes or a bad response, an unwilling response. I let go of things that have limited me and tonight Lord, I open my heart to learn the new

lesson you want me to learn. Lord, I'm asking for your grace and I'd love to just come and lay hands on you and pray that God's grace and favour would come on you.

I have been in many prisons, many very painful, difficult, limiting experiences see so the person you see on the stage is a public person, but privately I have faced many painful prison experiences and all I could do was just weep before the Lord and reach out for Him to teach me and help me. You could do that too. It's called the path to greatness. You are a great person inside just waiting to come out. Why not just listen to the musicians play and just as we have an atmosphere of worship, those that had God speak to them tonight why don't you come forward tonight, just lift your hands and build an altar in your heart to the Lord. I'd like to come and just pray and bless you. Some of the other pastors will come and pray also. Let's just do that, just stand right now. Come on, let's just stand as we just start worshipping God.

Just make your way to the front. Make your way to the front. Just build an altar in your place of prison. God, I feel like I want to fly. I feel so contained and God's saying don't be impatient, I want to teach you some things. Come on, won't you come forward, come now. Just come, come on, it's why you came here tonight. It's not just to sing songs, it's to let God touch your life. Come on, why don't you come, just come tonight, just come, let's make our way to the front. Just get in touch with your heart - so close your eyes. Closing your eyes enables you to look inwards, enables you to look upwards, so just begin to worship the Lord. As you worship Him begin to talk to Him about what the issue is He was speaking to you about. We'll just come and lay hands on you. The rest of the church, if you could just pray and flow into the song or just sit down wherever.

Thank you Lord. Father, I just thank you for each one who's responded tonight. Father, pour out your spirit. Thank you Lord. Thank you Lord. Father, tonight as we lay hands on people we ask for your presence and power to come on them, an impartation of grace to grow in the very area you spoke to them tonight, in Jesus' name.