

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-
Presbyterian Church, 10 Downing St.
Oakleigh, Vic, 3166]

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 35

THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Chapter 45

INTRODUCTION

The theme of this chapter is on reconciliation and forgiveness. Joseph presents a good example of how to forgive and be reconciled. Reconciliation and forgiveness is only possible when we recognise the providential hand of God in our lives. Joseph explained that he could forgive and love his brothers in spite of the evil that they had done to him and the years of suffering and separation from his father because he could see the hand of God planning the wonderful picture of salvation for his whole family.

Troubles and tribulations are not uncommon in life. Sometimes we undergo trials because of what others had done. A natural tendency is to retaliate and take revenge. But a much better thing to do is to discern God's sovereignty in these episodes of our lives. It will motivate us to forgive those who hurt and harm us. In the process, we will be freed from the bondage of self-pity and self-righteousness.

OUTLINE

A Joseph Revealed His Identity to His Brothers (45:1-8).

1. Joseph dismissed the Egyptians when he could no longer refrain from revealing his identity (vv.1-2).
2. Joseph revealed his true identity to his brothers (v.3-4).
3. Joseph told them not to feel sorry or be angry with themselves for selling him (v.5).
4. Joseph explained that it was in line with God's plan to save them (vv.6-7).
5. Joseph explained that God had made him a ruler over all Egypt (v.8).

B. Joseph Instructed His Brothers to Bring Jacob to Egypt (45:9-15).

1. Joseph told his brothers to hurry home and tell their father that his son, Joseph, was ruler of Egypt and that they should all go and live in Egypt (v.9).
2. Joseph explained that he would provide for them (vv.10-11).
3. Joseph reassured them that he was their brother and told them again to bring their father to Egypt (vv.12-13).
4. Joseph kissed all his brothers in a spirit of reunion (vv.14-15).

C. Pharaoh and His Servants were Pleased (45:16-20).

1. Pharaoh heard about Joseph's brothers and instructed him to tell

his brothers to move to Egypt (vv.16-18).

2. Pharaoh reiterated that it was his command to Joseph to make all the necessary arrangements to bring his father to Egypt (vv.19-20).

D. Joseph Sent His Brothers Back to Canaan (45:21-24).

1. Joseph provided wagons and provisions to his brothers for their journey back to Canaan (v.21)
2. Joseph favoured Benjamin more than all the other brothers (v.22).
3. Joseph prepared gifts for his father (v.23).
4. Joseph sent them off and instructed them not to quarrel (v.24).

E. Jacob was Told that Joseph was Alive (45:25-28).

1. The brothers arrived in Canaan and told their father that Joseph was alive (vv.25-26a).
2. Jacob was shocked by the unbelievable news. When his sons related all the words of Joseph and showed him the gifts, Jacob's spirit revived (vv.26b-27)
3. Jacob resolved to go and see Joseph (v.28).

COMMENTARY

God's Providential Care

Judah had just finished his impassioned plea for his brother Benjamin and for his aged father Jacob. Joseph could no longer control his emotion. He cried unashamedly and loudly. He wisely dismissed all his Egyptian servants before disclosing his real identity to his brothers. He was discreet in that he did not want the Egyptians to know what his brothers had done to him.

His revelation to his brothers was short and succinct, "I am Joseph." He then immediately asked about their father. The reaction of the brothers was one of a terrible shock. They were understandably speechless. Imagine what could have crossed their minds at that moment – this Egyptian ruler, who had been harsh and tough with them, was their brother Joseph whom they had sold off so many years ago! Of course, they would not know what to expect.

Joseph's inquiry regarding their father, which immediately followed this stunning revelation, softens the shock. They were tender words. He invited them to step nearer so that they could study his features. He told them what no one else knew, "I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt" (v.4b). That should convince his brothers.

Joseph allayed their fears. He explained that it was God, not them, who sent him to Egypt so as to preserve

lives (v.5). God had made him a “father to Pharaoh, and lord of his entire house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt” (v.8). Three times he mentioned that it was God’s plan and purpose that he was sent to Egypt. It was God who exalted him and made him a benefactor to Pharaoh and his country. It was God who had brought him before Pharaoh, and God who had exalted him to his present position of being the most powerful man in Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself! He harboured no grudges against them. He was not deliberately cruel for he mentioned his being sold into Egypt only in passing to assure his brothers that he was their long lost brother! Joseph used the name “God (*elohim*)” appropriately. It is the name of the Creator God, who rules and controls the heavens and the earth, and all that are therein. Those who trust God and walk uprightly before Him can discern the providential workings of God in their lives, during the good times as well as the bad.

