

Intro- A few weeks ago, we left off in Joseph's story near the end of Genesis 45.

* At this point, Joseph's brothers have been through quite the ordeal, as Joseph has put them through a series of trials to bring them to humble repentance before God.

* They had been hateful, vicious, dishonest men, and demonstrated it in various ways, especially in what they did to Joseph, some 23 years earlier, and then lied to their father about it.

* In Ch 45, after they admitted their guilt and repented of their sin before Joseph, He revealed himself to them, and they were gloriously reconciled to their long-lost brother.

* At that point, Joseph prepared them to go home and bring the family back to Egypt, and he graciously blessed them with an abundance of provisions for the move.

* Most of the chapter describes what they received and how they were given, and they give us a great picture of what the Lord Jesus does for lost sinners at salvation. **Notice--** (Phillips)

1st- The resources Joseph gave his brothers came directly from the throne.

In Mt. 11:27 Jesus said- "All things have been committed to me by my Father", and in salvation, the things the Son possesses are given to us as well.

2nd- When Joseph went before the throne, he didn't tell the king about any of his brother's guilt, because he completely forgave them, and bore what they deserved on himself.

3rd- Once forgiven, Joseph's brothers were given a new appearance which was the new clean beautiful clothes they received from the savior of the empire. - At salvation, Christ cleanses us, which shows outwardly in the changed life we live.

4th- With their sin forgiven, Joseph extended full fellowship and blessings to his brothers, when they actually deserved to be punished, banished and left without anything.

5th- His brothers came to Egypt as needy despised people, and when they turned from their sin, they were welcomed with open arms for the rest of their existence.

6th- The place they left in the world was destitute from famine, with nothing to offer, and they were told to leave it all behind, because they were given the best things of the kingdom for their journey, and brought to live in the best place in the kingdom.

* These details are a beautiful picture of what God through the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, did for us as undeserving lost sinners, when God saves us.

* Now, starting with Gen 45:25 -- in this next scene of the story---

--- the brothers are leaving Egypt again, and coming home to reveal to their father and family, all that happened there, and to bring the family back to Egypt.

* As the brothers head for home to inform Jacob about Joseph, there is a distinct contrast between this part of the story, and what happened with Joseph 23 years earlier.

* Years ago, Joseph had to bring a bad report about his brothers to their father, which is one of the reasons they got rid of him,

---- and then they lied, and brought a **bad report** about Joseph to Jacob. (bloody coat)

* Now, completely opposite, they get to go home from Egypt, and bring a **good report** about Joseph to their old discouraged father.

@ **Normally** these men would have come home tired, dirty, a little discouraged, back a second time from hauling food 200 miles, with no end in sight to the dry conditions of the famine.

* But this scene must have been very different, and Jacob is about to get the shock of his life.

* Imagine, that as soon as they arrived, they headed for the main home where Jacob lived. *
They probably came in, eager, with big smiles, dressed in their fancy designer clothes.

* Benjamin probably reached his father first for hugs, and the others followed.

* This entrance would have taken Jacob completely by surprise.

* His first thoughts may have been- What in the world is going on, and why did you spend good hard-earned money on a bunch of new clothes in the middle of a famine, are you crazy?

This passage unfolds in 3 main movements.

I. THE BROTHER'S GAVE JACOB THE GOOD NEWS. (25-26a- read)

* We might think Reuben being the oldest, broke the news; But keep in mind, this news at some point, would include their confession of selling Joseph into Egypt.

* Because of that, Reuben may have declined to reveal this because 23 years ago, he intended to deliver Joseph out of the pit, back home to Jacob. It was the others who got rid of him.

* And since Judah suggested they sell Joseph, and he convinced Jacob to let Benjamin go back to Egypt with them, and he spoke for the group when they confessed their guilt to Joseph, its likely Judah broke the news to Jacob, as the others chimed in.

* Remember- before they left Egypt, Joseph told them 3 main things they were to tell Jacob (9-11)

1. The first thing they blurted out was this shocking news that- "Joseph was still alive".

- Earlier, Joseph shocked them by blurting out- I AM JOSEPH. These guys should have been more careful saying this to their very old father, but like Joseph, they couldn't wait.

2. The second part was equally unbelievable - Joseph is- "ruler of all Egypt".

3. The third part of their message was astounding as well- that Joseph has sent word to Jacob to move the whole family, to come live in the best part of Egypt. **NEXT----**

II. In vs 26b-- "JACOB WAS STUNNED, HE DID NOT BELIEVE THEM."

* Jacob's unbelief would be normal. It took a while for him to trust them, and realize he should believe this good news. 4 reasons he struggled to believe them.

1. Jacob had a hard life.

- His father preferred his twin brother Esau over him. Then when Jacob cheated Esau out of his birth right, he had to flee for his life, and he was met by God on that trip.

- Soon, Uncle Laban cheated him in his first marriage, then cheated him in his wages for 20 years, and after God prospered him anyway, the family had to leave secretly.

- Then uncle Laban pursued Jacob to take his family away. When his daughters took their husband's side against their mercenary father, they parted ways, but not favorably.

- Then immediately, he faced being destroyed by Esau, and in total desperation, he had a wrestling match with God, where the Lord permanently crippled his hip.

- Soon after, his sons killed the Shechemite men which put the whole family in danger of the Canaanites, then he lost his beloved wife Rachel in the birth of Benjamin. 3

- He also had lived with 4 wives, who competed with each other for Jacob's attention.

- Then, not many years later, he lost his precious son Joseph, who was rising to leadership in the family, because Jacob was growing too old to oversee the family business.

