

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Lord's Day Afternoon

Date 20th February 2022 Hymns Psalm Ps 71v1-8 Stracathro , 85, 261, 71 Read: Genesis 37:11-17 Text Genesis 37:15-17

Series: Joseph (10) Title: Joseph seeks His Brethren

When Joseph was commissioned by his father to leave Hebron the place of Fellowship and dwell in Shechem the place associated with the pollution of sin for the purpose of seeking his brethren's well being, Joseph the loved, and chosen son willingly, sacrificially and submissively surrendered to his Father's will by giving obedience to His word.

Look at the end of **verse 13** *And he said to him, Here am I.* then we read in **verse 14** *“So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.*

Upon arriving in Shechem, a certain man asked him, in **verse 15** *“what seekest thou.”* Joseph answered in **verse 16** *“I seek my brethren...”* Joseph was seeking their spiritual well being.

In thinking of these words, what a view we have of Jesus Christ our heavenly Joseph for He willingly, sacrificially and submissively surrendered Himself to leave the place of fellowship with His Father, to be sent forth, to come to this world associated with sin, to dwell among humanity, in order to seek the spiritual wellbeing of sinners, given to Him by Father within the everlasting covenant of grace.

Notice the obedience of Christ as seen in **John 4:34** *“Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.”*

Christ desired to honour His Father. To finish the Father's work in seeking and saving sinners, Christ must accomplish two things, perfectly obey the precept or commands of the Father's law by living a sinless life, and perfectly obey the penalty or curse of the Father's law by dying a substitutional death.

Fail in one and there is no salvation for sinners, half way obedience is full disobedience.

Hallelujah Christ perfectly obeyed both, He honoured God to save sinners.

Therefore, with this mind in view we will consider today Joseph seeks His brethren and supremely gaze our minds to Christ, the greatest seek of needy souls.

I FIRST, JOSEPH SEEKS HIS BRETHREN PURPOSEFULLY.

Joseph said in **verse 16** ***"I seek my brethren..."***

The word **seek**, conveys the idea of an earnest seeking after something with the full intention that the object sought be found.

In this case Joseph's intention, his purpose is to find his brethren and **see if it be well with** them, if they are at peace.

(The same word **seek** and its meaning is used in **Ruth 3:1** ***"Then Naomi her mother in law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee that it may be well with thee."***

Naomi desired the well being of her daughter in law Ruth. Ruth was once a stranger to God's grace, however she trusted in the Lord, as her salvation and refuge. Ruth was rescued from sin's damnation but also brought out of pagan Moab where she had once worshipped her false idols.

Coming from Moab to Bethlehem, Ruth a Gentile, had no position, provision or protection among Jews, in the land of Israel. Ruth was poor and needy.

Therefore, the family had a kinsman redeemer, a relative, named Boaz, who could do for Ruth all that she needed, in giving her position, provision and protection for all the days of her life, however this could only be done by marriage union.

Boaz must take full responsibility for Ruth, in the presence of all people and redeem or purchase her to be his wife. But He must be willing, and able to do so.

Boaz the kinsman redeemer, a mighty man of wealth, meet all the requirements to marry Ruth publicly and give her rest and all she needed in life.

The point is, Naomi would not stop until Ruth had rest, and security through marriage union. She did not give up until Ruth and Boaz were one by marriage.

There is a picture of Christ, He is greater than Boaz, He purchased His people to be His bride, He has done for sinners all they need through life and eternity.)

Joseph has travelled 60 miles maybe a bit more to seek with a purpose his brethren, he will not rest until he finds them.

In fact such is Joseph's intense search that the certain man who is unnamed can see Joseph's determination, he sees Joseph searching intensely, and he asks in **verse 15** "***what seekest thou.***"

Of course he thinks Joseph is searching for something, Joseph answers in **verse 16** "***I seek my brethren...***" is not what but who I am seeking to find.

This same word seek or seekest is recorded in the life of Christ on His visit to Samaria, when He came to seeking the well being of a Samaritan woman, **John 4:27** ***And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?*** The Lord being a Jew spoke to this woman who was a Samaritan, a heathen worshipper, an adulterous woman.

the Jews and Samaritans had no dealings with one another, yet the Lord sits with this sinful woman, giving her the gospel message, exposing her sin, in order to save her soul.

The Lord said himself in **Luke 19:10** ***“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.***

Therefore, believer in looking at Joseph seeking his brethren purposefully, we must also look to Christ as the greatest seeker of souls, and learn from Him,

We must seek souls purposefully going to the highways and byways and compel souls to come unto Jesus, and be saved by His cleansing blood, and find in Him all that is needed for life and eternity.

Paul said in **Romans 10:13** ***“for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. ¹⁴ How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!***

II SCEOND, JOSEPH SEEKS HIS BRETHREN PLEADINGLY.

Joseph then says to the certain man in **Verse 16** ***“tell me I pray thee, where they feed their flocks.”*** In seeking for his brethren Joseph pleads for them, the words, ***I pray thee***, means ***to beseech or to plea***.

Joseph pleads in the presence of this man for his brethren. Joseph is specific in his pleading. He beseeches the man for them.

Surely there are lessons concerning our heavenly Joseph, Jesus Christ the great high priest of His people. Unlike the earthly the Joseph, our Heavenly Joseph knows where His people spread out among the nations.

The role of OT High priest was to offer sacrifice and then upon the sprinkling the blood upon the altar he prayed on the basis of the shed blood, as he represented in in the presence all for whom the blood was shed for.

