

Friday, March 3, 2017

Sent

Genesis 45-46

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.

Genesis 45:5

Joseph tells his brothers that God sent him to Egypt. I can learn a lot from this sentence and even more from the attitude. Joseph seems to be in a good place now, but still, he could have held on to much anger and bitterness. Perhaps he had. Perhaps there were times in his life when he wondered how this could be happening to him. Perhaps there were moments of darkness and despair. But in the end, he came to rest in the sovereignty of God. He wasn't sold into Egypt, he was sent into Egypt!!! Of course he can forgive his brothers. He sees God working through their actions. He is a servant of God who will endure whatever is needed for God's plan to move forward. I want this to be so true of my life. I want to see that the sovereignty of God will use any occurrence in my life for His glory. What needs to change is not my circumstance, it is my perspective. There are times that I need to remove myself from harmful circumstances, when it is possible, but most of the things that come into my life, I cannot change. Will I allow myself to get paralyzed by fear, blame, and bitterness or will I rest in the reign of my Almighty Father?

Dear Father, help me learn from Joseph's perspective that is based in His love for You. Help me see that You are working Your plan in my life. Your eye is on me and I am part of Your plan of bringing the knowledge of redemption to the world. Help me not get wrapped up in me. Amen.

Saturday, March 4, 2017

Worship

Genesis 47-48

"Swear to me." he said. Then Joseph swore to him, and Israel worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

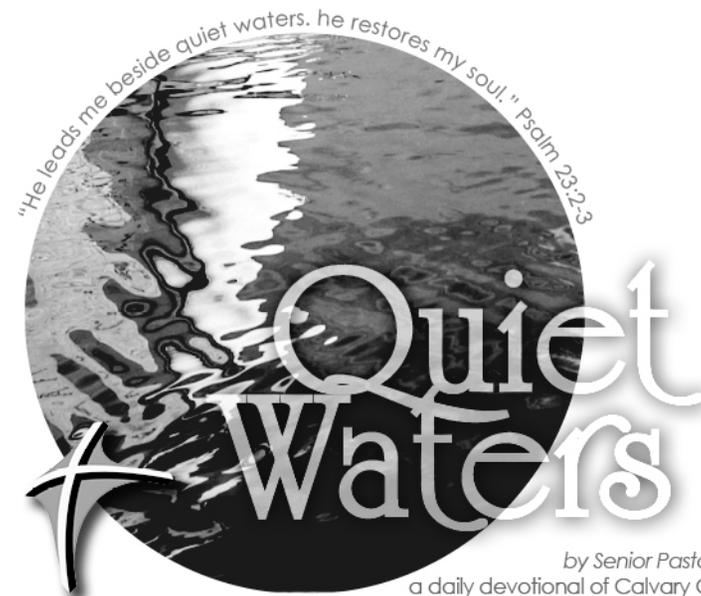
Genesis 47:31

At the end of his life, Jacob worshiped God. There is a little more to the story, but it is the start of Jacob passing on the blessing. What is it in this text that causes Jacob to worship? I believe it is the fact that his bones will rest in the land that was promised to him and his descendants. He does not wish to be buried in Egypt. It is not the land that was given to him by God. This will impact Joseph, as he will make the same request (50:25). Jacob leaned on his staff—more than likely, the headboard of his bed. He has lived quite a life, this one who struggled with God, and yet, as he waits for death, he is able to worship. God has been good. God has been faithful. Jacob has seen it time and again, and so he ascribes worth to the One who is worthy. May I do the same with each and every breath I take. May I worship Almighty God.

God, I praise You and worship You because of Your faithfulness and Your promises to me. You are so very good. Your promises are true and You are preparing a place for me. I long to join with Jacob one day as we worship You together with all the saints of all the ages, magnifying Your great name. Amen.

February 27 - March 4, 2017

Note: During Pastor Chuck's sabbatical, we will revisit the Genesis and Exodus editions of Quiet Waters, resuming with Song of Songs upon his return.



by Senior Pastor Chuck Cervenka
a daily devotional of Calvary Community Church

Monday, February 27, 2017

Irony

Genesis 37-38

Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay a hand on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood." His brothers agreed.

