

# (Genesis) - Part 29

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen's sermon explores the themes of faithfulness, integrity, and God's sovereignty through the story of Joseph and his brothers.*

**Duration:** 58:26

**Scripture:** Genesis 45:4-20, Psalm 105:17-18

**Topics:** "Joseph"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the story of Joseph and his brothers from the book of Genesis. He highlights the events where Joseph tests his brothers by placing his silver cup in Benjamin's sack. The brothers are accused of stealing the cup, but they deny it. Eventually, the cup is found in Benjamin's sack, causing distress among the brothers. The speaker emphasizes the importance of honesty and teaches a lesson on humility and serving others, using Joseph's actions as an example.

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## Transcript

We read in our last study of how Joseph's brothers had come to Egypt to buy grain from him and how Simeon had been held back as a surety or a guarantee to ensure that they would go and bring Benjamin back, and Joseph wanted to see, and they did not know it was Joseph. Chapter 43, verse 1, the famine was severe in the land, and though Jacob did not want to send his son, because he didn't want to send Benjamin, when they had finished eating the grain which they brought from Egypt, their father said to them, go back, buy us a little food. We were considering how this famine that was there in that part of the world is a picture of the famine that the Word of God says in Amos chapter 8, verse 11 and 12, will be there all over the world in the last days, a famine for the prophetic words of the Lord.

And when there is such a famine, those who have not been careful in the years of abundance have to go at that time of need to those who have been faithful in the years of abundance in order to get the prophetic word of the Lord. The challenge that comes to us is to be faithful in the times of abundance. It is easy to be faithful in the time of adversity and poverty and struggle, but it is if we can be faithful in the times of abundance and ease and comfort, which is much, much more difficult.

The children of Israel never worshipped idols, as far as we know, in the wilderness, because there were all types of dangers in the wilderness. But soon after they got into Canaan, where everything was prosperous and in abundance, they went to the worship of idols. We must remember, brothers and sisters, that we are in greater danger in times of abundance than in times of difficulty and trial.

And so, if Joseph was faithful in the times of abundance to store up for the time of famine, and therefore those who were not faithful in that time of abundance have finally to come to him to get, and of course he is glad to give. However, Judah told his father that we cannot go back unless we take Benjamin with us, and explains the whole history there, how it was not that they volunteered that information, but that the man there, they didn't know it was Joseph, the ruler in Egypt, had extracted this information from them. So finally, their father Israel says to them in verse 11, If it must be so, then do this.

Take some of the best products of the land in your bag, and carry down to the man as a present a little balm and a little honey, aromatic gum and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds, and take double the money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks. Perhaps it was a mistake. There are two things I want you to notice here.

One is Jacob's honesty, that that which was put into your bag, make sure that you return it. It's a good example for fathers to teach their children honesty in matters of money and not having in their possession anything that belongs to another when they come back from school with somebody else's pencil or rubber, to teach them to give it back. It's a small thing, but it's in these small things that we are to teach our children absolute honesty.

We must never have a single pie with us that does not lawfully, righteously belong to us. If somebody has by mistake given us something which is in our favor, he may not have known about it, we have to give it back. That is righteousness.

And we have to be very strict on that, because we're living in days when people who call themselves believers are not strict in these matters, and that's why God is not able to commit to them spiritual riches. Very, very important. And the second thing, a little phrase here which I would suggest that each of us keep in our minds.

You see, Jacob and his sons felt that this man, this ruler in Egypt was offended with them for some reason. And when someone is offended with you, what should be your attitude? Jacob, if you have to go out of necessity to such a person, Jacob says in the last part of verse eleven, take a little honey with you, carry a little honey with you. I thought of that little phrase.

It's really good if all of our lives we can carry a little honey with us. There's so many bitter things that we carry around in our hearts and in our mouths. It's good to always carry a little honey when we go to meet with people.

Then Jacob says, take your brother and return to the man, and may God Almighty grant you compassion in the sight of the man. Jacob believed that God was sovereign and powerful to give them favor in the eyes of such a senior official. And that's another aspect of God's sovereignty that we need to have faith in these days, that God Almighty, he uses that title of Almighty God, which means the one who is totally sovereign, has power over people to give us favor in their eyes.

Have you noticed this phrase that comes in the Bible now and then? God granted him favor in the eyes of that king or in the eyes of that official. These things are written for our instruction, that if we trust in God, he can give us favor in the eyes of those with whom we have to deal. And so they come to Egypt and Joseph arranges for a meal for them, verse 16, and he sees Benjamin and the others.