Do Good to Others

Joseph continued to talk. He did not let his brothers respond. He went on to tell them about his plan for the future. He wanted them to quickly return to Jacob and tell him the news that he, Joseph, is lord of all Egypt. Joseph was not boasting. He did not say it in a self-glorifying manner. His words were intended to convey that he had the power to do all that he had said and promised. There were five more years of severe famine. They should move to Egypt so that they could be well provided for. He continued to reassure them that it was “my mouth that speaketh unto you” (v.12). Joseph himself spoke to them without an interpreter. He spoke directly to them in

their native tongue. That convinced them, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that he was Joseph. Then he fell on Benjamin’s neck and kissed him to show his affection for him, and kissed all the others. This is the ultimate gesture that he bore no grudges or ill feelings against them. After that “his brethren talked with him” (v.15). They must have talked about many things. Joseph would have shared with them what happened to him since he last saw them in Dothan. They, in turn, must have shared about their families and their father. The reconciliation and forgiveness was complete.

God Uses Others to Provide for His People

Pharaoh came to know that Joseph’s family had come to Egypt. In gratitude for what Joseph had done for him and his country, Pharaoh commanded Joseph to move all his family members, including their livestock, to Egypt. He wanted them to enjoy the goodness and fatness of the land. Pharaoh’s command coincided with Joseph’s plan! This is Divine providence! We are reminded of another instance of God’s Divine providence -- Paul’s life was threatened by his enemies. They had plotted to kill him. Paul’s nephew learnt of this wicked plot. He informed the Roman authorities in Jerusalem. Subsequently, Paul was heavily guarded and escorted to Caesarea, away from danger. God had promised him that he would “bear witness at Rome” (Acts 23:11-24). God does make use of the resources of unbelievers to finance and support His people!

The time for them to depart Honour Thy Father and Brothers

The time for his brothers to depart had come. Joseph generously provided them with clothes. He gave Benjamin much money and five changes of clothing. Joseph did not forget his father. He prepared ten asses of “good things” and ten more to be laden with corn and bread for his father. Joseph indeed honoured his father and his brothers. He was generous and kind. His parting words to them were that they “fall not out by the way” (v.24). The word “fall” means “to be agitated” or “to quarrel.” In other words Joseph cautioned them not to argue or quarrel amongst themselves. He did not want them to accuse one another over what had happened in the past and he did not want his special kindness to Benjamin to be a divisive element. They were to remember that they had many things to do when they reached home and they should do it without dispute.

Triple Joy

When they were home, they told Jacob, “Joseph is yet alive, and he is the governor over all the land of Egypt” (26). Jacob was shocked. All these years, he had been grieving and mourning for the loss of his favourite son, Joseph. The sudden news that he was alive was too good to be true. He had seen his multiple coloured coat covered with blood! When Jacob saw the “wagons”, he was convinced and his spirit revived. The Egyptian wagons were not the same as the chariots used by the neighbouring countries. Jacob said, “It is enough.” What was important to him was that Joseph was still alive and that he could see him again. He prepared to go to Egypt. It was a triple

joy for him – Benjamin was safe, Simeon was also home, and Joseph, his favourite son, was alive in all his glory. God be praised! It was not reported that the brothers confessed their evil deed to Jacob. But it is highly probable that they did.

SUMMARY

Reconciliation and forgiveness are possible when we can see God’s providence at work for good in our lives. In order to discern this, we must know about the ways and thoughts of God. He has revealed these in His Word. That behoves us to diligently study the revelation in His inspired and infallible scriptures. There is much to gain from spending quality time reading, meditating, and learning the many precious truths recorded in the Book of Life. AMEN

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DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION

QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

Monday: Genesis 45:1-8; Ephesians 1:3-12; Luke 6:37.

Tuesday: Genesis 45:9-15; Psalm 36:5-12; Matthew 7:12.

Wednesday: Genesis 45: 16-20; Acts 23:10-33; Psalm 24:1.

Thursday: Genesis 45:21-24; Acts 4:32-37; Ephesians 4:32-5:2.

Friday: Genesis 45:25-28; Matthew 17:1-8; 1Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Discussion Questions

1. Joseph was a man of high rank and position, but he cried so loudly. Do you think it is proper for him to cry?

2. How did Joseph explain his brothers' past deed of selling him into Egypt? What do we learn about God?

3. Describe how Joseph allayed the confusion and terror of his brothers.

4. Is Joseph glorifying himself when he told his brothers to inform his father of his glory in Egypt?

5. How did Joseph end his disclosure of his identity to his brothers?

6. How did Pharaoh respond when he learned that Joseph's brothers had come to see him?

9. What concern did Joseph show when he sent them off?

7. What does Pharaoh's response tell us about God's dealings with His chosen people?

10. Jacob did not believe his sons' report that Joseph was indeed alive. Why is that so?

8. How did Joseph treat his brothers when the latter took their departure from Egypt?

11. What made him change his mind?

12. Do you think the brothers explained everything to their father concerning their sin against Joseph?
