

February 19-Genesis 50

What kind of impact are you making on those around you? Have you ever stopped to think about this kind of thing? Every day, you are surrounded by people and you make an impression on them by virtue of your words and actions. Those of you who work hard, treat people with respect, love and serve (even when its not convenient or easy) and genuinely try to do the right thing probably are well respected and admired. Genesis 50 records for us the kind of impact a man can make in this world as we read about Joseph. Chapter 50 paints Joseph as a man who is respected and admired by those who know him.

After his father Jacob had passed away, the Bible says that the “Egyptians wept for him seventy days” (v. 3). This was undoubtedly their custom, to weep for those who die and to grieve with their families, but this was most assuredly their custom for their OWN people not for “outsiders”. If you remember, a few days ago we read in Genesis about the fact that the Egyptians thought it was an “abomination” to eat with Hebrews. They generally wanted nothing to do with them and yet we see in this text that they wept for a Hebrew and his family for over 2 months. What would make this possible? The answer is found in the life of Joseph.

You see, Joseph wasn’t just any ordinary Hebrew. Joseph was a man who had served their country faithfully. He was someone who had gone the extra mile to preserve their very lives (Genesis 47:13-26), he was a person who had shown himself to be a faithful servant and a strong leader and the people loved and respected him because of it. I wonder how many people could look at who you are (a follower of Christ) and disagree with you over your beliefs but still love and admire your life.

Today, Christians are commanded to live honorable lives amongst a lost world. 1 Peter 2:12 says “Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.” The word translated “Gentiles” in the ESV literally means “unbelievers” or “evil-doers”. It is important to note that this text does not teach us that our good deeds will prevent the world from speaking negatively about us currently, but it does share with us that ultimately our good deeds will lead to a day in which all people glorify God. Truthfully, we will never appease all people, but many will look upon our actions and respect us because our walk matches our talk.

Of course, the greatest example of this kind of conduct is Christ Himself. Just a little further down in 1 Peter 2 we read about Jesus as our guide when Peter says “When He was reviled, he did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten.” Jesus lived a perfect life amongst the lost. He did so understanding that He would be insulted and reviled in the present but His actions would bring Himself and His Father glory in the future. His life was so exemplary that even Pilate could not find any fault in Him on the days leading up to His crucifixion.

A little farther down in the text we are reminded of what we spoke of just a few days ago, namely that God is able to take that which is intended for evil and turn it into good (Genesis 50:20). This reality gives us courage to live honorably. You see, we live righteous lives not because we trust the world to reward us but because we trust our Sovereign God to make all things work together for our good (Romans 8:28). We believe that our prize is coming and even those evil things that befall us serve to prepare us for our eternal reward (2 Corinthians 4:17).

Is your conduct honorable amongst a lost world? Are you criticized and mocked because of your biblical beliefs and actions? Do those who know you best believe that you are genuine? I pray that what was true of Joseph is true of us today, namely that even those who are lost around us know that we love them and genuinely seek their good as a product of our righteous deeds and words. We may be amazed at the impact and relationships we will see blossom through our living testimonies. Let us commit the results to God and obey Him trusting that He will use us to bring about great fruit in the lives of others while protecting our eternal reward which is found only in Him.