And they thought they were afraid, and the men were afraid, verse 18, because they were brought to Joseph's house. And they came to Joseph's steward and explained to them that this money was in their bag, and they had brought it back. And Joseph's steward says, Don't be afraid, verse 23, I have your money.

And he brought Simeon out to them. And then when Joseph came home, verse 26, they brought into the house the present which is in their hand and bowed to the ground. And he asked them about their father.

He said, Your servant, your father is well. And he lifted his eyes, and he saw his brother Benjamin, verse 29. He said, Is this your youngest brother? May God be gracious to you, my son.

And Joseph hurried out, for he was deeply stirred over his brother. And he sought a place to weep, and he entered his chamber and wept there. That's something we see about Joseph.

We've seen Joseph is the type of man whom God uses in a time of famine. We saw that in Psalm 105, God sent a man. Always, God's answer to any problem is a man or a woman.

And when God sends a man or God sends a woman to a particular, to fulfill a particular purpose, it's really tremendous. And the type of man whom God sends is what we can study in the life of Joseph. And we see from this verse that he was a very tender-hearted man.

He was the type of person who would weep, not publicly. There are many preachers who can weep in public. I'm not talking about that.

As far as we know, Jesus never wept when he preached. Never. Not even once.

But we know that he wept in private. And Joseph wept in private. We can say the man whom God sends is a man who knows how to weep, not in public, for there can be honor if we weep in public, but in private.

He went to another place and hid himself and he wept. He was tender-hearted towards people who had been so evil to him, who had been so evil and had tried to get rid of him, just stopped short of killing him. But his attitude to them was so different.

He was tender-hearted. That is the type of person whom God sends. And that's a quality that does not dwell in our flesh.

We're not like that naturally. But the grace of God can make us like that, tender-hearted towards people who've done wholly evil to us, to be good and tender-hearted. It's not just being good on the outside, but being tender-hearted.

Of course, it's good, it's easy in a sense, if we have understood the truth, to be good externally, but to be tender-hearted in secret, in our attitude towards people who have harmed us, that is quite another thing altogether. Then he washed his face and came out, and he controlled himself and went to serve the meal. So they served him by himself.

And they were all seated, verse 33, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth. The men were amazed how this man knew their ages to put them according to their seniority. And he took portions to them from his own table, but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs.

So they feasted and drank freely with him. And I just want to mention in passing that Benjamin, as Joseph, is a picture here of Christ. Benjamin is a picture of the Church, of those who come in last, who are given the greatest reward, the greatest allowance.

And then we come to chapter 44. And most of this is just history. We can go through it quickly.

He told his house steward to fill the men's sacks with food as much as they can carry. Put each man's money again in the mouth of his sack, he said, and put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his money for the grain. And he did as Joseph told him.

And as soon as they had just gone out of the city, Joseph said to his house steward, verse 4, follow after them. And when you overtake them, say, Why have you repaid evil for good? And why have you stolen? And they overtook them. And they said, No, we have not stolen any such thing.

And if anyone has stolen it, let him be, we will be your Lord's slaves, verse 9. And so they opened their sack, and they began to search, and the cup was found, verse 12, and Benjamin sank. Of course, they didn't know how it came there. They tore their clothes and returned to the city.

And you see here Judah's attitude. And Judah came there, verse 14, and fell to the ground. What is this deed that you have done? And notice, of course, Judah could have said, But we never stole that.

We don't know how it came into our bag. But he doesn't say anything like that. He says, How can we justify ourselves? Verse 16.

God has found out the iniquity of our servants. Both we and the one in whose possession the cup has been found, we are your slaves from now on. But Joseph said, No.

And here we can say that Joseph was testing those ten brothers again. He said, Far be it from me to do this. I don't want all of you to be slaves.

But the one in whose possession the cup has been found, that was Benjamin. He shall be my slave. The rest of you go up in peace to my father.

Now these were the ten brothers who once upon a time were glad to get rid of Joseph and just seek their own. And now Joseph was testing them to see. When another younger brother, Benjamin, is in a difficult situation now, let me see what your attitude will be towards him.

Will it be the same attitude that you had towards me nearly twenty years ago? Or have you folks changed a bit? You see, if he had seen that, Oh well, that's all right, if they say that's all right, let Benjamin be put in jail here, we'll go back home, then he would have seen that their attitude hasn't changed one bit. But we can see their attitude had changed. Because Judah approached him.

