Let No Delay in Answer to Prayer Discourage You: The Example of Joseph in Egypt

by Martin Luther

For about thirteen years Joseph cried and continued to pray God to help him. But the more he prayed, the worse he fared.

Joseph desired liberation and return from his prison to his father Jacob. He pleaded for nothing greater. Then God in heaven let him burn incense and sweet-smelling things for a while but replies:

You know not what you are asking; I am in the habit of giving above and beyond what you ask and understand; therefore I must detain you somewhat longer; you will have to wait a while; I desire still more of those wisps of ascending incense, your prayers.

If God had liberated Joseph, his father, Jacob, would no doubt have been glad; but Joseph would have remained a sheepherder. However, since the help was delayed so long, he became a lord over all Egypt, so that certainly no greater man can be found in Holy Scripture, no one who rose higher as world ruler than did Joseph.

The Word of God teaches that the time, the place, and the manner of the disposition of a matter should be entrusted to God and that we should simply ask for the matter as such, confident that our request will be granted in His time and place.