

Series: Stand Fast In the Lord

DECIDING TO FORGIVE

GENESIS 50:15-21

Text:

Introduction:

Everyone faces crisis times in their lives. Often these are generated by Satan himself.

Note:

There is no guarantee that every Christian will finish their life in a strong way spiritually.

I believe most people would want to say what the apostle Paul said at the end of his life.

2 Timothy 4:6-7

⁶For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

Joseph was a man who finished by forgiving, the way that the Lord finished his race.

Note:

- Joseph was rejected by his brothers – so was the Lord
- Joseph was loved by his father – so was the Lord
- Joseph was victorious over temptation – so was the Lord
- Joseph was taken into custody because of a false witness – so was the Lord
- Joseph suffered from doing what was right – so did the Lord

Let's notice some of the great decisions in Joseph's life...

1. THE DECISION TO HAVE FAITH IN GOD (GEN. 35:1-5)

Genesis 35:1-5

¹ And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. ² Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: ³ And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. ⁴ And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. ⁵ And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.

Note: Faith is trusting in God's plan.

A. Faith to Receive God's Revelation (Genesis 37:5)

Genesis 37:5

⁵ And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

It takes faith to believe for one's entire life the commandments of the Word of God

Not only did Joseph have faith to Receive God's Revelation but also:

B. Faith to Recite God's Revelation (Genesis 37:6-8)

Genesis 37:6-8

⁶And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: ⁷For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. ⁸And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

Note only did Joseph decide to Have Faith In God but also he made:

2. THE DECISION TO BE FAITHFUL TO GOD

A. When He Was Betrayed By His Brothers

- They envied their brother.

Genesis 37:11

¹¹ And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.

- They persecuted their brother

Genesis 37:20

²⁰ Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

B. When He Was Sold By His Brothers (Genesis 37:27-28)

Genesis 37:27-28

²⁷ Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content. ²⁸ Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

They told Jacob he was dead

Ever feel like your family or friends don't appreciate you?

Remember Joseph!

Understand:

2 Timothy 3:12

¹² Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Remember:

Integrity is keeping my commitment(s) even if the circumstances when I made the commitment(s) have changed.

Joseph remained faithful to God and he was blessed!

Genesis 39:2

² And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

Note only did Joseph decide to Have Faith In God and to Remain Faithful To God but also he made:

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3. THE DECISION TO FORGIVE HIS BROTHERS

Genesis 45:1-5

¹ Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. ² And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. ³ And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. ⁴ And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. ⁵ Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

In his forgiveness we see:

- He shows the grace of God – vs. 5

Genesis 45:5

⁵ Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

We also see:

- He shows the purpose of God – vs. 7

Genesis 45:7

⁷ And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

But more importantly we see:

- He shows the forgiveness of God – Gen 50:15-18

Genesis 50:15-18

¹⁵ And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. ¹⁶ And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, ¹⁷ So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph

wept when they spake unto him. ¹⁸ And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants.

Close:

Ephesians 4:32

³² And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Even as Joseph was rejected of his own, the Lord Jesus Christ came nearly 2000 years later, was rejected of His own, was tempted and tried, was mocked and abused, yet He still willingly died, and He willingly offers salvation for whosoever.

Have you receive His forgiveness?

Illustration:

An attorney, after meditating on several Scriptures, decided to cancel the debts of all his clients that had owed him money for more than 6 months.

He drafted a letter explaining his decision and its biblical basis and sent 17 debt canceling letters via certified mail.

One by one, the letters began to return, unsigned and undelivered.

Perhaps a couple people had moved away though not likely.

Sixteen of the seventeen letters came back to him because the clients refused to sign for and open the envelopes fearing that this attorney was suing them for their debts.

How profound and similar to many today!

We owe a debt for our sin and God is willing to cancel it but too many people will not even open the letter that explains that.

Joseph stood fast by being

- Having Faith In God
- Remaining Faithful to God
- Deciding to Forgive His Brothers

Are we doing these things so that we might be able to Stand Fast?

Joseph stood fast despite hatred and opposition.