And Judah was the one, if you remember, in chapter thirty-seven, who said, Let's sell this Joseph to the Ishmaelites, in thirty-seven verse twenty-six and twenty-seven. That was Judah, who said, Let's sell him off to the Ishmaelites, get rid of him. Now the same Judah, after more than twenty years, he says, Please, don't be angry with me, you're equal to Pharaoh, let me say a few words to you.

We have an old father, verse twenty, and a little child of his old age. Of course, Benjamin was not a child. Joseph must have been around thirty-nine by now, and Benjamin perhaps thirty-five or so.

We read in another chapter that he already, he was married and he had ten children, Benjamin. Well, he was the youngest, and in that sense, the father's little child. And yes, his father loves him.

And when we said that we cannot go without him, our father was very disturbed, he said. And finally he agreed. And if we go back now without him, our father, verse twenty-nine, will come with grey hair, will come down to shill and sorrow.

And so he says, verse thirty-three, Therefore, please, let me, that is your servant, remain instead of the lad. You see the difference now? The same Judah who, twenty-two years ago, was glad to get rid of Joseph, sell him off to the Ishmaelites, now he is so changed. He says, Let me stay, and let Benjamin go.

For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me, lest I see the evil that would overtake my father? He never thought like that twenty-two years earlier, how he could go back to his father and tell him a lie, that Joseph had been slain by wild beasts, but he has changed. And that's a good thing, if God has been able to do a work so that hard-hearted people have changed and become soft. And then it was obvious to Joseph that these brothers have really changed.

They are not the same old people who will get rid of their younger brother and seek their own. They are now so concerned about their younger brother that the same Judah is willing to go into jail in order to let the younger brother go. Then Joseph could not control himself.

Have everyone go out from me, he says. And there was no man with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. This is a very beautiful picture of Christ making himself known to the Jews when he comes again in glory.

The whole history of Joseph, as we saw, is a picture of Christ who came to his own, he came to the field to look for his brothers. We read in Genesis 37 that Jesus came to the Jews, he came to his own, but his own did not receive him. They sold him for thirty pieces of silver, just like they sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites.

But God raised up Joseph to a high position, and God has raised up Christ. But Joseph's brothers did not recognize him, and the Jews don't recognize Christ as their Messiah yet. But a day will come when he will return in glory, and it says in Zechariah chapter 12, verse 10, that they shall look on me whom they have pierced, and then they will weep.

And so this phrase that Joseph made himself known is a picture of that day when Jesus will make himself known to the God-fearing among the Jews, that they will see that the one whom they rejected and sold was really the Messiah. And he wept so loudly, the Egyptians heard it. Then Joseph said to his brothers, I am Joseph, is my father still alive? But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence.

And then Joseph said to his brothers, please come closer to me. He said, I am your brother Joseph. And then he uses a phrase three times, which is the phrase we read in Psalm 105.

He says, don't be grieved or angry with yourself, because you sold me here. God sent me. That's the phrase.

It's amazing when you think that long before Romans 8.28 was written, without any Bible in his hand, without attending any meetings. As far as we know, for 20 years he'd been in Egypt by now. He had no

contact with God-fearing people.

20 years, he was 17 when he was sold. He's 39 now, more than 20 years. And he's kept himself pure, without fellowship, without exhortation, without a Bible.

He's lived in the fear of God. Tremendous example for young people who may be living alone in a place where there's no one to encourage them, and no one to see them if they sin. He kept himself pure.

He so cleansed himself of any bitterness or an unforgiving spirit, that when he sees his brothers, he says, don't feel sorry for what you did. You may have had wrong intentions, but God sent me. It wasn't you who sold me to the Ishmaelites.

It was God. Just like Jesus said to his disciples when they tried to defend him with a sword, and the soldiers came to capture Jesus and get them. He says, the cup which my father has given me, not Judas Iscariot, the cup which my father has given me, shall I not drink it? It's amazing that Joseph, living way back there at the beginning, had that light and understanding.

It just teaches us one thing, brothers and sisters, that it's possible to have a knowledge of God, even without contact with other God-fearing people, if we are wholehearted and God-fearing ourselves, to know these truths. It's possible to know them. And Joseph's life is an example of that, that God can sovereignly make the evil that other people do to work for our good.

God sent me, he says, again in verse 7, God sent me. Again in verse 8, it was not you who sent me here, but God. Very clearly, it was not you.

You may have sold me to Ismailites. You thought you were sending me here. God sent me.

