

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

THE BIG REVEAL

GENESIS 45

“I Am Joseph”

Genesis 45:1-4 1 Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, “Make everyone go out from me!” So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. 2 And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it. 3 Then Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph; does my father still live?” But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. And Joseph said to his brothers, “Please come near to me.” So they came near. Then he said: “I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.

- In Genesis 44, Judah pleads with Joseph and says he can’t go back home without Benjamin because Jacob’s life is tied up in him
- Judah tells Joseph that he *guaranteed* his father that he would take care of Benjamin and if he didn’t bring him back, he would bear the blame forever
- When Joseph hears this, he couldn’t contain his emotions any longer, and he ordered all of his servant to leave the room
- Joseph broke into tears, he was crying uncontrollably, he was crying so loudly that the Egyptians in the other room could hear him
- Joseph is finally face to face with all his brothers and he says, “I am Joseph”
- Verse 3 said they *could not answer him* and were *dismayed at his presence*
- The brothers didn’t know what was going to happen next
- Joseph tried to calm their fears by asking if their father was still alive
- Joseph’s brothers had not seen or heard anything about Joseph for over 20 years and now they are standing in front of him
- Not only is Joseph alive and standing in front of them, he is the prime minister of Egypt with the power of life and death over them
- Then Joseph said to his brothers, **“Please come near to me... I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.”**
- Joseph isn’t asking them to come close to remind them of what they did or to get revenge; he wants to close the *relationship gap* between them that has existed for more than 20 years
- Joseph’s actions reveal that he has matured and God has worked in his life during those painful years
- Joseph shows us that spiritual maturity means you don’t have to become *bitter* just because you’ve been hurt, nor do you have to become *arrogant* just because you’ve elevated
- What has happened to you shouldn’t be the only thing that defines you
- You are more than what’s happened to you
- When God gives you another opportunity, you don’t carry the character of the person you were when you entered that painful time in your life

God’s Purpose is Revealed

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5 But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. 6 For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. 7 And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. 8 So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

- Joseph tells his brothers not to be grieved or angry that they sold him into slavery, Joseph was past his emotional grief and anger and he wanted his brothers to get past it, too
- He wants his brothers to know that there was a greater *power and purpose* at work
- Joseph sees the providence of God in the midst of it all
- God *sent me* before you to preserve life
- Despite what his brothers did, Joseph saw God's providence and purpose was greater than the evil of his brothers
- Joseph didn't pretend that what his brothers did never happened, not did he ignore that God providential hand was working every step of the way
- Joseph said God sent me before you to *preserve a posterity* for you in the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance
- Joseph was saying that God had sent him to Egypt ahead of his family to preserve their lives and ensure that their family line would continue
- But God had positioned Joseph in Egypt to store and distribute grain, making it possible for his family to survive
- The word *posterity* emphasizes more than keeping the family alive in the immediate crisis.
- Joseph's role in Egypt therefore served a purpose much larger than his own survival or success
- God had chosen Joseph to be exalted, and used all the terrible circumstances Joseph endured and proved His sovereignty
- God *positioned* Joseph in power to save people, especially the sons of Jacob
- Joseph realized that God ruled his life, and not men, not evil men, circumstances or fate
- Joseph has developed the spiritual maturity to interpret his story through God's faithfulness instead of only through what he endured
- Mature faith doesn't deny the hurt or the wounds, it also recognizes that neither the hurt nor the wounds don't have to write the end of your story
- God's power is greater than you pain

Grace Revealed

9 Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph: "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry. 10 You shall

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dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. 11 There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for there are still five years of famine." ' 12 And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my mouth that speaks to you. 13 So you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here." 14 Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. 15 Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him.

- Joseph is still speaking and his brothers are still in a state of shock, but he's trying to put them at ease
- Joseph instructs his brothers to go back to Canaan and bring his father to Egypt
- Joseph wanted his father to settle in Goshen so that they could be near each other
- Joseph also wanted his brothers, their families and future generations, and all their flocks and herds to dwell in Goshen
- This should put the brothers at ease because he was concerned about them as well as their father Jacob
- Joseph wanted his brothers to know this and pass it on to their father
- If they stayed in Canaan, they would be at risk of losing their ranch, livestock and everything they had
- Joseph tells his brothers, ***"Your eyes see...that it is my mouth that speaks to you"***
- Joseph tells his brothers that they can see for themselves that he is speaking to them.
- Joseph tells his brothers, ***"You shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen"***
- Joseph instructs his brothers to return to Jacob and tell him everything they have witnessed, including Joseph's position and authority in Egypt.
- The brothers are not simply given information; they are given an assignment.
- They must go back, tell their father, and bring him to Joseph.
- Joseph's family now has access to the person God has *positioned* to preserve them through the famine
- Joseph showed affection for his brothers by first embracing his brother Benjamin and weeping and Benjamin responded by embracing Joseph and weeping, too
- Joseph then walked over and embraced each brother one by one, and he kissed them and wept over each one
- Joseph had wept, embraced Benjamin, and kissed his brothers. His actions communicated that he was not seeking revenge
- They were experiencing reconciliation

