

SHARING BLESSINGS Sunday School- January 15, 2012

Unifying Topic: GOD PRESERVES A REMNANT

Lesson Text

I. Joseph Made Himself Known (Genesis 45:3)

II. Joseph Acknowledged God's Plan (Genesis 45:4-15)

The Main Thought: So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. (Genesis 45:8, KJV).

Unifying Principle: When people are mutually faithful to each other, they support and protect each other. What can faithful people expect from other faithful people? Because Jacob and Joseph were both faithful to God, God remained faithful to God's promise to Abraham by putting Joseph in a position to save the entire family from death by starvation.

Lesson Aim: To help the students understand that Joseph was being faithful to God and his family when he was willing to reconcile with his brothers.

Life aim: To make commitments of faithfulness to God, our families, and our communities.

- 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.
- 6 For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.
- 7 And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.
- 8 So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.
- 9 Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not:
- 10 And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast:
- 11 And there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.
- 12 And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you.
- 13 And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.
- 14 And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.
- 15 Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

HISTORY:

Joseph had tested and tested his brothers, given them experience after experience in order to teach them to stand together as a family unit, as the chosen family of God. Now it was clear: his plan had worked. God had greatly blessed his efforts. From the bottom of their hearts, the brothers had shown that they regretted the past and were repentant. They had refused to hurt their father again (Gen.44:30-31), and they had refused to abandon Benjamin, even at the peril of their own lives (Gen.44:30-34). The ultimate experience of sacrificing one's self for the sake of one family member had been learned. Now the time for truth had come: Joseph could now reveal himself to his brothers, and reveal himself he did, in one of the most magnificent demonstrations of forgiveness and reconciliation ever seen among men.

After Joseph hearing that they couldn't leave Benjamin; that they were one family and if need be they would sacrifice themselves for him (they would all suffer the same fate as Benjamin); Judah had even stated that he himself was willing to bear Benjamin's punishment (to substitute himself for his brother), Joseph now comes clean.

1. Upon hearing this Joseph could not control his emotions any longer. He cried out for all the servants to clear out of the room, to leave his presence at once. Joseph began to make himself known to his brothers (45:1).
2. Joseph stood by himself, face to face with his brothers, those who had hurt him so deeply and done so much wrong against him. Suddenly he broke into tears, sobbing painfully and loudly, so loudly that the Egyptians who had just left heard him in the adjoining room. They of course carried the report of what then happened over to Pharaoh's house. (45:2).

LESSON:

Genesis 45:3 Joseph Made Himself Known

45:3 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. Now the climactic moment came; Joseph identified himself again, "*I am Joseph.*" What will Israel's reaction be when Christ says to them at the Second Coming, "*I am Jesus.*"

He goes on to ask the question, if his father is living? This was no doubt a deliberate attempt by Joseph to ease the shock for his bothers. However, the words struck like a lightning bolt, throwing the brothers into a state of shock, terror, and utter confusion. They were bewildered and terrified, so much that they were speechless. They had not seen or knew anything about him for about twenty or twenty-two years, not since they had treated him so harshly; not since they had threatened to kill him, and had ended up selling him into slavery. Now he was standing face to face with them as the supreme ruler of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself. He had the power of life and death over them, and in their dealings with him as the governor of Egypt, they had received only harsh treatment. No wonder they backed up from his presence. We must face those who hurt us, even those who do terrible wrong against us. God wants us living in peace with everyone. Therefore, we must always seek reconciliation. Reconciliation may not always be possible, but as much as is possible, we must try, and the first step is to face those who have hurt us and done wrong against us.

Genesis 45:4-15 Joseph Acknowledged God's Plan

45:4 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. Joseph called his brothers closer to him for what he needed to say had to be said quietly among them. He told them again that he was Joseph and added, their brother. He confessed their guilt; called them out—he was the one that was sold into Egypt by them. He stressed two things:

1. Their relationship.
2. Their guilt.

45:5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. As soon as he mentioned the above facts, he immediately moved to the subject of forgiveness. Joseph was declaring that he had forgiven his brothers: they were not to fear any retaliation from him; neither were they to be angry at themselves nor among themselves. The whole issue was to be put in the past, forgotten. He had forgiven them, forgiven completely and fully. But that was not all: Joseph had also learned a great lesson through all the terrible circumstances. God's hand had been at work throughout all the wrong the brothers had done to him. God had actually taken the terrible circumstances and worked them out for good—placed Joseph in Egypt ahead to preserve lives, save Egypt, and prepare the way for the beginning of the nation of Israel. How awesome! God is sovereign and His plans are not dictated by human actions.

45:6 For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. Note the famine had been in the land for two years, yet there is still likely to be five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest (remember the dream? 7yrs. of plenty and 7yrs. of famine [41:29-30]). This means that Joseph would have been 39 years old and away from his brothers for 22yrs (37:2).

45:7 And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. It was all a part of God's plan for keeping that promise (37:5-10) that Joseph now finds himself in. "*Posterity*", meant "*all future generations; all descendants.*" The word "*posterity*" (Strong's 07611 "shehayreeth") also means a residue, remnant. God had elected Joseph for slavery and suffering so that the children of Israel would be saved and delivered as a remnant unto God. Joseph himself would be the one whom others could gather when the disaster came. He would be able to save them so they could bear the promised seed, the great nation of people promised by God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. What happened to Joseph in Egypt saved his father and bothers from destruction, along with their families and flocks. It set the stage for the Exodus from Egypt. Salvation history was in the making. Part of God's purpose was to use Joseph to preserve the house of Israel and thereby save their lives by a great deliverance. The word "*deliverance*" means deliverance, escape; escaped remnant, fugitive, survivor, band of survivors.