Genesis 37:26-27

After all, he is our brother. As I read this passage, this sentence jumps out to me as very ironic. As a reader of the text, I can very easily see how these brothers could come to this point. For reasons only God knew, Joseph was to be specially chosen. It would be Joseph who God would use for His glory in miraculous ways and Joseph was given a glimpse of that in his dreams. Once the dreams were experienced and shared, everyone who was involved had choices of how they would respond. I believe the text today shows the struggle of the brothers, although not in great detail. But in the end, God would use their sense of family for His purposes. Yet the irony I see is in their reasoning, though they do not see it. Their hatred of him could not be fully lived out because of the strong sense of family, but the call of family is not merely a call of restraint, it is a call to love. Jesus will come and make that very clear. I need to consider my relationship with my brothers and sisters in the Lord. Am I living out my relationship to all God's family in deep love or does it merely lead me to restraint? Are there times that it doesn't even do that?

My Father, please help me love my brothers and sisters as You love them. Remind me often that this is one of the great privileges of being in the family of God. Amen.

Tuesday, February 28, 2017

How?

Genesis 39-40

No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?

Genesis 39:9

What a great question, and one I think I would do very well to remember and ask often. Joseph is a testimony for me of great restraint. He makes 1 Corinthians 10:13 come alive! He knew well the way out of temptation. He rested in the provision of God. He had self-control. He understood that there were things that were off limits. He was satisfied with what he had been given. That allowed him to take the one way out—to run away from that which is forbidden. But it is in his reasoning, shared in the text, that I see what I truly need to learn well, by rehearsing the truth often. My sin is not personal. My sin is against God. My sin is wicked. Any sin. Any sin is me saying that I am not content with God and His provision, in whatever area of my life that may be. The LORD was with Joseph, and Joseph's response reveals that he was with the LORD. It is a beautiful thing. I long for that as well. How could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God who is with me and in me?

Dear Lord, How? How is it that I can do such wicked things and sin against You? How is it that You are always so ready to forgive? I long for more. I long for victory over every sin. I long to show my love for You by fleeing from even the thought of a wicked act of sin. Please Father. Help me. Amen.

Wednesday, March 1, 2017

Cannot

Genesis 41-42

"I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."

Genesis 41:16

Every time I read the account of Joseph, so many different things jump out to me. Truly, that is one of the things I love the most about God's Word. At just the right time, the cupbearer is reminded of Joseph. Even though the cupbearer had forgotten Joseph (40:23), two years later he remembers. Joseph is released from prison and made presentable. The first words of Joseph that are recorded reveal that he has not allowed his time in prison to make him bitter against God. Quite the contrary—his faith has increased! He stands before a man of great power who is the one who will determine his worldly fate. If Joseph can interpret the dream, he will likely be released. So, when asked to interpret the dream, he says that he cannot. That is courage. That is humility. That is faith. That is self-control and self-awareness. "I cannot. But God can." And God does. The rest of the account reveals that God receives the glory.

"I cannot, but God can." I must not take the credit for what God does through my life. Apart from Him I can do nothing, and yet I can do all things through Him.

Lord, I cannot do it, but You can. Please help me have those words resonate within my soul. Teach me to rely fully on You and Your power and presence. Let me, like Joseph, be a testimony of Your control of all there is—starting with my life. Be glorified in me. Amen.

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Uncovered

Genesis 43-44

"What can we say to my lord?" Judah replied. "What can we say? How can we prove our innocence? God has uncovered your servants' guilt. We are now my lord's slaves—we ourselves and the one who was found to have the cup."

Genesis 44:16

Guilt has been uncovered. Guilt is a burden heavy to bear. It is a crushing weight that never leaves. It continually pushes down and overwhelms. It is relentless. David experienced the same thing (Psalm 32:4). These brothers have carried a shared guilt together for many years. Guilt never really goes away. It gets buried—and, every once in a while, it gets uncovered. That is what happened here. It seems all the brothers think that the cause of the bad things that happen to them are because of this deep dark secret sin. That is what guilt does. It causes me to separate myself from God's true love and forgiveness. As I can expose my sin appropriately, guilt disappears and is no longer buried in my heart. I no longer need to waste the effort trying to hide it. There is relief as the burden is thrown off and out of my life. In the midst of this situation, the brothers are realizing again the weight of their burden of guilt. It has been uncovered.

Dear LORD, what are the areas of guilt that I have in my life? Are there any that You see and that I am not aware of? In Your kindness, would You please continue to uncover them so that I may see and repent and find Your forgiveness? Please let me see any ways in which guilt may be keeping me from You. Amen.