* Although much of this was due to Jacob's failures, he had a hard life with constant struggle. *
Later when he met Pharaoh, Jacob told him - "my years have been few and difficult".

* His attitude about his life was - it had gone by in a flash, and seemed to him to be full of nothing but heartache. (his troubles hardened him from believing good news)

2. He knew his sons had been far less than honest, in their past.

- They lied and tricked the Shechemite men into a situation where they could destroy them.

- And these guys were the ones who brought Joseph's bloody coat back to Jacob, so any news about Joseph coming from them, would hit Jacob as negative.

3. Joseph's "death" was the most terrible thing he suffered, next to losing Rachel.

- Jacob fully accepted that Joseph was dead. There's no hint he held out hope of him coming home. He never sent anyone out to see if they could find him, wounded somewhere.

- And he mourned for a long time and refused to be comforted, and now he's lived more than 2 decades believing Joseph was gone, never to return.

4. While trying to wrap his mind around Joseph being alive, he has to digest the idea that Joseph rules Egypt and wants to move the whole family there.

Sum- Jacob was so beaten down by all the negative things in his life, he just normally failed to trust God and express faith in the Lord's control over his circumstances.

* His life seemed to be mostly controlled by trouble, and when blessing overcame the trouble, he had a hard time believing he could actually experience something good.

* Back when he was sure Esau would destroy his family, God made solid promises to him in Gen 28:12-15. But Jacob couldn't look above the circumstances to the promises.

* He was a pessimist, but at times when trouble dominates our life, so are we. *
This is why Paul (terribly treated) said from prison- "in everything give thanks". (Phil 4:6-7)

@ But finally, after thinking and considering several things-----

III. JACOB WAS CONVINCED. (27-28- read) Several things finally brought Jacob to believe.

1. The brothers explained "EVERYTHING Joseph had said to them." (27a)

- Once they were reconciled to Joseph, they had a long conversation with him, and Joseph probably detailed his last 23 years, so they told that detailed story to Jacob.
 - Jacob is thinking- this is either true, or it's the biggest lie by far, they have ever told. -
- And what possible reason could they have for coming up with this wild detailed story?
- You can imagine as one of them told the story, the others chimed in through the conversation, to give more details of what Joseph said. **All this became convincing.**

2. The brothers honestly confessed their sin toward Joseph.

- Notice again, v27 says- "They told him **everything** Joseph said".
- And remember in Ge 45:5 Joseph said- "And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves **for selling me here**". ("Everything" means - whole, entire, all)
- They told that to Jacob, and then they would have explained how they plotted to kill Joseph, but decided to sell him as a slave into Egypt, and they gave Jacob the many details Joseph gave them earlier, in their long conversation.
- Immediately, Jacob would remember their deep resentment toward Joseph, and their criticism and hatred of him, about the dreams Joseph had of them bowing down to him.
- So knowing his older sons, Jacob began to realize this story makes perfect sense.
- And Jacob knew people don't naturally confess their sin, they cover it up or make excuses, and these sons had hidden this story from their own father, for 23 years.
- So when they openly confessed their sin, Jacob knew they were changed men, and this made him realize they were telling the truth. (thinking- "why didn't I suspect them before?")

Sum- Earlier, while coming home, the brothers probably feared having to tell Jacob, but the good news was so overwhelming, they were glad to confess the whole situation.

3. The brothers told Jacob that Joseph said - God was in control of all this.

- Joseph was a godly honest young man when he lived in his father's home, and to Jacob, this sounded just like Joseph, to bring God into the situation.

4. Joseph told them to tell his father of his high position.

- This would have struck another nerve in Jacob's mind, because years ago, Jacob heard and even scolded Joseph for his dreams that the whole family would bow down to him.
- But Jacob kept those things in his mind, and Jacob had dreams that God fulfilled, so the news that Joseph ruled Egypt, confirmed to Jacob that God had fulfilled Joseph's dreams.
- In all this, Jacob began to realize that God was leading him through Joseph.

5. They told Jacob how deeply Joseph expressed his love for his father.

- Jacob cherished his special relationship with Joseph, and he knew how much Joseph truly loved and cared for him, so those words would ring true.

6. Jacob saw all the Egyptian stuff. (27b- "when he saw the carts")

- The sons came with carts, and multiple animals and provisions for their journey back. -
And they were wearing fancy clothes they would never have bought. (Where to wear them?)

Finally- When Jacob saw their excitement, heard their detailed story and their confession, and he heard of Joseph's love for his father, and saw the stuff, Jacob believed and revived.

* A final proof was- Benjamin with 5 sets of clothes, 300 shekels of silver, confirming all this. *
At this point we might think Jacob would blow up in anger at the older sons. (selling Joseph)

* But the end result was so great, Jacob let it all go and focused on going to Joseph. (28)

Notice. (Swdl) When Jacob was doubting- the Holy Spirit called him Jacob- (meaning deceiver).
Deceivers are usually suspicious that others will deceive them.

- But when he was "satisfied" v28 calls him "**Israel**". The word for Israel refers to a contender, a soldier of God, someone who perseveres. The Lord gave him that name when they wrestled, to instill faith in Jacob to believe God's promises to him.

Q- When Jacob was in charge, we get a negative, whining, self-pitying, complainer.
When God overcame, we get "**Israel**"- a soldier of God that determined to trust God, and go to Egypt as God was leading him, through his son Joseph. (Swind)

Lesson- Jacob was mostly negative, always needing some move of God before he trusted God.

* But now, not only is he "satisfied" that this is the truth, but he's satisfied that all along, God has been working, even though he didn't believe it.

* It's so important for us to work at trusting God, and keep life's circumstances from stealing our faith in God's sovereign control over our life.