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- The brothers' conversation with him suggests that the relationship was beginning to be restored
- Joseph's response reveals the maturity of his character.
- He could have used this moment to humiliate them, punish them, or remind them of their wrongdoing.
- We see the fruit of Joseph's character development; he can acknowledge the past without allowing it to destroy the possibility of reconciliation.
- Joseph's forgiveness and reconciliation did not mean the brothers' actions were acceptable, but that he chose not to let their wrongdoing have the final word in their relationship
- Forgiveness does not require us to ignore abuse, disregard appropriate boundaries, or restore trust without *evidence* of change
- The same brothers who once conspired against Joseph were now talking with him.
- For Joseph's family, this is not just an emotional reunion, they are beginning to experience the fruit of changed character
- The real evidence of growth is not merely that we feel differently about *the past*, it is that we behave differently in *the present*
- Do you behave *differently* or are you like some people:
 - Who can "shout" about victory, but still refuse to speak to a family member
 - We can "celebrate" God's blessings while holding on to *resentment*
 - Who can pray for God to "open doors" for us while refusing to *open our hearts* to others
- Behaving differently is "I'm not going to let what you did to me determine how I treat you forever!"

The Reveal of Provision (vs. 16-28)

- Pharaoh hears that Joseph's brothers have come to Egypt
- Pharaoh is pleased that Joseph's brothers are in Egypt and that they have reunited with Joseph
- Pharaoh shows his gratitude for what's happened in Joseph's life by:
 - Ordering Joseph to bring his entire family down to Egypt and to give his brothers all the supplies they needed to bring the family and flocks to Egypt
 - Promising to give Joseph's family the very best land in Egypt
 - Ordering Joseph to use his wagons to transport the family to Egypt
 - Saying they don't need to bring their furniture, he would see to it that they would receive all they needed once they arrived in Egypt
- On top of what Pharaoh did, Joseph did more
 - He gave each of his brothers' new clothes
 - He gave his brother Benjamin 5 sets of new clothes and 300 pieces of silver

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- He sent his father, Jacob 10 donkeys loaded with the best things Egypt had to offer, 10 donkeys loaded with grain, bread and other provisions
- Then Joseph told his brothers as they were departing, **"See that you do not become troubled along the way."**
- We have a tendency to play the "blame game"
- The brothers arrived in Canaan and told Jacob that Joseph was alive and he is the governor of Egypt
- And Jacob's heart *stood still*
- It means Jacob was so overwhelmed by the news that he was momentarily stunned and unable to fully process what he was hearing
- Then Jacob's sons tell him everything Joseph said, and when Jacob sees the wagons Joseph sent to carry him, his *spirit revives*
- The evidence (i.e., the reports of all 11 sons and the wagons) changes Jacob's perspective
- The news has restored Jacob's hope
- Israel said in verse 28, ***Then Israel said, "It is enough. Joseph, my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die!"***
- The first thing you notice is Jacob's name changes to Israel
- Jacob had wrestled over the years with doubts and fears, but here he believed the news about Joseph
- Jacob says, "It is enough", he doesn't need to know every detail, the fact that Joseph is alive is enough of Joseph's journey before responding.
- Every question in Jacob's life has not been answered
- Sometimes *one piece of good news* does not answer every question, but it gives you *enough hope* to take the next step
- Jacob said, ***"Joseph my son is still alive"***
- Hope replaces the expectation of loss
- Notice that he does not merely say, "Joseph is alive." he calls him "Joseph my son."
- Jacob said, ***"I will go and see him before I die"***
- Hope produces *movement*
- He intends to go to Egypt and see Joseph for himself
- The reveal brings hope to a father who thought his son was lost forever
- Joseph's *authority* in Egypt becomes the means of preserving his family
- This an important point about *Christian stewardship*; God's blessings are not "privileges" just for us to enjoy; they're also *opportunities* to serve others
 - If God gives you *influence*, how will you *use* it?
 - If God gives you *resources*, whom can you *help*?
 - If God gives you *wisdom*, whom can you *guide*?
 - If God gives you a *position*, who can *benefit* from your leadership?
- Joseph's story was not just about his personal "elevation"; it's about how his position became *the means* of preserving life