



Lent reflection for February 29, 2024

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Genesis 42:29-38

When they came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them, saying, “The man, the lord of the land, spoke harshly to us and charged us with spying on the land. But we said to him, ‘We are honest men; we are not spies. We are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no more, and the youngest is now with our father in the land of Canaan.’ Then the man, the lord of the land, said to us, ‘By this I shall know that you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me, take grain for the famine of your households, and go your way. Bring your youngest brother to me, and I shall know that you are not spies but honest men. Then I will release your brother to you, and you may trade in the land.’ ”

As they were emptying their sacks, there in each one’s sack was his bag of money. When they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were dismayed. And their father Jacob said to them, “I am the one you have bereaved of children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and now you would take Benjamin. All this has happened to me!” Then Reuben said to his father, “You may kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you. Put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you.” But he said, “My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he alone is left. If harm should come to him on the journey that you are to make, you would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol.”

Today’s Reflection is by Keisha Lightborne

Jealously. Secrets. Lies. Grace. Forgiveness. Reconciliation. This is the story of Joseph and his brothers. But this is also a timeless story of how God uses our gifts to restore others.

My mother always made it a point to tell her children that she loved them equally. Actually, when I used to ask her if I was her favorite, she would tell me, "You're my favorite daughter." By the way, I am her only daughter. My mother also made it a point to acknowledge the differences in her children and praise their gifts. This is godly mothering.

Jacob too had a unique love for each of his sons. Losing three sons was too much for him to bear. Remember he had twelve all together so he would still have nine left if anything happened to the others, but by pointing out how aggrieved he would be he was indicating that each of them was special to him in their own right.

God loves each of his children exquisitely. He endows each of us with unique gifts. God praises our gifts and gives us opportunities to use them in myriad ways. When we use our gifts in furtherance of God's kingdom on earth we find ourselves bathed in the light of God's love. When we fail to use our gifts, we stray from God's path. And when even one of God's children wanders off the path He hurts. Just like Jacob.

Recall in one of Jesus' sermon he explains this further in terms of a shepherd and his sheep. If one sheep is lost, a shepherd will leave the 30 sheep he has just to find that one lost sheep. So too does God seek us out when we are lost and wandering. Won't you be still and listen for His voice so he can find you?



Keisha is a native New Yorker. Who stumbled upon the best little church in Brooklyn in 2017. She is an avid knitter and reader when she is not working to improve processes at SUNY Downstate.