

## February 14-Genesis 45

Genesis 45 (as well as Genesis 50) shows us very clearly that Joseph's comfort came from his unshakeable belief in God's Sovereignty. We can learn from this text that the ultimate and all sufficient comfort in the life of the believer is based on our knowledge of God's goodness and sovereignty. If we do not believe that God is both good to His people and in control of all that befalls us, we cannot and will not find comfort. You see, God's plans are not dictated by man's actions. Do you believe that? Joseph did and he showed that he did by his response to his brothers in Genesis 45.

We all fight temptation to believe that certain events can ruin our lives. Whether it be someone who was abusive or a marriage that was destroyed because of infidelity, many folks are tempted to buy into the lie that one unfortunate event can destroy them. So often, we act as if people are really the ones who dictate God's plans for us, as if those who are unfaithful or somehow mistreat us can steal or change God's purpose for our lives. While it is important to mourn with those who mourn and to acknowledge that many problems in life are incredibly painful, it is also vital that we learn from stories like Joseph's which teach us that God is able to bring beauty from ashes.

Joseph gives us a great perspective to have as we deal with people who have hurt us or, under God's control, changed our life's path in some way in the past. Most would agree that Joseph had every right to be angry with his brothers. After all, it was because of them that he was sold into slavery, spent years in prison and was taken from his family and friends because they were tired of dealing with him. The average person would have spent years brooding over this mistreatment. They probably would have rehearsed how they would get their revenge and they most certainly would have retaliated if they had the golden opportunity that Joseph had in Genesis 45.

This might be natural, but those who concentrate on revenge can, and typically do, become totally consumed by their anger. These people become more and more miserable and often forfeit their ability to see God moving or to be used by Him. Do you know people like this? These are people that are so focused on revenge or a situation that happened years ago that they have no ability or desire to live their lives today. Truthfully, some of you are that way. You have never let go of some hurt or pain in your life because you continually dwell on it, and if someone confronts you on it you hit them with "Hey! I have a right to feel this way".

While the world would certainly agree that those who have been mistreated are correct in their anger, the Gospel teaches us clearly that those who accept the love and forgiveness of Christ forfeit their right to be unforgiving towards others. In Matthew 18:21-35 Jesus told a parable about a man who was forgiven a great debt. In this text He shares with us that a man owed an astronomical debt, one that he would never be able to repay. Instead of forcing the debtor to suffer punishment for his debt, the debtor's master chose to forgive him of his debt. This was a great act of mercy! Yet we read that this man who was just forgiven his massive debt immediately goes to find one who owes him. The debt he is owed is In verse 5 Joseph says it all "And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life." Listen carefully to what Joseph is saying, he is not denying that his brothers had evil intentions or meant to hurt him (they did) he is simply saying that although they meant him harm, God had his (and others) best interest at heart! Have you ever stopped to think about how you could use your life's troubles for good? Could it be that God allowed you to go through your particular problem so that you could help others? Maybe you can connect with people that the average person would have no hope of reaching because of your struggles. Is God big enough and smart enough to have planned something like that? Of course He is and Joseph knew it too! Joseph understood all of the evil intentions but he also understood that he served a great and mighty God who was working behind the scenes to fulfill a bigger and greater purpose than just getting him revenge. The same is true of you today. If you have been wronged, I know it hurts but take time to trust that God has a plan and a purpose behind your hurt and also take time to realize that you have been forgiven of way more than you will ever be asked to forgive!