

20210611 Genesis Joseph Part Two – God Never Forgets His Children



06 Joseph Part Two – God Never Forgets His Children

This morning I will tell the story again to catch us up to new material. This will be a little different than most mornings because I will read large portions of the account right out of the Bible. I am doing this because the Bible

gives life to the story and carries so much more emotion than I can generate with my own words.

We started our journey to the Promised Land with a sort of survey of the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; which I followed up on Wednesday night by talking about Joseph. The theme of the teaching covering Joseph was that God is sovereign in the life of the believer. There is a whole lot in the story of Joseph. We learn that as parents we can really do a lot of damage to the whole family by having favorites. It is a way of creating insecurity and jealousy among siblings. We also learned that as part of the human condition, we can get into horrible circumstances often at no fault of our own. We also learned how to act when we're in the midst of those circumstances. Joseph was a great model of a steadfast person who depended on God and continued to do the right thing regardless of the injustices that he experienced.

I think more than anything, the story of Joseph reminds us that God is sovereign in our lives. No matter what we might go through, God never forgets His children. Things may happen that are out of our control, but God is in control. This doesn't mean that we just sit back and let terrible things happen to us. We need to do anything and everything we can to ameliorate the situation, but some things are just out of our control. Joseph managed Potiphar's house and business affairs well. He even looked out for Potiphar's wife. But, Potiphar's wife falsely accused him. He then became a model prisoner when he was thrown into the dungeon. He managed the prison so well he was made a trustee and ran it all. Eventually, Pharaoh's butler and baker were thrown into prison, and Joseph was put in charge of them as their guardian. One night they both had dreams and Joseph told them that God was the interpreter of dreams.

On Wednesday, we discussed how God revealed to Joseph the meaning of their dreams. The butler was restored to his former position with the Pharaoh, but the baker was hanged. When we last left off, Joseph had asked the butler to remember him when he was back in Pharaoh's service. Two years went by and the butler never remembered him or mentioned him to Pharaoh. It was only when Pharaoh had a troublesome dream, that he remembered Joseph and told Pharaoh about him. Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and Joseph was successful in telling Pharaoh his dream and the interpretation of the dream. Again, Joseph gave God the glory and told him that God is the interpreter of dreams. Let's take up where we left off on Wednesday. Please turn with me to Genesis chapter 41.

³⁹ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. ⁴⁰ You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you."⁴¹ So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt."⁴² Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. ⁴³ He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and people shouted before him, "Make way!" Thus he put him [Joseph] in charge of the whole land of Egypt.

⁴⁴ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, but without your word no one will lift hand or foot in all Egypt."⁴⁵ Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah [Strongs: "God speaks and he lives"] and gave him Asenath daughter of Potiphara, priest of On, to be his wife. And Joseph went throughout the land of Egypt.

⁴⁶ Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from Pharaoh's presence and traveled throughout Egypt. ⁴⁷ During the seven years of abundance the land produced plentifully. ⁴⁸ Joseph collected all the food produced in those seven years of abundance in Egypt and stored it in the cities. In each city he put the food grown in the fields surrounding it. ⁴⁹ Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure.

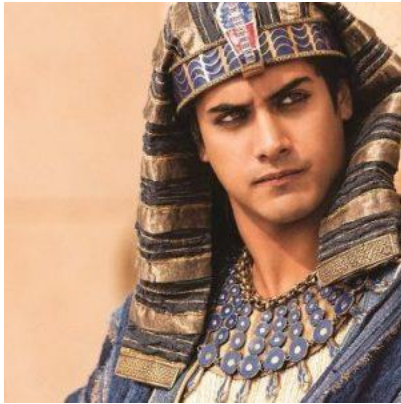
⁵⁰ Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphara, priest of On. ⁵¹ Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh and said, "It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household."⁵² The second son he named Ephraim and said, "It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering."

⁵³ The seven years of abundance in Egypt came to an end, ⁵⁴ and the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had said. There was famine in all the other lands, but in the whole land of Egypt there was food. ⁵⁵ When all Egypt began to feel the famine, the people cried to Pharaoh for food. Then Pharaoh told all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph and do what he tells you."⁵⁶ When the famine had spread over the whole country, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout Egypt. ⁵⁷ And all the world came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe everywhere. (Genesis 41:39-57, NIV).

