

A New Season 3

What is required of you in the new season?

A new season requires:

1. Forgiveness and purity of heart

Example: Joseph

We pick up the account of Joseph Genesis 37, we see that when Joseph was 17 year old years old he had a dream. In this dream, his sheath stood up right, And those of his brothers were around his and bowed down to his sheath. He dreamt another dream and this time the Sun the moon and the 11 stars bowed down to him, and he told this to his father and his brothers. And his father actually rebuked him and said what is this you've dreamt shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the Earth before you? And these dreams cause his brothers to envy him. And eventually because of this and his for the fathers favouritism towards him, his brothers sold him into captivity. And the Midianites to whom his brothers had sold him then sold him in Egypt to Potiphar who was an officer of pharaoh. And it's interesting how we read in Genesis 39:2 that the Lord was with Joseph and he was a successful man in the house of his master the Egyptian. And it says in verse three that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand and that Joseph found favour in the sight of his master. He was made an overseer of this house. We know that Potiphar's wife then tried to seduce Joseph and he ran from her and was falsely accused by her and thrown into prison. But even in prison we see in Genesis 39 verse 22 to 23 that the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners and gave him authority in the prison because the Lord was with Joseph and made all he did prosper. This is interesting to me it shows a depth of character and purity of heart in Joseph. Joseph must have kept his heart pure even through all of these difficulties and trials that he went through, trials that he most likely did not deserve in any form or fashion. And we can learn a lot from him in this regard concerning keeping our hearts pure and free from resentment. When Joseph had been in prison for some time he then interpreted the dreams of a butler and a baker of the king of Egypt and he interpreted them correctly. In the case of the butler it

involved pharaoh restoring him to his original role and Joseph asked that the butler remember him. We are told in Genesis 40:23 that the chief butler did not remember Joseph but forgot him. It then took another two years before anything happened for Joseph. He had a lot of time to grow resentful and bitter once again. But God had not forgotten him. Pharaoh had two dreams and he couldn't interpret them. He sent for the magicians of Egypt and all its wisemen and it seems that there was no one who could interpret these for pharaoh. And it was at this point that the butler remembered Joseph. And at this point that there are sent and called for Joseph. They changed his clothing and brought him out of the prison. I love Joseph's response when asked to interpret the dream he basically said that it was not him but God who would give Pharaoh the answer. And Joseph then to interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh. Now this is a suddenly. Joseph had been in preparation for this moment for many years. But Suddenly he was catapulted from prison to 2nd in command over all the land of Egypt. Joseph was 30 years old when he stood before pharaoh king of Egypt. He had been 17 when he had the original dreams. This suddenly had been 13 years in the making.

Pharaoh's dreams were about a famine in all the lands and how to ensure that there would be enough food for all the people of the land when the famine hit. It's at this point when we see that Joseph's dreams were actually correct because all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain when the famine hit. This included Joseph's brothers or Jacobs sons. When Joseph's brothers came to him they didn't recognise him but immediately he knew who they were.

At a certain point Joseph couldn't contain himself anymore and revealed his identity to his brothers. This is where I'd like to pick up reading the Scriptures.

*Gen 45:3-5 (NKJV) Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. [4] And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. [5] But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; **for God sent me before you to preserve life.***

Wow! The way that Joseph had processed 13 years of false accusation and imprisonment, was from the perspective of God's eternal purpose. Joseph had not retained unforgiveness resentment bitterness towards his brothers or God at all. This would have been crucial for him as he entered into this new role of second in command. Unforgiveness, bitterness, resentment would have formed a snare to trip him up in God fulfilling his grade of purposes of feeding people in the famine. Sometimes the very people God wants to use us to minister to or to help are the very people who have wounded us. And in order for God to use us in his grand design we need to walk free from unforgiveness bitterness and resentment.

Heb 12:1-2 (NKJV) Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, [2] looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Heb 12:14-15 (NKJV) Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: [15] looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

- Are there people that have wronged you, that you need to forgive?
- Have you been holding onto resentment regarding something that happened to you?
- Were you falsely accused or wronged in some way and have held onto it and know that you need to release it?
- Is there someone that owes you something still, and you know that they not likely to pay it back?

Maybe it's time to release these people, institutions, countries, organizations. These things will only become hindrances, weights, judgements against us as we enter a new season.