What conviction! And that is why it was easy for him to forgive. Why is it so difficult for us to forgive someone who has harmed us? Because we don't see God in that situation. Our eyes are focused on that person, and the devil magnifies that person's image before our eyes, who has done us harm.

And there we can be put to shame by Joseph. To be able to say, it was not he who did that. It was God who allowed that.

Not he. So that my... I don't allow the devil to show that person through a magnifying glass to me. Not he.

God. Think how David could say, when Shimei cursed him, when Absalom had usurped the throne and thrown David out, and Shimei cursed him, saying, now God is judging you for your taking the kingdom from Saul. And somebody, one of David's party, like Peter, said, let me go and chop off that fellow's head.

If God has permitted him to curse me, why should I object? Do we have the faith that Joseph and David had? If God has permitted that man to speak to me like this, why should I fight with God? If God has permitted that person to treat me like this, why should I fight with God? It is not that person. It's God. If only we can say what Joseph said here, it was not you.

It was God who sent me. It's amazing how we can know so much of scripture, and hear about these things again and again and again in the church, and yet not come to the faith that Joseph had, which teaches us, it is not a matter of intellectual understanding. It's a question of fearing God in our heart.

If we fear God in our heart, we will know the truth. If we don't fear God in our heart, even if we hear it again and again and again in the meeting, it will not make an impression on our life. Joseph feared God.

He kept himself pure when he was tempted, in the time of temptation. That's why he got a revelation from God, that God allowed these things. And so he could say to them, don't be angry.

God sent me. God sent me to preserve a remnant in the earth with a purpose, to keep you alive. It was not you who sent me.

Verse 8, He has made me a father to Pharaoh. Amazing, that God took that young man, made me a father to Pharaoh, means like a father gives advice to his son as to how to conduct himself, Joseph became the one who was advising Pharaoh as to how to solve the problems of Egypt. It's amazing what God can do through one man, if He can find one man who is faithful.

I want to emphasize what we considered in our last study, while the world looks for numbers, a lot of Christians think that by numbers we can impress people. People ask, how many people in your church? One hundred. Oh, that's a good number.

That is all carnal. Think if you had to say, there are only two people in our church. If they are wholehearted like Joseph, that's better than a hundred people who are not wholehearted like Joseph.

We have to train our mind away from thinking like in worldly terms, that numbers makes an impression before God. If we are impressed because the chairs are full, we don't know God yet. We certainly don't know God yet.

Man looks on the output appearance, God needed only one man in Egypt, in the world's most powerful country in those days, Egypt. He needed only one man. He didn't need a hundred.

One man. It's always been like that with God. But that man has to be faithful.

One faithful man can accomplish a tremendous amount for God. And I really long with all my heart that particularly you younger brothers and sisters will be gripped by this truth. With many who are older, many have missed the bus.

They have taken it easy in their younger days. But with many of you who are younger, just make sure you don't miss the bus. Make sure that you're going to be faithful in your youth, so that you can be that one person who can influence multitudes for God, particularly in the days of famine that are going to increase as we approach the end.

So he says, hurry up and go to my father and say to him, thus says your son Joseph, God has made me Lord of all Egypt. Notice there again the emphasis, his humility. He doesn't say that Pharaoh found me to be a very smart, clever person.

No, not a word about how he interprets Pharaoh's dream and giving a testimony. I'll tell you now how I came to this position and glorifying himself. None of all that.

His humility. He says, God made me, gave me this position. God sent me here.

God gave me this position and this position has been given to me to serve others. Not for me to sit on a great throne and enjoy myself, but to serve others, to preserve a remnant in the earth. Verse seven.

Think of that phrase, God has sent me to preserve a remnant in the earth. That's our calling. God has sent us to preserve a remnant for him in the days of famine.

A remnant who here, not just dry expositions of scripture, but the prophetic words of the Lord. God has sent me. God has given me this position.

And so it has come down. And do not delay. And you will live in the land of Goshen, verse 10.

You shall be near me, you and your children. There I will also provide for you. There are still five years of famine to come, lest you and your household and all that you have been impoverished.

Your eyes see and the eyes of my brother see. It's my mouth which is speaking to you. Verse 13.

Now you must tell my father of all my splendor. And bring my father down here. There again, when we look at Joseph as a picture of Christ, we see something very beautiful of the spirit of Christ there.

That what Joseph was enjoying, he did not want to enjoy alone. He wanted his brothers to share that. There was no selfishness there.