How can a person go from being a slave to being the most powerful person in the most powerful country in the world? It is only through the sovereignty of God. And yet, that is what happened to Joseph. The scripture prior to what we read this morning tells us that Joseph was taken from the prison because he had a reputation for interpreting dreams. Pharaoh had a puzzling dream about seven fat cows coming up out of the Nile River. Then as they were eating reeds by the river, seven thin cows came up out of the Nile and ate up the seven fat cows. Pharaoh also had seen seven fat ears of corn that sprouted which were displaced by seven thin ears of corn that sprouted next to them. Scripture tells us that Pharaoh called on all of his magicians and fortune tellers and such and no one could interpret Pharaoh's disturbing dream.

Joseph was brought out of prison when the butler remembered that he was able to interpret dreams. ¹⁵ *Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it."* ¹⁶ *"I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."* (Genesis 41:15-16, NIV).

James, the brother of Jesus, tells us: *"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. (James 4:10, KJV).* That is exactly what happened to Joseph again and again. When faced with hardship, Joseph just kept doing the right thing. You can never go wrong just doing the right thing.



When Pharaoh put his signet ring on Joseph's hand, he was making him trustee of the entire land of Egypt. That signet ring would be pressed into hot wax on all kinds of documents so it was as though Pharaoh himself "signed and sealed" anything that Joseph declared or decreed. I think it is interesting that Joseph never forgot *who* he was or *whose* he was. He quietly knew that he was a Hebrew and we have every indication that he just kept believing in and worshipping the God of his father, Israel. I think that one of the overwhelming characteristics we see in Joseph is that he never seemed to despair. Scripture gives us no indication that he ever felt sorry for himself. He recognized his problems but he was not dominated by them. The only indication that he acknowledged his suffering was in the naming of his boys. ⁵¹ *Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh and said, "It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household."* ⁵² *The second son he named Ephraim and said, "It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering."* (Genesis 39:51-52, NIV).

Now that Joseph was pretty much the most powerful person in the world, we will see the grace with which he received this new role that God had given him. Let's move into chapter 42 to see what was going on back in Canaan with his family. I am reading from Genesis chapter 42 starting in verse one.

42 When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you just keep looking at each other?" ² *He continued, "I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. Go down there and buy some for us, so that we may live and not die."* ³ *Then ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt.* ⁴ *But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with the others, because he was afraid that harm might come to him.* ⁵ *So Israel's sons were among those who went to buy grain, for there was famine in the land of Canaan also.* ⁶ *Now Joseph was the governor of the land, the person who sold grain to all its people. So when Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground.* ⁷ *As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them. "Where do you come from?" he asked. "From the land of Canaan," they replied, "to buy food."* ⁸ *Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him.* ⁹ *Then he*

remembered his dreams about them and said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see where our land is unprotected." ¹⁰ "No, my lord," they answered. "Your servants have come to buy food. ¹¹ We are all the sons of one man. Your servants are honest men, not spies." ¹² "No!" he said to them. "You have come to see where our land is unprotected." ¹³ But they replied, "Your servants were twelve brothers, the sons of one man, who lives in the land of Canaan. The youngest is now with our father, and one is no more." ¹⁴ Joseph said to them, "It is just as I told you: You are spies! ¹⁵ And this is how you will be tested: As surely as Pharaoh lives, you will not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. ¹⁶ Send one of your number to get your brother; the rest of you will be kept in prison, so that your words may be tested to see if you are telling the truth. If you are not, then as surely as Pharaoh lives, you are spies!" ¹⁷ And he put them all in custody for three days. ¹⁸ On the third day, Joseph said to them, "Do this and you will live, for I fear God: ¹⁹ If you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay here in prison, while the rest of you go and take grain back for your starving households. ²⁰ But you must bring your youngest brother to me, so that your words may be verified and that you may not die." This they proceeded to do. ²¹ They said to one another, "Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen; that's why this distress has come on us." ²² Reuben replied, "Didn't I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn't listen! Now we must give an accounting for his blood." ²³ They did not realize that Joseph could understand them, since he was using an interpreter. ²⁴ He turned away from them and began to weep, but then came back and spoke to them again. He had Simeon taken from them and bound before their eyes. ²⁵ Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, to put each man's silver back in his sack, and to give them provisions for their journey. After this was done for them, ²⁶ they loaded their grain on their donkeys and left. ²⁷ At the place where they stopped for the night one of them opened his sack to get feed for his donkey, and he saw his silver in the mouth of his sack. ²⁸ "My silver has been returned," he said to his brothers. "Here it is in my sack. "Their hearts sank and they turned to each other trembling and said, "What is this that God has done to us?"

