

# The Life of Joseph

## Week 7 - Resting in God's Plan

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### WHAT WE BELIEVE

1. Read Genesis 49:28-50:21. What was Jacob's dying wish?
2. How did the Egyptians honor Joseph and Jacob in our text?
3. What worried Joseph's brothers? What did they do about it?
4. How did Joseph respond to his brothers' plea for mercy?

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### CATECHISM CORNER

#### **BELGIC CONFESSION**

##### **Article 13: The Doctrine of God's Providence**

We believe that this good God, after creating all things, did not abandon them to chance or fortune but leads and governs them according to his holy will, in such a way that nothing happens in this world without God's orderly arrangement.

Yet God is not the author of, and cannot be charged with, the sin that occurs. For God's power and goodness are so great and incomprehensible that God arranges and does his works very well and justly even when the devils and the wicked act unjustly.

We do not wish to inquire with undue curiosity into what God does that surpasses human understanding and is beyond our ability to comprehend. But in all humility and reverence we adore the just judgments of God, which are hidden from us, being content to be Christ's disciples, so as to learn only what God shows us in the Word, without going beyond those limits.

This doctrine gives us unspeakable comfort since it teaches us that nothing can happen to us by chance but only by the arrangement of our gracious heavenly Father, who watches over us with fatherly care, sustaining all creatures under his lordship, so that not one of the hairs on our heads (for they are all numbered) nor even a little bird can fall to the ground without the will of our Father.\*

In this thought we rest, knowing that God holds in check the devils and all our enemies, who cannot hurt us without divine permission and will.

\*Matt. 10:29-30

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### GOD SPEAKS TO US

1. Joseph's brothers were afraid that Joseph would seek vengeance against them after their father died, even after Joseph had shown them tremendous mercy. How would you counsel someone who's afraid of God's punishment in spite of His promises to forgive and preserve us?

2. Joseph's brothers admitted their transgressions against Joseph (see Gen. 50:13-17). Why is confessing our sins an important part of forgiveness?

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## **GOD SPEAKS TO OUR FAMILY**

1. How did the brothers navigate their grief as a unit? When your family faces a major loss or crisis, what steps can you take to ensure you support one another rather than pulling apart?

2. Joseph didn't just say "I forgive you"-he actively comforted his brothers and promised to provide for them. When we forgive our family how can we communicate that forgiveness to them beyond words?

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## **NOTES ON GENESIS**

"Jacob in his last days undoubtedly said more than is recorded in the biblical record. It is quite possible that he personally asked Joseph to forgive his brothers and also told the brothers to remind Joseph of that request. One should note that when the brothers requested forgiveness in their own terms, they described themselves as the servants of the God of your father. Perhaps they hoped that this emphasis on their spiritual identity would appeal to Joseph's mercy more than saying that they were his brothers.

Joseph's reaction to his brothers' request is stated very simply: Joseph wept. As yet the brothers were speaking through a messenger, not in person; but the message moved Joseph to tears. We are left to surmise just what emotions overwhelmed him at this point. First among them must have been love for his brothers, the love that had been demonstrated during all of the 17 years that they had been living in Egypt. Then there may also have been a sense of grief because the brothers did not yet grasp the fullness of that love. They remained uncertain that Joseph's forgiveness was genuine; they were still afraid of his vengeance. And there must have been joy because Joseph himself was free from malice and hatred and because of the knowledge that he could offer his brothers a freedom from their fear and anxiety if only he could make them understand that he held no grudge whatsoever against them."

Redford, D. (2008). The Pentateuch (Vol. 1, pp. 181-182). Standard Publishing.

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## **DREAMER OF DREAMS**

"A type is an event, character, or institution which has a place and purpose in Bible history, but which also, by divine design, foreshadows the future. For instance, Christ is sometimes called the "second Adam," and in Romans 5:14 Adam is spoken of as a "pattern of the One to come." There is no exact correspondence here. Yet Christ and Adam are alike in that each is the head of a race: Adam of sinful man; Christ of redeemed humanity. In regard to headship, Adam as the source of humankind does foreshadow Jesus, the source of mankind's transformed brotherhood. But why speak of types and typology here? Because many Bible students have seen in Joseph's life and mission many parallels to Christ. Rejected by his brothers, sold for silver, suffering in a foreign land for the good of those who betrayed him, Joseph does bear a striking resemblance to the Saviour. And Joseph's forgiving spirit also foreshadows the attitude of Jesus, who one day would cry from a cross, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

Richards, L. O. (1987). The teacher's commentary (p. 70). Victor Books.

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## **GOD SPEAKS IN WORSHIP**

1. When we gather for corporate worship, we often bring heavy grief and personal losses with us. How does the Christian hope of being "gathered to our people" in eternity change the way we experience both mourning and praise during a church service?
2. Jesus commanded that if we are offering a gift at the altar and remember a brother has something against us, we should first go and reconcile. How does carrying hidden guilt, bitterness, or unresolved conflict hinder our ability to actively participate in and experience genuine worship?

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## **THE GOSPEL CALL**

1. People in the world often become most open to hearing about spiritual hope during times of deep grief or personal crisis. How can the church use moments of communal or individual sorrow as a bridge for compassionate, gentle evangelism?
2. Genesis 50:20 mirrors the Cross of Christ-where humanity did the most evil act in history by crucifying Jesus, yet God used it to accomplish the ultimate good of saving the world. How can we use Joseph's story to explain to a non-believer how God handles the pain, suffering, and evil in our world?