

King Frederick II... (an eighteenth-century king of Prussia)... was visiting a prison in Berlin, the inmates tried to prove to him how they had been unjustly imprisoned. All except one.

That one sat quietly in a corner, while all the rest protested their innocence. Seeing him sitting there oblivious to the commotion, the king asked him what he was there for. "*Armed robbery, Your Honor.*" The king asked, "*Were you guilty?*" "Yes, Sir," he answered. "*I entirely deserve my punishment.*" ... The king then gave an order to the guard: "*Release this guilty man. I don't want him corrupting all these innocent people.* [PAUSE]

Not being able to admit their guilt shows how un-repentant the majority of those prisoners were. Repentance is coming to our senses... seeing... suddenly... what we've done... (and maybe what we might ***not*** have done.)

Our passage today (Genesis 45)... speaks of the way the Lord Jesus reveals Himself to those of us today... who (like the brother's of Joseph) have repented. ... (Please recall that at the end of last week's passage – we saw that they repented.) And that takes us right up to where we begin this morning.

Genesis 45:1-3

WHEN JOSEPH FINALLY is convinced of the transformation that has taken place in his brothers... he reveals himself to them. The first statement he makes, "*I am Joseph*" is logical enough... but the next one seems odd: "*Is my father still living?*" ... The brothers have been speaking all along of the actions and statements of their father (Jacob.) ... They have reported on Jacob's involvement up to the very moment of their departure. Why ask such a question?

Well... because: (1) Joseph is hereby ending his masquerade. He no longer speaks about Jacob as “your father.” He now asks about “my father.” Joseph inserts himself directly into their family. ... (2) It is likely that the Hebrew word *hay* (which we just saw translated as “*alive*”... “*is he still alive?*”)... asks not so much whether he is above ground or below ground... heart beating or not. ... It is the more like our asking, “*Is my father well?*” or “*Is everything OK?*”... He wants to know on a personal level how his father is doing. ... Up until now the communications have been given to him as an outsider. He wants more intimate and detailed news of his father. ... We see from this just how great priority to Joseph... this was.

But let me move-on to four significant characteristics about Joseph's revelation of his person to his brothers. (**FIRST** of all) it was a **sudden revelation**. ... One moment he was a harsh... impersonal... and very mysterious ruler... and the next he stood (fully revealed) as the very son of their own father! What a stunning moment it must have been. They had known him only as the savior of the world... (the great and terrible over-lord of Egypt)... to whom the world came and begged for food. But suddenly... in a flash... he was someone much more intimate to them... wanting news about a close family member.

I think this sudden revelation... is significant for how it points to Jesus Christ. (He is all throughout this story.) ... (You see)... It is in just this same way that the Jews will one day have their eyes opened to Jesus. The Book of Revelation shows us how during the closing of the Tribulation period... Israel’s national leaders will finally call upon Jesus as Messiah. Suddenly... He will be unveiled before them (at the time of His coming) and they will see in a flash that the Lord-God of the Old Testament and the

Jesus of the New Testament... are one and the same. ... Their testimony will be: "*Once I was blind but now I can see! ... How could we ever have not recognized the truth concerning this Person?...*"

The events that the world is experiencing with the Corona Virus (Covid 19) is persuading me that we are very close to Jesus' sudden revelation of Himself. The world has been brought to it's knees... and human government is being shown just how puny they really are. Get ready, Folks! Because mankind (all over the globe)... is about to discover that human government can **NEVER** be a substitute for God. The most powerful and efficient government will be seen as completely powerless.

I believe that we are in the birth pangs stage that leads up to the Tribulation of which the Apostle John records in the Book of Revelation. ... At the end of it... the Jews will finally recognize Jesus as the promised Messiah... and recognize their great need for Him.

Just as what that day will be like... Joseph's revelation to his brothers... was a sudden revelation... But here is another significant thing about Joseph's revelation of himself. It was (**SECOND** of all) a **sobering revelation** (verse 2). "*And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.*" The initial moment of revelation was packed with emotion and drenched with tears... and the reports of it were carried up to the throne. And in the same manner... when Israel (in that day) comes face to face with Jesus and realizes (at last) Who He really is... there will be just as strong expressions of emotion. And it will be noticed at the very throne of Heaven.