There was no saying, oh, well, God's given me this position. I've been faithful, therefore God's given me this, and I can enjoy myself. Well, those fellows were unfaithful.

Just do better. No. He did not want to enjoy something which he could not share with his brothers.

Think of that phrase. He did not want to enjoy something which he could not share with his brothers. That is the spirit of Christ.

He did not want to enjoy something in heaven which he didn't want to share with us. He wanted to share it with us. In fact, he wanted to share it so much with us that he came down and died for us, that we might share what he has in heaven.

That, my brothers, is the spirit of Christ. It's the exact opposite of the spirit of Adam, which is, if I got something, that's for me. That's for me and my family to enjoy.

Forget about the others. And that's not the spirit of Christ. Joseph did not want to have something which he couldn't share with his brothers.

And the more we partake of the spirit of Christ that we cannot share with others who are the brothers of Jesus Christ. This is the divine nature, the exact opposite of selfishness. All that he had, he wanted us to have.

That's the spirit of Christ. And there we can see what a lot of selfishness dwells in our flesh. Tremendous amount of selfishness.

And we see here further, when he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck, verse 14, and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck, and he kissed all his brothers and wept on them, and afterward his brothers talked with him. When the news was heard in Pharaoh's house that Joseph's brothers had come and pleased Pharaoh and his servants, then Pharaoh said to Joseph, say to your brothers, do this, load your beasts and go to the land of Canaan, and take your father and your households and come to me, and I'll give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you shall eat the fat of the land. You see, because this one man's

faithfulness, all his family was blessed.

And that's another spiritual principle, that when God finds one man in a family faithful to him, that man, God's intention is that through that man, he blesses that whole family. And that should be a challenge to us, that by our faithfulness, even if our families initially misunderstand us and despise us, it doesn't matter. One day, God will bless our families because of our faithfulness, if we are really faithful.

That's something to think about. And verse 20, he says, don't concern yourself with goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours. Think of that attitude.

Joseph wanted to give the best to those who had given the worst to him twenty years earlier. That is true spirituality, to want to give the best to those who, when they had power over us, gave us the worst. What a spirit.

Not just to forgive them. This is way beyond forgiveness. This is a longing to do the very best for those who have done the very worst they could towards us.

Verse 30, 21, Then the sons of Israel did so, and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the command of Pharaoh, and gave them changes of garments. And to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces, verse 22, three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments. And he sent ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt to his father, grain and bread and sustenance.

And then he gives them an exhortation as they go. And so he sent his brothers away, verse 24, and as they departed he said to them, Do not quarrel on the journey. He knew the tendency these people have to quarrel with each other, because they have to go back now and tell Jacob what? That Joseph is in Egypt.

And Jacob say, I thought you fellows said that he'd been killed by an animal. And then they have to confess their sin of 22 years earlier. And on the way they'll have to discuss who will take the blame for this.

And then they can get into a quarrel. He says, Now don't quarrel on the journey. Think of that little exhortation of Joseph's, and I want to exhort each of you to take it as an exhortation for life's journey.

Don't quarrel with anyone on life's journey. Be like Joseph, not like his ten brothers who had a reputation for quarreling, that they need such an exhortation. It's a sad thing if we have a reputation for quarreling, that such an exhortation has to be given.

That's a closing exhortation as you go. Don't quarrel. Because I know you folks have a tendency to quarrel with each other.

Dear brothers and sisters, we really need to cleanse ourselves, so that we have a testimony that it is impossible to quarrel with me. Impossible. Impossible to get me offended, first of all.

Whatever you may do, whatever you may say, whatever you may not do, whatever you may not say, you cannot get me to be offended. You can try anything you like. I have finished with that.

Getting offended? Impossible. Quarreling with you? Impossible. That is the testimony of one who is walking the new and living way.

Because it takes two people to quarrel, and if you refuse, that's the end of the quarrel. That is very important that all of us have such a testimony. And then we read further, and they came back to Jacob,

and they said, Joseph is still alive.

Indeed, he is ruler over all the land of Egypt. But he was stunned, for he did not believe them. Like the Jews today do not believe that Jesus is exalted above all things.

And when they told him all the words of Joseph, he had spoken to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent, then he believed. He said, It is enough. My son Joseph is still alive.

I will go and see him before I die. Chapter forty-six. So Israel set out with all that he had, and he came to Beersheba, and he doesn't forget to offer sacrifices to God there.