2. Humility

Example: John the Baptist

*Luk 3:1-15 (NKJV) Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, ..., [2] while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. [3] And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, ...[10] So **the people asked him, saying, "What shall we do then?"** [11] He answered and said to them, "He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise." [12] Then **tax collectors** also came to be baptized, and said to him, "**Teacher, what shall we do?**" [13] And he said to them, "Collect no more than what is appointed for you." [14] Likewise **the soldiers** asked him, saying, "**And what shall we do?**" So he said to them, "Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages." [15] Now as the people were in expectation, and **all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ or not,...***

*Luk 3:16-22 (NKJV) John answered, saying to all, "**I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.** ... [21] When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. [22] And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."*

- Do you see your purpose in the light of God's bigger purpose, or do you have tunnel vision?
- Is it about God's kingdom and what He is building, or your kingdom?
- Do you seek your own elevation, promotion, fame and influence, or Jesus'?
- In your heart, do you serve Jesus for what you can get out of Him, like the multitudes I mentioned in the first message in this series? Or for because you love Him and want to build His Kingdom, even if you must decrease for Him to achieve His purposes?
- Are you willing to step aside for someone else whom God is raising up? `are you willing to create a platform for others?

3. Total devotion to God, His purposes and will

Example: Saul

A new season requires total devotion

We're going to have a look at Saul, but in order to understand him a bit better, we're going to start by looking at Stephen's death. We pick up the account of Stephen Acts 6. We read of how he really was full of faith and power who performed great wonders and signs among the people. And there were some Sirenians, Alexandrians and others couldn't resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spoke and so stirred up people against him. They stirred up elders and scribes and he was brought before the council. Stephen addresses the council and these men were so cut to the heart they stone Stephen.

Act 7:59-60 (NKJV) And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." [60] Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Act 8:1-3 (ESV) And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. [2] Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. [3] But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

Act 9:1-6 (ESV) But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest [2] and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. [3] Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. [4] And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" [5] And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. [6] But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do."

. [10] Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." [11] So the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. [12] And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight." [13] Then Ananias answered, "**Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem.** [14] **And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.**" [15] But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. [16] For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake." [17] And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." [18] Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. [19] So when he had received food, he was strengthened. **Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.** [20] **Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.** [21] **Then all who heard were amazed, and said, "Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?"** [22] **But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ.**

- In Saul (Paul)'s life, he had learnt and become totally passionate and zealous for what he was doing. This passion and zeal was what God wanted Him to carry through and use for Jesus after his encounter with God. There could be no fear of man, no fear of his previous contemporaries, no pursuit of the fame and honour from his previous position and titles.

Php 3:3-11 (NKJV) For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, [4] though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: [5] circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of

Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; [6] concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. [7] But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. [8] Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ [9] and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; [10] that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, [11] if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

- If we truly are serious about living for God and embracing everything he has for us, this must truly be our heart's cry. Nothing less than Christ will do!
- What has the Lord given you in terms of character traits, passions, gifts, desires, that He may want to use in this next season?
- Are there any counterfeit comforts, and counterfeit desire fillers that you have been using? These may be as simple as food or alcohol to fill a void or spiritual hunger, to using your natural gifts or wealth or likeability to fill a void in the soul.

4. Leadership and stepping up

Example: Deborah

Jdg 5:7 (NIV) Villagers in Israel would not fight; they held back until I, Deborah, arose, until I arose, a mother in Israel.

Jdg 5:7 (NKJV) Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel, Until I, Deborah, arose, Arose a mother in Israel.

If you read in commentaries, you discover that because of Israel's idolatry, the Lord had allowed them to fall into desolation.

1. No trade: There were no soldiers to protect businessmen from the incursions of the enemy. There were no magistrates to restrain and punish thieves and robbers who had

taken to robbing and plundering. Consequently, all commerce had ceased. Highways were unoccupied. Merchants refrained from travelling due to the dangers.

2. No travelling: There was no order and government. Travelers were not safe on the open roads and were forced to use the by-ways to avoid robbers and thieves.

3. No tillage: The fields lay waste and unattended to. the inhabitants of the villages and country farmers, ceased from working the fields and left their houses in these vulnerable areas because of the frequent raids by bandits. They shelter for themselves and their families in walled and fenced cities.

4. No administration of justice: There was war in the gates where their courts were kept, The continual incursions of the enemy deprived the magistrates of the dignity, and the people of the benefit, of their government.

5. No peace to him that went out nor to him that came in: The gates through which they passed and repassed were infested by the enemy. The places to draw water were guarded by enemy archers. Life was difficult

6. The people did not have weapons to fight nor defend themselves (Jdg 5:8): Either they were disarmed by their oppressors, or they themselves neglected the art of war.

This was the picture until one woman arose, in obedience to a call by God.

In our nation today, we can draw many similarities. Many of us can see the gaps, cracks, and leakages. I am sure many in Deborah's day could also see the gaps cracks and leakages. It took one woman to arise and make a difference. And what a difference she did make!

Psa 110:3 (NIV) Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy splendour, your young men will come to you like dew from the morning's womb.

Psa 110:3 (NKJV) Your people shall be volunteers In the day of Your power; In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth.

- What areas of the church do you see a gap in that you can step up to fill?

- What areas in society do you feel God nudging you to step up and step out in?

Conclusion:

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4. Leadership and stepping up (Deborah)

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- No travelling:
- No tillage:
- No administration of justice:
- No peace
- The people did not have weapons to fight

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