It was a sudden revelation... It was a sobering revelation... and now here is a (**THIRD** characteristic.) ... it was a simple revelation (verse 3). "*And Joseph said to his brothers, I am Joseph...?*" ... (Think about this announcement for a moment...) "*I am Joseph!*" That was all. How very simple it was. The gospel is so simple in its essence that a little child can grasp its truth.

Many centuries after this simple revelation of Joseph to his brothers... a fiery Jew had been dispatched by the Sanhedrin to travel up north (along the Damascus road from Jerusalem.) He travelled as fast as his camel could go... prodding him to move faster... and faster. ... His armed escort... trailed behind... trying very hard to keep the pace.

(You see...) In Damascus there lived some apostates (to the Jewish faith.) These criminals were daring to proclaim that Jesus of Nazareth (a crucified man)... was actually the Messiah of Israel and the Savior of the world. "*That dangerous cult must be stamped out...*" thought Saul of Tarsus... as he prodded his camel on that day. He was the official agent of the Israeli government and religious council to root heresy out of Damascus.

But suddenly... there came a blinding light... and Saul of Tarsus... fell from his beast... lay prostrate on the ground. ... "*Who are you, Lord?*" he cried. Back came the simple answer: "*I am Jesus.*" That was all. One moment Saul was a sinner... the next he was a saint. One moment a blasphemer... the next a believer... all because of a simple revelation.

"*I am Joseph.*" ... "*I am Jesus.*" ... (LISTEN!) Here is what I am learning: We often make witnessing to others such a difficult business. We arm ourselves with proof texts... with apologetics... with arguments... and

proven methods like “Evangelism Explosion,” “the Bridge Illustration,” and “the Four Spiritual Laws.” “*If you have not had the training that I’ve received... or attended the conferences I have... watched the videos... or read the books that I have... well(!) you are just not witnessing right!* (I am not knocking any of these approaches. They have led many people into a right relationship with God.) But often we become so focused on a particular method... that we forget - with God it is all so simple: “*I am Jesus.*”

When the time is ripe... the Holy Spirit reveals Christ to the sinner's soul in such a simple way... and the work is done. So... as Easter quickly approaches... don’t be afraid to keep it as simple as telling people that you are going to celebrate Who Jesus is... because He rose from the dead.

Our passage today demonstrates a simple revelation. ... Now here is our (**FOURTH.**) Joseph's revelation was a successful revelation. It opened up a sense of dreadful fear... because of their sin.

The word "troubled" in that verse... means "terrified." And it was only right for them to be terrified! ... They had fallen (in all their guilt)... into the hands of the one they had so dreadfully wronged - one now armed with absolute power.

And in this... we find yet another parallel to Christ. ... When we come to Christ... as sinners... we need to see that we have come into the hands of the One we have dreadfully wronged – and He is armed with absolute power. We must realize the enormity of our sin as a Christ-rejector... But perhaps there are those... in the church today... fooling themselves... with an attitude more along the lines of... “*Of course God loves me. I am a*

loveable person who has a lot of potential to work for Him. ... You are so lucky that I chose You, God!"

Salvation is not just a matter of raising one's hand in a meeting for prayer... or walking down an aisle. It is a matter of facing up to one's personal guilt... of rejecting Christ... which is brought to our attention by the convicting work of the Holy Spirit.

Joseph's revelation is very much like Jesus' revelation of His person. Joseph's was: #1. Sudden... #2. Sobering... #3. Simple... and... #4. Successful. ... Now that we have looked at Joseph's revelation... let's now look at Joseph's purpose.

Genesis 45:4-5

His purpose to pardon them all was instantly revealed. Not for a moment would he keep those terrified brothers in doubt about his grace.

"Come near to me, please..."

An Egyptian would never ask this of a Hebrew. They kept their distance from them. (Social distancing is not a new thing!)

"And they came near. And he said, I am your brother, Joseph, who you sold into Egypt."

He could not gloss over their sin of selling him into Egypt. ... But the addition of "*who you sold into Egypt*" was mentioned only so it could be pardoned. ... No hint is given as to the tone of Joseph's voice... but surely his tone matched his words. His words were tender... and inviting.

"...do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life."

It was not only pardon he offered, but pardon couched in terms that made their very wickedness seem like a blessing. ... "You sold... God sent."