He didn't just get so excited by what he was going to get, the prosperity and honor, that his son was now the top man almost in the world, that he forgot about God. He'd been broken at Peniel, so he bows before God and makes a sacrifice to Him. And when God sees that, God sees that a man makes time for Him, then God makes time for that man also.

If you make time for God, God will make time for you. And God speaks to him. Very often God doesn't speak to many people because they don't make time for Him.

And God spoke to Israel in a vision and said, Jacob, Jacob. We saw that in an earlier study. This is one of the seven places in the Bible where you have this double call, like Abraham, Abraham.

Jacob, Jacob. Samuel, Samuel, like that. Jacob, Jacob.

And He said, Here I am. And He said, I am God. Go down.

Don't be afraid to go down to Egypt. I'll make you a great nation. I will go down with you to Egypt.

The important thing, brothers and sisters, is not whether we go to Egypt or whether we live where we are. The important thing is that God can say to us, I will go with you where you are going. Then we are all right.

It is not that such and such a place is spiritual or such and such a place is not spiritual. The thing is for God to go down with us in all our movements. And that's what Jacob wanted to be sure of.

Lord, years ago my grandfather went to Egypt and he got into problems. He brought back an Egyptian maid and got a son through her called Ishmael that caused problems. And you told my father Isaac not to go to Egypt when there was a famine.

You remember that? We studied that in Genesis 26. Now what shall I do? God says, go. God's will for another person is not God's will for you.

He may tell one person not to go somewhere. He may tell you to go. Each of us need to have an individual contact with God.

The important thing is that we know that God is with us in our movement. And so he takes his children, the sons of Israel. They carried their father Jacob and their little ones and their wives.

They took their livestock and their property and came to Egypt. His sons and his grandsons with him, his daughters and his granddaughters. When it says his daughters, we don't really know whether it refers to whether Dina had other sisters or whether it's referring to his granddaughters, his daughters.

But anyway, they all came down and the sons, there's a list given here of all the grandchildren of Jacob. And this is where we see that Benjamin, verse 21, was, he had ten children. He was not really a baby or a small boy at that time.

He must have been past his mid-thirties. And these are sons of, all the other sons of all the children of Jacob, verse 26. All the persons belonging to Jacob who came to Egypt as direct descendants, not including wives, Jacob's sons were 66 persons.

The sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt were two. All the persons of the house of Jacob, including Joseph and Jacob and Joseph's two sons were 70. And then he sends Judah before him to Joseph to point out the way before him to Goshen.

And they came to the land of Goshen. And Joseph, there we see something. Goshen was quite a distance from where Joseph was living in Pharaoh's palace.

But though Joseph was such a big man, and though Joseph was around 40 years of age, he still had such a respect for his father that he goes out to meet him. He's a big man, he's 40 years old, but he does not fail to respect his father. This is the man whom God sends.

This is the type of man whom God sends. Not one who begins to feel that he is so important that he no longer knows how to honor his father and mother. Do you know that you have to honor your father and mother all the days of your life? You don't have to obey them once you leave your home and set up your own home.

You have to live your own life, but you have to honor them till the end of your life, if you want to be the man whom God sends. He prepared his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel. And he fell on his neck and wept on his neck for a long time.

And Israel, of course, was very happy to meet Joseph. And Joseph said to his brothers, now I'll go up and tell Pharaoh. And will say to him, my brothers in my father's household who were in the land of Canaan have come to me.

And these men, my brothers, are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock. And they have brought their flocks and their herds and all that they have, and shall come about when Pharaoh calls you and says, what is your occupation? That you shall say, your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers, as you may live in the land of Goshen. For every shepherd is loathsome to the Egyptians.

Do you see something there? The Egyptians loathed shepherds for some reason, because the Egyptians were cultured, educated, refined. They dealt with agricultural, agricultural work with the land. The shepherds looked after livestock, they felt were barbarians out in the jungles, and they really had no respect for shepherds.

And what we see here is Joseph telling these people, tell them the truth, that you're shepherds, and I'll tell him that you're my brothers. Even if they loathe you, you're my brothers. My brothers are shepherds.

My brothers are not big shots. My brothers are ordinary barbarians. You see something of Joseph's humility there.

When Pharaoh asks you, oh, you're Joseph's brothers, are you? What are we? We're just barbarians. He says, tell Pharaoh that. There's really so many things that we see in Joseph's character, which is really stands out.