The biblical account that follows gives us a chapter by chapter and verse by verse story of multiple trips that Joseph's brothers made down to Egypt. When they got back to Canaan the first time, and when Jacob saw that Simeon had been taken, he was devastated. When they told him that the governor of Egypt had demanded to see the youngest brother, Jacob was heart broken and chewed them out for even mentioning that Benjamin existed. They told Jacob that the "man" just kept asking all kinds of personal questions and they just answered what he asked. The drama is intense as the story builds. It is hard to stop reading the story.

The brothers finally make a second trip down to Egypt and they talked Jacob into sending Benjamin. Jacob is extremely reluctant to send Benjamin because he figures he'll go missing like Simeon (who had been held captive as ransom to bring Benjamin). Jacob also figures that his youngest precious son Benjamin will end up dead like Joseph. Remember it was Judah who had suggested selling Joseph into slavery instead of killing him. These are the words that Judah spoke to his father, Jacob as he pledged his to bring Benjamin back.

Genesis 43 ⁸ Then Judah said to Israel his father, “Send the boy along with me and we will go at once, so that we and you and our children may live and not die. ⁹ I myself will guarantee his safety; you can hold me personally responsible for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him here before you, I will bear the blame before you all my life. ¹⁰ As it is, if we had not delayed, we could have gone and returned twice.”

¹¹ Then their father Israel said to them, “If it must be, then do this: Put some of the best products of the land in your bags and take them down to the man as a gift—a little balm and a little honey, some spices and myrrh, some pistachio nuts and almonds. ¹² Take double the amount of silver with you, for you must return the silver that was put back into the mouths of your sacks. Perhaps it was a mistake. ¹³ Take your brother also and go back to the man at once. ¹⁴ And may God Almighty grant you mercy before the man so that he will let your other brother and Benjamin come back with you. As for me, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved.” (Genesis 43:8-14, NIV).

This story is about as dramatic as any story in the Bible. They get down to Egypt. Joseph sells them grain once again, but this time he not only has everyone’s silver put back into their grain sacks, but he has his personal silver divining cup put into Benjamin’s sack. The brothers leave Egypt and quickly they are pursued by the “police.” After they are all brought back, Joseph says that Benjamin must become a slave because the cup was found in his sack. In anguish, his brothers tear their clothes, and Judah, the brother who had suggested selling Joseph to the Ishmaelites, steps in as the chief advocate and in an impassioned plea he begs Joseph for mercy.

It is easy to begin to feel sorry for these brothers as Joseph puts them through the ringer, but remember that these are the same no good, no count brothers who had intended to destroy Joseph’s life. They are deserving of no mercy, but Joseph refuses to hate them. Instead, he understands the sovereignty of God. And finally the tension of the story is broken when Joseph reveals his identity.

⁴⁵ Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, “Have everyone leave my presence!” So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. ² And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh’s household heard about it. ³ Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still living?” But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence. ⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come close to me.” When they had done so, he said, “I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! ⁵ And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.

¹⁴ Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. ¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him. ¹⁶ When the news reached Pharaoh’s palace that Joseph’s brothers had come, Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased. ¹⁷ Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Tell your brothers, ‘Do this: Load your animals and return to the land of Canaan, ¹⁸ and bring your father and your

families back to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you can enjoy the fat of the land.'

²⁵ So they went up out of Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. ²⁶ They told him, "Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is ruler of all Egypt." Jacob was stunned; he did not believe them. ²⁷ But when they told him everything Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him back, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. ²⁸ And Israel said, "I'm convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die." (Genesis 45:1-28, NIV).

Joseph understood the sovereignty of God. Joseph knew that all things work together for good for those who love God, or those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). This beautiful story shows us that people will let you down. Family may let you down. Circumstances may overwhelm you and be beyond your control but GOD NEVER FORGETS HIS CHILDREN.

He didn't forget Joseph and He won't forget you. Our God is an awesome God. Entrust your life to Him to today and let us give Him praise and glory. In Jesus name, Amen!

Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.