While on the earth the Lord Jesus in His high priestly prayer, pleaded for all whom the father had given Him past, present and future, **John 17:9** ***"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine."*** **Verse 20** ***"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;***

He pleaded for His people while He was on earth and now in heaven He continues. Paul said in **Hebrews 7:25** ***"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."***

This verse is often taken by many to call sinners to repentance that is very true, but that is not the strictest context, for the words simply refer that the saving work Christ that has begun in the life, He will not abandon, He will not abort. This is seen by the word ***"save to the uttermost."***

Notice, the word ***'uttermost'*** it means ***completely***. The idea of the ultimate end. Therefore, all that the Lord has purposed to do in the salvation of His people will be accomplished.

It is accomplished through the high priestly ministry of Christ, signified by the words ***"...seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."*** He lives as God and man for us." The Lord Jesus Christ in heaven is the advocate, defender, mediator, and intecessor for His people.

Christ by His life and death has provided all that was necessary for our salvation, He lives to see every blessing applied and enjoyed by His people.

His very appearance in heaven is a plea for His chosen ones. His constant thought of us is pleading with God. All the virtue of His sinless life and vicarious death is constantly presented in His High Priestly intercession on high.

The Lord Jesus declaring that He appears in the presence of God for believers. He constantly intercedes with God.

Therefore, believer, seek to be a prayer warrior, plead for the spiritual well being of sinners, pray that in this part of the Lord's vineyard in London, that sinners will be added unto the Church.

Beseech the Lord for the salvation of your loved ones, friends, community.

Beseech the Lord for one another, plea for you minister. Seek God that in all things that Christ will have the pre-eminence.

When Joseph seeks his brethren he does so pleadingly, never give up pleading for sinners to be saved.

III THIRD, JOSEPH SEEKS HIS BRETHREN PROMPTLY.

V17 *And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren....*

When Joseph heard that his brethren where in Dothan, he sought for them promptly, immediately he left with speed.

There seemed to be no delay, rather there was urgency, he left to find his brethren.

Dothan was the main route that travellers, business men, used when going down to Egypt, that's why later we discover the ***ishmeelites*** in **verse 25**, with their spices, materials going down to Egypt.

Once being told of their location and present position, Joseph promptly went after them to Dothan.

It is interesting to note that the name **Dothan** means *custom, law, or under the law*.

May I draw some spiritual lessons from the meaning of Dothan and the fact his brethren are positioned there.

Believer in past time when were without Christ as our Saviour, we dwelt spiritually at Dothan, as **Gal 3** reveals we were under the law, that is under the curse of the law.

That was our natural position having rebellion, hatred and envy in our hearts, against the person and words of our heavenly Joseph, Jesus Christ.

This is the natural position of all humanity, we have fallen and sinned in Adam.

When Adam and Eve fell from the original state wherein they were created, they came under the curse of the law,

(straightaway, and so did all men and woman as God viewed and treated all humanity in Adam.)

God's law had been broken, and its curse known as the penalty and punishment of the law was activated.

God's law like a lion, roars against the law breaker with all its strength, the soul that sinneth it shall die.

However, in **Genesis 3**, Adam and Eve in their sinful condition, did not seek after God, rather promptly, immediately the Lord sought after Adam and Eve, He came to redeem them, to deliver them from the curse of the law.

He did this by directing their attention by faith toward the promised Saviour, as the substitute of His people, and the

shedding of His blood which is His righteous clothing, which God only provides for the forgiveness of sin and entrance into heaven.

It is Jesus Christ alone who shuts the lions roar, He is the refuge of the soul. For fallen sinners there is a Saviour, for the guilty there is grace.

Therefore, believer take Christ's words of evangelism he gave to the saved man in **Mark 5:20**, tell *thy friends what great things the Lord hath done for thee and hath had compassion on thee*.

IV FOURTH, JOSEPH SEEKS HIS BRETHREN PERSISTENTLY.

V17 *And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren....*

Remember, from Hebron to Shechem was about 60 miles, then from Shechem to Dothan was about 12 miles.

Joseph could have just stopped at Shechem and turned back to his father and say I did as you asked and went to Shechem, however, he would have failed his task, because Joseph was commissioned and entered into an specific oath with his father concerning his brethren, in **verse 13** "*I will send thee unto them*" **verse 14** "*...see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again.*"

Joseph went to Shechem, but his brethren where not there, so to return home without finding his brethren, was to fail in his word, his mission.

Therefore, the only option there is for Joseph is as **verse 17** states "*Joseph went after his brethren....*" Joseph in seeking his brethren does so persistently, steadfastly, he didn't give up, rather he went all the way, He entered into Dothan to find them.

Therefore, we think of Christ our Saviour, who never turned back from His redemptive mission. He was fully committed to pay the penalty of sin and purchase eternal life for all who would believe on Him. Christ did not fail, **Isaiah 53:11** confirms this ***He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.***

Paul as he encourages believers at Corinth in the work of the Lord, he said in **1 Cor 15:58** ***my beloved brethren be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.***

Our labour in the work of God, is not in vain, because we labour in, by with and through the person, prayers, pardon and power of Christ, whose own labour was not in vain.

Since Christ never failed neither will his people, He will gather all His Jewels from the time of Adam, and they shall be forever with Him.

Until then, keep asking, seeking, knocking, planning and sowing for **1 Cor 3:7** states it is "...***God that giveth the increase.***"