And he says, you get the land of Goshen to live in, because that's, in a sense, it'll turn out for your good, because that's a good land, and the Egyptians won't want you anywhere near them. So he'll allot that land to you, and that's a good land, and you stay there. Well, that really struck me, that Joseph was not ashamed to call these barbaric shepherds his brothers, even in the presence of Pharaoh.

He says, when Pharaoh asks you, what are you? Say, we're shepherds. And every shepherd loathes them to the Egyptians. Chapter 47, verse 1, Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, my father and my brothers have come, and they're in the land of Goshen.

You see, Joseph, though he had such authority in Egypt, that he could have just allotted land to his brothers and said, well, you're going to take Goshen, that's all. But you see something there, that Joseph will not do something without Pharaoh's permission. He's not going to show any partiality to his brothers.

He's not going to show some partiality to his family, like a lot of people in high positions do. No. He lets Pharaoh allot whatever land Pharaoh decides.

When it came to other people, Joseph had authority. He could have done it for his brothers, and Pharaoh wouldn't have questioned him. Nobody would have questioned him.

But he submits to authority. He submitted to the authority of Pharaoh. He said, my brothers have come, and please allot them some land.

And Pharaoh asked them, what is your occupation? And they said to Pharaoh, your servants are shepherds. Both we and our fathers. And he said to Pharaoh, we have come to sojourn in the land.

Please let your servants live in the land of Goshen. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, your father and your brothers have come to you. The land of Egypt is at your disposal.

Verse 6. Settle your brother in the best of the land. Let them live in the land of Goshen. And if you know any capable men among them, put them in charge of my livestock.

You see, I believe there's something we can learn there also from Joseph's life, that when some tremendous authority is given into our hands, that we don't take advantage of it for our personal benefits, to benefit our family in some way. There you see Joseph is a man who has tremendous power, and he's totally free from corruption. He does not use it to benefit his own family.

He does not quietly allot the land of Goshen. He goes and brings his brothers before Pharaoh and says, you allot the land, because in this case this is my family. I don't want to allot it.

There's really something we can learn. I'm not surprised that God sent such a man, a man who had been trained by God in adversity and trial and discipline, tested in righteousness, in area after area after area, and every time you see Joseph shining with a crystal clear character, never seeking personal gain. That is the type of man God sends, the man who will not seek to use his position in the world or in the church or anywhere to benefit his family personally, but will let God do it, will submit to authority and not seek his own.

And of course they get the best. God always honors those who honor him. And Joseph brings his aged father, Jacob, before Pharaoh.

He's not ashamed of his aged father. There's a man again, you see, who honors his father. He brings his father to Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

Pharaoh said to Jacob, how many years have you lived? And Pharaoh says to Jacob, how many years have you lived? And Jacob says, the years of my sojourning, 130. Few and unpleasant, verse 9, have been the years of my life. But it's those unpleasant experiences that he had that made him into an Israel.

In other words, he didn't have a cushy, comfortable life. Jacob became an Israel because his years were difficult, difficult years. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

This man, who had been under God's discipline, finally blesses the world's greatest monarch. Think what God can do with a man who is broken. And so Joseph settled his father and his brothers and gave them a position in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Ramesses, as Pharaoh had ordered.

He didn't take that himself, as Pharaoh had ordered. And Joseph provided for his father and his brothers and all his father's household with food. He rewarded them good for all the evil that his brothers had done.

There was no food in the land of Egypt because the famine was severe, and the people had finally paid up all the money, buying grain, and finally, verse 15, they had spent all their money. And then the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, our money is gone, now give us food. So Joseph said, give up your livestock, and I'll give you food if you give me your cattle, now that you don't have money.

And so they brought their cattle, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses and the flocks and the herds and the donkeys. And he fed them with food in exchange for all their livestock that year. Verse 18, And when that year was ended, their money was spent, and their livestock had also been sold.

And they said to Joseph, nothing is left for my except our bodies and our land. So we'll sell ourselves as slaves in our land also. Joseph bought, verse 20, all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh.

There again we see a total freedom from corruption. He did not take anything for himself. He was so upright.

All that land, he didn't just write off some of that land in his name, and Pharaoh would never have known about it. He did not do it, not one thing in his name. He bought it all for Pharaoh, a faithful man who would not take advantage of his position for himself in any way.

There are very, very few people like this, very few, who will never take advantage of their position in any way to gain something for themselves. And we see the world is full of people who use their position to get some benefit for themselves, even in the church, in Christendom anyway. And there we praise God that God can raise up a testimony in the church of people who are quite different from that.