Notice that there was not a hint of reprimand... but only encouragement. It was apparent that Joseph had already forgiven his brothers. ... Here he is... actually attempting to ease their guilt.

The story of Joseph and his brothers encourages us to recognize the sovereignty of God in the affairs of life... and to trust His promises no matter how dark the day may be. ... If you and I could see the hand of God in our lives... would we ever become angry with anyone...? ... (STOP AND THINK ABOUT IT!) ... Would we ever seek revenge? ... (You know what?)... I don't think we would. ... That is why it is so important that we work hard at seeing and embracing Who God is... and what He is doing around us. (LISTEN!) All hatred... and any unwillingness to forgive someone is a very loud alarm that our heart is ignorant of God and His word.

As we continue... we see that Joseph had a purpose in provision.

Genesis 45:6-12

Joseph told them something of the future. "*There are yet five years, in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest.*" ... His brothers were not able to read the future... but Joseph could. They could not see the dark days that lay ahead for the world. But Joseph knew. And he knew what was best for them. "*It doesn't make any sense for you to keep making these trips back and forth from Canaan to Egypt... for five more years. So move here...*" and he assured them he would make abundant provision for

them. ... He backed-up his promise to do so... by telling them about the position he held in Egypt. *"(God) has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt."*

The word 'father' may be confusing, but it is simply a title of authority in the Egyptian system of rulership. ... "Father" represents an advisory relationship... used to refer to a variety of high officials and priests who serve in the Pharaoh's court.

God's plan of salvation... as it is so perfectly illustrated in the story of Joseph... not only included allusions to the rejection of Christ... but also Christ's subsequent exaltation to the highest seat of power in the universe. Jesus is now in heaven... seated at God's right hand – fully man and fully God!

Genesis 45:13

Joseph sent them back to the father: forgiven... restored... and with a message from himself. ... That is exactly what grace does for us. It sets us apart with a strong purpose. And like these brothers... we are sent to tell the Father about His Son. ... *Wait a minute. Huh...? We are to tell our Heavenly Father about His Son (Jesus)...? He knows better than we do about Jesus...*

(Uh... Hello...!?) Where can we find a more expressive description of worship than that? Whenever we worship... we express to our Heavenly Father that because of Christ... we are forgiven and we are restored. ... We also declare in the presence of our Heavenly Father the excellencies of Christ. Verse 13 says – *"You must tell my father of all my honor... (put differently... 'of all my glory')... and all that you have seen."* Once again –

what a great picture of our worship! ... Consider all these parallels between our worship... and Joseph's directions to his brothers. They were to return home and say...

"Father we joyfully come to tell you about your beloved Son. ... First we confess that once we hated him... and cast him out of our lives. We turned our backs on Him... and rejected him. We are completely unworthy of His kind attention. But we now know who he really is. ... We have seen him for who he is! ... He has been raised on high and given a name above every name. ... The world is at his feet... he controls all things... people are coming to him from the ends of the earth! ... Father, we did not see beauty in him before... but now we do! ... And what can we say of his grace? ... He has forgiven all our sins... he even said God meant it for good! He has made our very guilt minister both to his glory and to our good. ... And his desire is (now get this!) that where he is... there we might be also. ... He is giving us abundantly above and beyond whatever we could ever ask or think..."

Joseph planned that they should come and live in the best place shepherds could live... in all of Egypt – Goshen! ... The land of Goshen was a fertile area of Egypt where Jacob's family and their descendants could live close to one another without fear. ... They will be protected from too much involvement with the Egyptians... because of their trade as shepherds was an unclean lifestyle to the Egyptian mind.

Genesis 45:14-15

Joseph's purpose included 1.) a pardon... 2.) a provision... and also 3.) a *proximity*. ... He wanted closeness with his brothers... (not just in physical terms... but in terms of communion and love.) This is shown in how:

Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them. After that his brothers talked with him.

That is what he was after all the time — their fellowship. His promise of pardon and provision seemed too good to be true... but only after Joseph opened up the way for close fellowship... they talked with him.

I am sure they talked to him about their father and about their wives and children. They (no doubt) brought to him all sorts of odds and ends of information... (mere trivialities)... but dear and precious to Joseph (whose heart was hungry for all they had to tell.)