45:8 So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. The brothers learn that it was not them that placed him in this circumstance but it was God that had chosen him to be exalted in Egypt. It was God who had taken all the terrible circumstances and proven "*His*" sovereignty. God worked all things out for good and exalted Joseph. Three titles Joseph used to spell out his relationship to Egypt and Pharaoh:

- Joseph was "*father*" to Pharaoh, meaning advisor and counselor.
- Joseph was "*lord*" of Pharaoh's household meaning comptroller over Pharaoh's own personal estate.
- Joseph was "*ruler*" over all Egypt, meaning whatever he said goes!

"*Father to Pharaoh*" was a title which belonged to viziers (a high-ranking government officer) which in Joseph's case was lord of all Pharaoh's house and ruler throughout all the land of Egypt! And it was all done by the hand of God. Why? - To save the people, especially the sons of Israel; wherever Joseph was everything prospered.

45:9 Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not: Now Joseph is planning on taking care of his entire family. ¹No longer is Jacob (Joseph's father) making the major decisions for his family. Instead, that responsibility has shifted to Joseph. This is not Joseph's plan, but God's. Joseph is not making recommendations; he is giving orders. He tells his brothers to hurry back; this move must be made immediately if the family is to continue to flourish; and say to him, *'This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt.'*

45:10 And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast: Joseph wanted to settle his father in the area of Goshen so they could be near him. Goshen was one of the most fertile regions of Egypt lying in the northeast. Joseph wanted to provide for the family during the famine, both them and their livestock, their children's children, and all that they had. When the brothers heard this, they were bound to be somewhat eased, for Joseph was showing concern for them as well as for their father.

45:11 And there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty. Joseph wanted to provide for the family during the time of famine which was to last another five years. This was critical for the brothers to know and to pass on to their father. There was no way they and their livestock could survive the five barren years in Canaan.

45:12 And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. Joseph has been telling his brothers what he wants them to say to their father Jacob. Now Joseph shifts back to addressing the brothers themselves. Do they really need any more evidence to convince them that it really is Joseph who is in their presence? Even Benjamin sees that there is no doubt about his identity: the brothers could see and hear him, and he was speaking without an interpreter, speaking in their native language to them.

45:13 And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither. They were to tell the father about all of his honor accorded to him in Egypt and about everything they had seen. Joseph was gifted, Joseph was trustworthy, and Joseph was honorable. But the things that Joseph accomplished could not have been done without the leading and the blessing of God. *"And bring my father down here quickly."*

45:14 And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Joseph showed great affection for his brothers and seeing his youngest brother brought great relief and peace and they both wept together upon each one's neck. Their love and the tokens of it were reciprocal.

45:15 Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him. Joseph then walked over and embraced each brother one by one and kissed and wept over each one. The barriers were broken down. The brothers finally began to talk and share with Joseph.

SUMMARY:

²A supernatural forgiveness (Gen. 45:3-5)

Joseph stated twice to his brothers that he was Joseph. His brothers were left without comment, for they were troubled when Joseph revealed himself to them. Joseph was concerned about his father and also about the feelings of his brothers. He did not want them to be grieved because they had sold him into slavery. Joseph recognized that God was allowing His will to be done. It was God's will to preserve what would become the Jewish nation. God's Spirit was in control of Joseph and his situation. Joseph could very well have been bitter over what his brothers had done to

¹ <http://www.swordofthespirtchurch.org/lessons/Lesson%2012%20November%2018%202007.htm>

² Heart of the Lesson from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

him. Instead, Joseph had forgiveness in his heart. It is better to forgive than to hold on to bitterness. Forgiveness frees both the victim and the offender.

God's providence through His servant (Gen. 45:6-8)

How do you handle being mistreated? We have a good example of how to handle being mistreated in this lesson. Joseph did not allow his emotions to stop him from recognizing the plan of God. God had sent Joseph to Egypt. Joseph surrendered to God's will. The famine would continue for another five years. God allowed Joseph to understand that He was bringing deliverance to posterity (*all future generations*). God had Joseph in a position to store food for His people so that they could survive the famine. We have all experienced difficult situations from time to time. Not all negative situations are intended to overthrow us. It would be good to remember the Scripture that says, "*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose*" (Rom. 8:28).

God's provision for His people (Gen. 45:9-12)

God put Joseph in a position to help his people. Joseph was a father figure to Pharaoh and lord of his house (v 8). God's people were truly preserved! Jacob's entire family was invited to move to Egypt. They would live in Goshen. Jacob and the rest of his family would be given the good of the land of Egypt and would eat the fat of the land. They would be very well nourished. Joseph was eager for his family to live near him. Jacob, whose name had been changed to "*Israel*," accepted the invitation.

God's purpose to bless (Gen. 45:13-15)

Joseph wanted his father to hear how much God had blessed him. Through the reconciliation of the brothers, freedom had come to their lives where they could now talk with each other. They wept with relief during their embrace; it was a good family reunion; a sweet communion for all.

Whatever the brothers thought to do against Joseph, God had brought good out of it. Joseph was in a position of power to do good instead of harm for his entire family and that's just what he did. He shared all the blessings that were bestowed upon him to his family and the nation of Israel. It was in his heart to take care of his father and all the family. Of all the things he had gone through, he never held a grudge because he knew it displeased God! God had given him a tender heart to share. When you have a sharing heart, there is a need you will supply to others. The brothers might have looked at the outside of Joseph when he was growing up, but God looked at the heart and knew that no matter what he went through, he would not change. He would be the one to preserve a remnant for God's purpose because he would never change.

APPLICATION:

Could you faithfully have the attitude of forgiveness to be used of God? Would you determine to follow God no matter what? There is a whole family to save and it could be yours.