

# Fruitful in the land of Affliction

The people who consistently manifest the greatest joy are those who refuse to be discouraged by their circumstances. Someone has said, "If life hands you a lemon, make lemonade."

Charles Goodyear's lemon was a prison sentence, resulting from a contempt of court citation. While in prison, Goodyear became an assistant in the kitchen, and while there, he continued to work on an idea. In the process, he discovered a method for vulcanizing rubber. His lemon, a prison sentence, became our lemonade. He produced better tires which meant better travel and a better way of life.

A prime example of the rewards of faithfulness to God is Joseph, the favored son of Jacob. He was sold into slavery, betrayed by his brothers, his death was feigned, and yet through all the ordeals he passed, he made the best out of bad situations.

God was with Joseph in slavery, in prison, and in life (Gen. 39:2, 21,23). Why? Because of his fidelity to God. Joseph's son, Ephraim, was named in praise of God. Ephraim means "double fruitfulness." When Joseph ultimately made himself known to the brothers who sold him into slavery, he told them not to be sorry or fearful. He said God "hath made me fruitful in the land of my affliction" (Gen. 41:52).

While all of us at some time live in the land of affliction, good can always come from it – we can be fruitful in the land of affliction (Rom. 8:28). Continued faithfulness to God, in spite of difficult circumstances, will eventually result in manifold blessings. From a

prison cell, Paul wrote, “But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ” (Phil. 1:12-13).