Genesis 45:17-23

We see the source of Joseph's provisions. Joseph's resources were derived directly from the throne. ... The resources of the throne were laid at their feet... in the name of Joseph... or for Joseph's sake. ... The source of our provision comes from the throne... in the name of Jesus. It is given to us for Jesus' sake.

The Spirit of God not only points to the source of Joseph's resources... but He points also to *their* sufficiency.

And note what is said about their "stuff" (their "belongings.") "Have no concern for your goods," said Pharaoh. ... Have you noticed how stuff gets in our way of doing God's will! ... We have so many things and we want more things... bigger things... better things. ... "Never mind your stuff," said Pharaoh. It was a wise word to them and to us.

He gave them sufficient provisions for every step of the way until they were brought back (finally) to be with him. ... Joseph was sending his brothers on a mission... and he supplied his brothers with the more than enough provisions necessary for the mission. God does the same. When He calls... He enables.

Genesis 45:24

What does he expect them to quarrel about? "Quarrel" is the translation most commonly chosen... but the Hebrew term (*"regetz"*) does not mean that anywhere else. ... Its normal sense expresses someone getting "*worked up*" or "*agitated*" in a wide variety of different ways... such as anger... excitement... fear... anxiety... joy... or sadness. ... It has little to do with ***arguing***. ... Joseph probably anticipates that his brothers may be fearful that he will have second thoughts and send an army after them—perhaps accusing them of plundering and thievery and slaughter them all.

Genesis 45:25-28

"Joseph is yet alive..." This was the most important news. ... If Joseph was not alive... nothing else mattered. ... So it is with Jesus Christ. Our message of Him must be that He is alive! ... If He is not alive and in heaven... our Gospel is void. *"If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile"* (1 Corinthians 15:17).

"He is governor over all the land of Egypt" Joseph is not only alive... he is exalted and glorified. This same message is true about Jesus Christ.

This message (*"Joseph is alive... and Joseph is a ruler in Egypt..."*) would not have been the easiest thing for the brothers to proclaim. They've got a

lot of 'splain'n to do... because of their evil deeds. Yet... in spite of this problem... they faithfully proclaimed the message anyway; for Scripture says, *"They told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them."*

And Jacob almost had a heart attack! ... The news was too good to believe... but he couldn't deny the presence of the carts that Joseph had sent and the extra animals to carry the burdens and draw the carts. His spirit revived... as he contemplated seeing Joseph and having his united family around him until he died.

Even though Jacob at first did not believe... the brothers kept speaking the *"words of Joseph."* Unbelief must not silence our message. ... Keep preaching whether anyone believes or not.

Romans 10:17 (ESV)

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

The Word is essential for faith, so do not stop proclaiming it's truth... just because you do not get instant results from your listeners.

"When he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived." The wagons gave indisputable evidence. The wagons were distinctly Egyptian. There are enough indisputable evidences in this world to verify the message of the Word of God. Critics simply refuse to look at the wagons of evidence. [PAUSE]

This story has everything one could ask. ... In the end... evil is condemned... the brothers are changed... and great blessings are bestowed.

Many would examine their own life... and wistfully say... *"Such happy endings only occur in stories... or in the Bible. It doesn't happen to me."* But

there is another way to see it... and it is the proper way. The life of Jacob's family was not exactly a happy one. There were trials... and heartaches... and shameful actions. ... One event of triumph at the **end**... does not repay all the years lost... and all the time spent in ambivalent and hateful relationships.

But Jacob and his family were now in submission to God. He would not get back the years with Joseph that he lost. “...*I will go and see him before I die*” (verse 28). It is enough that Joseph is alive.

It doesn't matter how you and I come to evaluate the whole of our lives. We all probably can say that we have some lost years. But can we finish them without bitterness and anger? ... Jacob had to forgive the sons who took Joseph from him ... And Jacob had to recognize the work that God was doing and rejoice in it. ... Our lives may not be filled with all the happiness we desire... we may have had more than our share of heartache and misery... but... if we can look and see that God was at work in us... the we too can forgive even the most heinous offense and... life can at least end well.

There are so many themes that run through the narrative of Joseph. But who can miss the sovereign nature of God... over everything that happens in our life...? Are you dealing with bitterness and anger... over something not right in your life...? Look and see what the hand of God may be doing.