

Series: Stand Fast In the Lord

AND JOSEPH REMEMBERED THE DREAMS WHICH HE DREAMED

(PT. 2)

GENESIS 42-44

Text: Genesis 42:9

Genesis 42:9

⁹ And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye *are* spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

Introduction:

We began looking at this passage last week. To briefly review what we discovered we noted:

The Condition – The Famine

The Caution – Keeping Benjamin Home

The Communication – Joseph Remembered the Dreams

The Charge – Ye Are Spies

The Conviction – “We Are Very Guilty Concerning Our Brother.

We will pick the story up again this morning.

In this chapter we are reminded of how God in His grace and mercy will both confront and conquer sin in the lives of His people.

If you are a believer, you can be certain that God loves you too much to leave you the way you are.

As He did with Joseph's brothers, God will work to make you better; in bringing you to the place He desires for us to be.

Note this morning:

1. GOD WILL TROUBLE YOU ABOUT YOUR SIN

Some thirteen years had passed since Joseph's brothers had sold him as a slave into the hands of the traveling merchants.

In the meantime, God was with Joseph, and had guided him from the pit, to Potiphar's house, to the prison, and finally into palace of Pharaoh.

Yet, Joseph's brothers had no idea that any of this had happened. As far as they knew, Joseph was dead.

In God's providence, they would soon learn that their little brother was very much alive, and in the process, they would be reminded of the horrible sin they had committed against him.

In chapter 42, God began to squeeze the hearts of these brothers, and convict them of what they had done to Joseph.

In the same way, God will trouble us about sin in our lives and bring us to the point of brokenness over our guiltiness. Notice how this plays out in the text.

Consider with me:

A. The Misery He Will Use

Chapter 42 tells us that the famine in Egypt had reached all the way into Canaan. Starving to death, Jacob said to his sons, why are you just sitting around staring at one another? I hear they have food in Egypt. Go down there and buy some for us so we don't starve to death.

However, not willing to lose his favorite son Benjamin, as he had Joseph before, Jacob kept him at home, and sent the remaining ten sons.

When they arrived in Egypt, they ended up kneeling at the feet of Joseph, just as he had dreamed they would so many years before.

Yet they did not know who he was, nor did they know the trouble they were going to face before he revealed his true identity to them.

When they came to Joseph, the text says in verse 7 that:

Genesis 42:7

7 And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food.

Joseph accused them of being spies and lying about their intent. The text says he locked them all up in prison for three days which was minor compared to the years he had spent there.

When Joseph let them out, he kept Simeon as a prisoner and instructed them to go home and get their brother Benjamin, and bring him back as proof of their story.

While Joseph's actions may seem cruel, in reality God was using the misery Joseph caused His brothers to

prick their hearts about the sin they had committed years before.

Verse 21 is a key verse. It says:

Genesis 42:21

²¹ And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.

The fear and trouble that Joseph's big brothers endured over these chapters is a reminder to us that God doesn't mind distressing us if it will help to deliver us.

Quote:

Vance Havner once said that his dad was, "in favor of the posterior application of superior force when necessary." In other words, he didn't mind busting his kid's backside when he needed it.

We also note in Hebrews:

Hebrews 12:6

⁶ For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

When God wants to trouble us about our sin, we see in this story not only the misery He will use, but we see also further:

B. The Mercy He Will Use

When the brothers got back to Canaan and tell Jacob all that the Egyptian ruler had told them, Jacob refused to let them take Benjamin back with them.

Yet, when starvation set in again, chapter 43 tells us that Jacob changed his mind. Judah pledged himself as insurance for Benjamin, and Jacob sent them away with a prayer.

Note:

Genesis 43:14

¹⁴ And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.

Mercy is the theme of chapter 43.

Even as God was chastening these brothers and bringing them to a place of repentance, He showed them great mercy.

For instance, when they arrived in Egypt, they were immediately invited to dine at Joseph's royal residence.

Before they had left the first time, Joseph had secretly given back the money they had brought for their food, and their first thought *now* was that they were in trouble as suspected thieves.

But Joseph's steward assured them they were not, saying to them in verse 23:

Genesis 43:23

²³ And he said, Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them.

That day they sat down to an elaborate feast in Joseph's house, and though they still did not know who he was, the chapter closes by saying that they had a good time with Joseph.

Genesis 43:33-34

³³ And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another. ³⁴ And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

We are reminded on Romans 2:

Romans 2:4

⁴ Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that ***the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?***

In these chapters, Joseph's big brothers were troubled, fearful, and distressed, but it was a merciful and helpful troubling, because it led them to repentance.

That leads us to a second truth.

We see here not only that God will trouble you about your sin, but we find also secondly that:

2. GOD WILL TURN YOU AGAINST YOUR SIN

As you read through these chapters, you may feel like Joseph was just messing with his brothers. Someone might even say that he was torturing them a bit before letting them off the hook.

But that is not the case. Joseph dealt carefully and slowly with his big brothers in order to test them. Joseph wanted to know if anything had changed in the years since they had beaten him and sold him like a piece of livestock.

Joseph wanted to see if there had been any repentance – any turning from their old, wicked ways.

Repentance is a work God must do in all of our lives, both at the moment we are saved, and throughout our walk as believers.

Notice how the repentance of these brothers is displayed in this text. For one thing, we find here:

A. A Testing of Their Repentance

Joseph tested his brothers throughout this text, no doubt trying to see if they were any different than the cruel siblings they had once been.

In chapter 43 Joseph tested to see if they were still the same jealous bunch they had once been.

