

Friday, March 2, 2018

Kindly

Genesis 49-50

You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children. And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

Genesis 50:20-21

This passage is shared so many times in ways that are so very helpful. God is sovereign. He has either allowed or decreed everything that happens. Everything. As Joseph learned who God was, he came away with an understanding of his life that must guide mine. I am here for God's purposes. What people do to me is really of little concern. *What happens to me is less important than how I handle what happens to me.* If I am able, by God's grace, to see God working in everything, then I am able to completely forgive, as Joseph did. Joseph saw that what happened to him personally was not something to be bitter about. Rather, it was something to rejoice in! God had used what could be perceived as awful to accomplish that which was beautiful. God was protecting His people and ensuring the coming of the Messiah through this family. I have salvation because of what Joseph experienced. Joseph understood and celebrated God's purposes. It allowed him to speak kindly to those who intended to harm him. He blessed those who cursed him. Oh, I need to learn this well.

God, whatever You need to have happen in my life for Your plan to continue, let that happen. Please, let this be not just words, but the very desire of my heart. Help me respond in kindness to anyone whom I perceive to have intended to harm me. Amen.

Saturday, March 3, 2018

Heard

Exodus 1-2

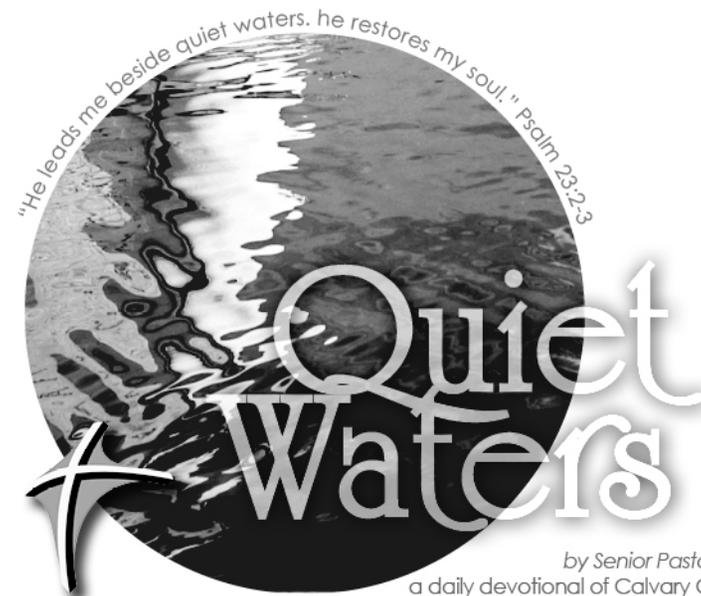
God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

Exodus 2:24-25

In this passage, I see that God heard, remembered, considered (looked), and was concerned as the Israelites cried out from the pain of their slavery. It is because of the covenant that God has made. He will keep His covenant. As I think about this passage, God is listening to everything that is happening. He knows about the babies dying. He knows about the abuse of slavery. He knows that He is growing His people during their pain for His purpose. Their cry was not the first thing he heard. It was not that their cry was needed to jar His memory, as if He had forgotten His covenant. This was not the first time He had considered what was happening and I am sure He had been continually concerned. God hears the groaning of His people from the pain of slavery. It is so important that I remember that God is the One who hears my groans. It is He who is concerned about whatever it is in my life that keeps me in slavery, because He longs for His children to be free. My Father hears me. I can rest in that—even in the midst of my trials. My Father remembers the promise of the gospel that has rescued me. I will go to the Land He has promised for me. He watches over me and He is concerned. I can rest secure knowing that He is working His plan.

Dear Lord, remind me that You do hear me when I call, as my heart is open to You. Help me rest in the knowledge that Your promises stand firm and sure. Amen.

February 26 - March 3, 2018



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

Monday, February 26, 2018

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 at 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.

Tuesday, February 27, 2018

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 that all the brothers think that the cause of the bad things that happen to them is 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.

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

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.

Thursday, March 1, 2018

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. He 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.