

Remnant Life Church
11.27.22
Joseph
Pt 7
A Very Good Finish
Gen 42, 43 44, 45

We conclude this morning our time examining the life of Joseph

1. A Forced Confrontation
2. Two Dreams
3. The Brother's Revenge
4. A Different Kind of Confrontation – part 1
5. A Different Kind of Confrontation – part 2
6. Pharaoh's Dreams

The Final chapter (in 4 parts) is how Joseph created a scenario for a wonderful finish

Part 1 - The Brothers First Trip to Egypt

READ – **Genesis 42:1-17**

Of course, the backdrop for this final confrontation is a famine that is impacting a large section of the then know world

- It is by God's providence that this is happening
 - Designed to bring Joseph and his brothers in contact with each other again
- Now there are several underlying currents that are adding to the story
 - First, the impact of Joseph's disappearance remains evident in Jacob's overprotectiveness of Benjamin (42:4)
 - Benjamin is now in his 20's and you can only imagine what Benjamin thinks of his father's overprotectiveness
 - Second, when Joseph sees his brothers he recognized them but they do not recognize him (42:8)
 - This is not surprising
 - Egyptian high officials were adorned with wigs, eye makeup, and jewelry
 - The Canaanites would have no understanding or knowledge of these practices so Joseph, for intents and purposes, was in a full disguise
 - Third, Joseph begins a two-pronged approach to dealing with his brothers
 - Remember, Joseph was a man of incredible integrity but he was not perfect
 - I believe there is an undercurrent of "Let's see how you like it" in his actions
 - He accuses them of being spies
 - Is this is the same thing they thought of him
 - We read in **Genesis 37:2** that Joseph brought a bad report to his father about his brothers
 - Do you think they accused him of being a spy for his father?

- The irony of the whole thing is almost laughable as they begin to vehemently proclaim their innocence
- We then begin to see the first inklings of what the brothers have been dealing with for the past 13 years
 - They tell Joseph that besides the 10 of them, that one brother is at home with their father and another *is no more*. (4:13)
 - It would appear that they have fully acknowledged what they did to Joseph
- And as Joseph's plan continues to unfold he is, as he says to them in verse 15, testing them
 - But it is not about whether they are spies or not, he knows they are not
 - But it is a test to determine whether his brothers have reformed from their earlier cold and evil ways
- Joseph then puts them in prison for three days as the reversal of their fortunes continues (42:14)
 - Again, Joseph certainly remembers what it was like to be kept in that empty cistern, a prisoner of his brother's jealousy
 - I don't know that we can assume Joseph is enjoying this, but I have to think that there is some measure of satisfaction – and who could blame him?
- The first encounter comes to a close as Joseph tells his brothers that he will keep one of them and the others must go home and come back with Benjamin
 - We are not told why he selected Simeon to stay (42:24)
 - Perhaps Simeon was the most vocal antagonist against Joseph over a decade ago and most deserved to be kept in confinement
 - But given the ultimate purpose of the test it is likely that Joseph is wanting to know if his brothers would still be willing to abandon a brother as they did him
 - After all, the only true motivation for them to return (since they had successfully purchased the grain) was their own new-found sense of mercy
 - This was the perfect way for Joseph to see if their hearts had changed.

Part 2 – The Second Trip to Egypt

READ – Genesis 43:1-10

- Jacob is finally convinced to send Benjamin
 - But it takes his oldest son Judah's promise to bear the full blame if something happens to Benjamin
 - This should have sounded familiar to Jacob since it was his mother Rebecca that said the same thing regarding the curse of Isaac for stealing Esau's birthright (Gen 27:13)
 - If their first visit to Egypt brought their guilt and remorse to the surface, the second visit keeps them totally off balance with events that make no sense and in every way bewildering

- The first shocking event is when they are all invited to the home of the Egyptian governor
- Of all the tens of thousands people pouring into Egypt to buy grain why were they being singled out for this special treatment?
- Of course, the brothers, in their guilt, think the worst
 - **43:18** - *Now the men were frightened when they were taken to his house...He wants to attack us and overpower us and seize us as slaves and take our donkeys.*
- But when they arrive at Joseph's house, the care for their needs is meticulous and extravagant
 - They are given new clothes and a wonderful meal
 - In start contrast to how the brothers treated Joseph when he came to Dothan, he now lavishes them with the finest of hospitality
- Finally, they realize something else that has no explanation
 - They have been seated around the table in the order of their birth from oldest to youngest (**43:33**)
 - But the test is still in operation
 - While he gives them all very generous portions
 - Benjamin is lavished with 5 times the amount of food as his brothers
 - Joseph is once again repeating what he went through as the favorite of his father
 - He wanted to know if this act would, as happen before, turn his brothers against Benjamin
 - Had they changed or were they still the same petty, jealous men who had betrayed Joseph?

Part 3 – The Silver Cup

READ – Gen 44:1-9

- The silver cup is the most intense test that Joseph puts his brothers through
- Once again, he is wanting to know if his brothers have changed or would they be glad to exact payback to a younger brother who had received preferential treatment
 - This time Benjamin, before, it was Joseph
 - This time, it would be even more legitimate
- The brothers proclaimed that if found, the guilty man would be executed and the rest put into bondage
 - But this would not have accomplished what Joseph was interested in
 - That would come by a counterproposal – only the guilty would stay in bondage, the others could all go free
- The profound grief of the brothers at Benjamin's apparent guilt is clear evidence that they are not the same
 - Not only have they learned pity and mercy
 - But they now also have great concern for their father at the possible loss of Benjamin

- This was something that apparently never entered their mind when they were so quick to sell Joseph and before that suggesting that he be killed
- But now, Judah, one of the architects of the plan to sell Joseph, freely offers himself in Benjamin's place
 - Joseph now has his answer
 - There is only one thing left to do

Part 4 – I am Joseph

READ – Gen 45:1-7

- Now that Joseph is fully convinced that his brothers have changed, he makes himself known to them
 - Consider two things as we wrap this up
 1. Joseph did not do the things he did out of vindictiveness or revenge
 - a. He certainly had the reason and means to do so
 - b. At his word they would have all been executed and they would not have even known it was Joseph who did it
 - c. But remember, Joseph was a man of great integrity, and men of great integrity do not hold grudges that can only be satisfied with revenge
 - i. How long is your injury memory?
 - ii. Do have a vault in your brain that has every bad thing ever done to you cataloged and filed?
 - iii. We have talked so much about forgiveness at RLC
 - iv. *Matt 6:14-15 - For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*
 2. Joseph knew that God was at work through the whole process
 - a. *Gen 45:5 - And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.*
 - b. This is why Joseph did not need to seek revenge
 - c. He knew that God was orchestrating the whole thing for a greater purpose

Is there any way that we, too, can see the events of our lives in that same way?

- To trust God enough that when things are difficult we don't allow our emotions to take us over and start acting in a way that does not represent Jesus Christ in our lives?
- Some of you may be saying, "I don't care. When things like that happen I am going to react in whatever way I see fit."
- OK – but then don't turn and cry out to God asking why things are the way they are when you have determined that your will and responses are yours alone.

One final encounter...

READ – Gen 50:15-21

- The brothers were perhaps not as deeply changed as Joseph had thought
- Jacob is dead and the boys think that Joseph will now turn on them and make them pay
- They even concocted a lie to ensure their safety
 - A fake message from their dead father to Joseph
 - But I believe Joseph knew it was not genuine which is why he wept when he received it
 - Joseph encapsulates the entirety of his time by what he says in verse 20
 - **50:20** - *You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.*