When Joseph was a boy his brothers had hated him because they envied him. Joseph tested them to see if they had repented of their jealousies.

In chapter 44, Joseph tested to see if they were still the same treacherous bunch they once had been.

You remember that his brothers had been content to leave him to die in a pit, and go on without him.

In chapter 44, before they left the second time, Joseph planted his special, silver cup in the saddle bag of Benjamin. Then he sent his steward out to stop them, and interrogate them.

When it was discovered that Benjamin had the cup, Joseph offered to let the rest of them go. He said in verse 17 of chapter 44:

Genesis 44:17

17 And he said, God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

Joseph wanted to see if his brothers would gladly leave behind one of their own again. He tested their repentance.

How do we know if we have truly repented of our sins?

The answer is in how well we do when we face those same temptations that at one time tripped you up.

Are you passing the test you once failed?

You see in this story of God turning these brothers against their sin not only the testing of their repentance, but also further you see:

B. The Truth of Their Repentance

At each turn, these brothers proved to be different. Just as God had been working in Joseph's life, He had been working on his big brothers as well.

When Benjamin was given more food, the brothers showed no resentment at all. Then when Benjamin was taken captive by Joseph, the brothers would not leave without him.

Note verse 16:

Genesis 44:16

¹⁶ And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found.

These men were changed men! God had convicted them of their sins and they had clearly turned from them.

Repentance is one of those old-fashioned words that seem to have fallen out of favor in the modern user-friendly, no-challenge, no-change church.

And yet it was the Lord who said in Luke 13:3:

Luke 13:3

³ *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

Part of the work God wants to do in all of His people is the work of turning them against their sins; of bringing about a genuine repentance in which the sin that once killed us is now being killed in us!

Where sin once was loved it becomes lothed.

Quote:

Spurgeon once said:

*Oh that I could repent,
With all my idols part,
And to Thy gracious eyes present,
A humble, contrite heart*

It ought to be a frequent prayer upon our lips, “Lord, grant me true repentance!”

From that repentance, we are led to a third truth we find in this story. We learn here not only that God will trouble you about your sin, and that God will turn you against your sin, but notice also that:

3. GOD WILL TRANSFORM YOU AFTER YOUR SIN

These men were changed men. That change is most clearly seen in the person of Judah.

In chapter 43, Judah had stepped up to promise Jacob the safe return of Benjamin. Then in chapter 44, Judah emerges as a critical figure in the reconciliation with Joseph.

I believe the transformation we find in Judah is a reminder of the kind of transformation God wants to perform in our lives as His children.

Notice:

A. The Progress Judah Revealed

The last time the Scripture focused on Judah, it was ugly. Judah's sons were wicked, and Judah himself was awful in the episode with his daughter-in-law, Tamar.

But here in Genesis 44, Judah has clearly made some progress. He had promised his father that he would take care of Benjamin, and when Benjamin was caught with the cup, Judah stepped up in a major way.

In chapter 44, we find an emotional and powerful speech from Judah to Joseph.

In the speech Judah explains the situation in his family. He tells Joseph that his elderly father has already lost one son (an ironic detail with Joseph standing there), and that to lose Benjamin would certainly kill him.

As you read through Judah's plea to Joseph, you find that where there had once been envy and strife in this family, now there is love and compassion.

They didn't want to leave Benjamin, and they didn't want to further hurt their father Jacob. There is progress in the kindness of these sons.

I wonder, as you look back over your Christian life, can you see any progress? Are you different now than you were five or ten years ago?

Has God broken some of the old attitudes in you and softened your heart? Are you less selfish and more selfless?

Are you making any progress in your pilgrimage?

The Christian life is not like a stationary bike, where you peddle and peddle, sweat and struggle but never really get anywhere.

God intends to progress you – to move you forward, growing in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus!

In the transformation that followed the sin of these brothers, we see not only the progress Judah revealed, but notice with me further:

B. The Person Judah Reflected

Look back at chapter 44, and notice with me verse 33.

Genesis 44:33

³³ Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.

After explaining to Joseph the heartache it would bring to Jacob if Benjamin was not returned, Judah offered this solution.

Judah said, “I will take Benjamin’s place. I will be your slave and he can go free!”

This willing substitution and sacrifice sounds a lot like the Lord, who took our place on the cross so that we could be free.

Part of the transformation that God wrought in Judah’s life was to make Him like the Lord. So too, part of the work God wants to do in you and me as His children is to make us more like Christ!

God is not content to leave you as you are! He wants to make you like He is! He is working even now, rooting out the sin in your life in order to conform you to the image of His Son!

Illustration:

I read about a woman who desperately wanted to lose weight. One day her doctor stood her in front of a mirror, and on the mirror he traced an outline of her body, only much thinner than she was.

Motivated by that image, the woman exercised and ate right, each week measuring herself by that outline on the mirror. Finally, the day came when she fit into that image that the doctor had drawn for her.

Christ is the image God has in mind for us, and through our experience, He is molding and shaping us, cutting away the parts that are unhealthy and unholy. And the day is coming as the song writer penned:

*When before the throne,
We will stand in Him complete.*

Close:

In these closing chapters of Genesis, God worked to move His people from Canaan to Egypt, from famine to plenty, from death to salvation at the hands of Joseph, their deliverer.

That is in many ways the summary of the Christian life. God wants to move us away from our sins and our old life, and closer to Himself, the One who alone can save us!

Understanding that, as God troubles us about our sins, let us turn from them, and let us seek the transformation that God and His grace desire to produce in us.