And thus the land became Pharaoh's, and as for the people, he moved them to the city. Only the land of the priests he didn't buy, because they lived off an allotment Pharaoh gave them. Then Joseph said to the people, I have bought you and your land for Pharaoh now, and here is seed that you may sow the land.

And at the harvest, t'was twenty-four, you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh. Everything is for Pharaoh. Four-fifths will be for your own seed and for your food.

And they were so grateful to this man. They said, You saved our lives, let's find favor in the sight of my Lord. And Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt valid unto this day, that Pharaoh should have a fifth, and only the land of the priests did not become Pharaoh's.

Now, notice here the wisdom that God gave to Joseph to administer this whole land single-handed. Wisdom to know what to do when this happens, and what to do, and yet, though he bought these people to be slaves, they were not bitter against him. Which shows what a good attitude he had to these people, that they were so grateful to him.

At the end of it all, they said, You've saved our lives. That's really something that struck me, how God could give a man like this administrative wisdom at the age of thirty. And that's in the Old Testament.

We don't have to wait till we're seventy years old. You can have wisdom, my brother, sister, when you're thirty years old. Wisdom.

Practical wisdom. This is not just spiritual wisdom. He had spiritual wisdom, too.

We know he had spiritual wisdom because he forgave his brothers. That's spiritual wisdom. We know that he gave the best to those who gave the worst to him.

That's spiritual wisdom. But he also had practical wisdom in the God needs to give us. Practical wisdom in dealing with people, in dealing with difficult situations, in handling it.

God can give it. If we seek him, if we are faithful, he can give us wisdom for the practical situations of life when you're thirty years old. When I see the number of young brothers and sisters who go around making fools of themselves continuously, I say, Joseph could have made a fool of himself, too.

Well, he didn't. How is it that this man didn't make a fool of himself? How is it that with all the responsibility that he had and all the things he had to do, he did it so wisely and he didn't make a fool of himself? That's a challenge to you, young brothers and sisters, that you can live such a life that you command respect from others, even at the age of thirty, if you are faithful in your private life. That's the secret.

It's when you're not faithful in your private life that God allows you to just make a fool of yourself. That's the proof that you're not faithful in your private life. That proves that you don't fear God, proves that you're not humble, particularly humble.

Where God sees that any of us think too much of ourselves, he just allows us to do something so stupid. If we have ears to hear what God is saying to us at such times, you are too high in your own thoughts. My dear brothers and sisters, it is the will of God that younger ones, particularly I'm speaking about from your teenage years, it's so easy for you to do such a lot of foolish things.

It's possible for you to grow up in the church so that by the time you're thirty, people in the church respect you, really respect you as a brother or a sister whom God has sent to be a blessing in the church. That's the challenge I want to present to every one of you, young brothers and sisters, in your teens and who are in your twenties, that by the time you're thirty, let people in the church respect you. They respect you for what you have to say in the meetings.

They respect you because they see the way you conduct yourself. They respect you because they see the wisdom you have, spiritual and in practical matters. How shall you have it? Humble yourself.

Go down in your own eyes. Be faithful and fear God in secret, and God will raise you up like he did Joseph. If he did that for someone in the old covenant, won't he do much more for us? Sure.

That is the will of God. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Humility and the fear of God are the secret to be saved from all folly and submission to authority.

Joseph had that. Humility, the fear of God, and submission to authority. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Now Israel, in verse twenty-seven, lived in the land of Egypt, in Goshen, and they acquired property in it and were fruitful and became very numerous. And he lived seventeen years there, and the time for him to die drew near, and he called his son Joseph and said, Please don't bury me in Egypt. When I lie down with my fathers, you must carry me and bury me in their burial place, in Canaan.

Swear to me. Verse thirty-one. So he swore to him, and Israel bowed in worship to the head of the bed.

So there we see Jacob's faith that I will go back. God will give the land of Canaan to my seed. This Egypt is a beautiful place.

It's a lovely place, very advanced culturally, educationally, and all that. Beautiful sites here to see, but my home is there. Here was a man who knew that God had promised Canaan, and he said, Bury me way back there.

A testimony on his deathbed. My home is not here. He was broken.

There was a time earlier on in his life when he was seeking for money and prosperity and all that, but not now. He's a broken man, and he longs for that inheritance which God has reserved for him. That's how we are to live in this world.

We look around and see so many things, and we say, This world's not my home. My home is somewhere else. So we'll close there.

Ask God for grace that we can have in our life those qualities that we have seen in these characters we've seen in scripture.

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