

Joseph's Forgiveness

Intro: One of the most dramatic moments in Bible history: As Joseph had dreamed, his brothers bow down before him (Gn 44:14) begging for mercy and favor.

1. Joseph's Revelation/Forgiveness – Gn 45:1-5

A. Joseph has put them to several tests to determine whether or not they had changed over the years. They had sold him at 17; he is now 39. Are they sorry?

1. They acknowledge their sins in his presence: Gn 42:21; 44:16.
2. They demonstrated love for Jacob, Benjamin: 44:30. They are not as willing to get rid of Benjamin as they were to get rid of Joseph.
3. Judah vicariously offers himself in Benjamin's place: 43:8; 44:33. *Judah had been the one who suggested selling Joseph (37:26).* How he has changed!

B. Joseph confirms his forgiveness after death of Jacob – Gn 50:15-21.

2. Joseph's Belief in God's Providence – Gn 45:5-8

A. "God sent me ..." – repeated 3 times.

B. "God made me Lord of Egypt" – 45:9.

1. The Lord had blessed Joseph in Potiphar's house – 39:2.
2. Lord with Joseph during apparent setback, hardship – 39:21-23.
3. Lord blessed Joseph with interpretation of Pharaoh's dream – 41:16.

C. Upon reflection – 50:20: *"But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order ... to save many people alive."*

D. On providence: "All parties were allowed, in the free exercise of their own choice, to follow their course, ignorant that all the while they were only contributing their share towards the fulfilment of God's purposes. And in this lies the mystery of Divine Providence, that it always worketh wonders, yet without seeming to work at all – whence also it so often escapes the observation of men. Silently, and unobserved by those who live and act, it pursues its course, till in the end all things are seen 'to work together' for the glory of God, and 'for good to them that love God, that are called according to His purpose'" (Edersheim, p. 143).

3. Lessons from Joseph

- A. He never lost confidence in God; from 17-30 he endured much distress. He was homesick, abandoned, falsely accused, etc., yet his faith triumphed.
- B. His life mirrors that of Jesus: betrayed; harshly treated; exalted; savior of his people; eliciting confession, repentance from those subordinate to him.
- C. He did not harbor bitterness but was forgiving. He left vengeance to God.

Conclusion: A life that does not see itself as somehow connected to the will of God is missing its main focus. We may not be a Joseph, but we all have work to do, things to accomplish for God.