



STORY

Joseph's Brothers Come to Egypt Again - Genesis 43-45

8/18/04

TEACHER PRAYER

Guide and bless me, dear Savior, so that I never forget that all things work together for good to those who love You. Bless me as I bring this truth to Your lambs. Grant me the faith, strength, and patience I need to be faithful in my calling to the lambs You have placed under my care. In Jesus' saving name. Amen.

VOCABULARY

famine: a time in which crops failed to grow and there was not enough food

surety: one who will be responsible for another; a guarantee

bereaved: to be deprived of something or someone, especially by death

repaid evil for good: to do something evil to someone who has done good to you; in this case stealing from a man who showed kindness

abomination: something that causes intense loathing or disgust in another.

divination: the act of foretelling future events

OUTER AIM

How God provided for Joseph's family to come to Egypt. Why God sent Jacob's family to Egypt.

INNER AIM

God sent Jacob and his family to Egypt to make a great nation of them. From this people (specifically Judah) the Savior Jesus would come. As God worked all things for the good of His people, so our Lord still does for us today. ***"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."*** (Romans 8:28)

BACKGROUND

The famine again brought the brothers to Egypt to buy grain. (Only ten brothers made the trip since Joseph and Simeon were already in Egypt). Unknown to the brothers their fate rested in the hands of Joseph, whom they had sold into slavery some twenty-odd years earlier. Joseph wanted to be certain that they had not only truly repented of their sins against him, but that they had also changed their sinful, selfish ways. He tested them by pretending to threaten Benjamin, their youngest brother. Joseph revealed himself to his brothers when they demonstrated that they would sacrifice themselves rather than see harm come to Benjamin. This was indication that a profound change had been worked in their hearts. The reunion that followed was therefore heartwarming and complete without reservation of any kind.

Certainly one will want to discuss the forgiveness the brothers received and the joy at finding out their brother was alive. What relief they must have felt in knowing that the sin that had been burning in their hearts was forgiven. Joseph certainly had the power and could have made his brothers suffer greatly for their sin. We see in Joseph a true man of God who was both loving and forgiving. The chastening of the Lord through Joseph had brought the brothers to repentance and forgiveness. The brothers could now see, by faith, that God had sent Joseph to save lives. The fact that God turned their evil plan to serve His purpose does not excuse the sin they committed. It does demonstrate to

us that our loving and gracious God is merciful and long suffering toward us all. God does not want anyone to die in unbelief.

Chapter 43

Jacob again demonstrates some of the same character flaws that marked his early years. He continues to allow one son, Simeon, to suffer in Egypt rather than risk his cherished son Benjamin in his mind the only living son of his beloved Rachel. He then blames his other sons for telling the truth to the "Egyptian ruler" (Joseph) when he asked them about other sons. Jacob then resorts to the tried and true tactic of gifting himself into the good favor of another (remember his attempt to pacify his brother Esau in Genesis 32). Finally Jacob realizes that he has no choice but to trust in the Lord and send Benjamin with his brothers. He is still wrestling with God.

Though Joseph invited his brothers to dine with him, they, the Egyptians, and Joseph himself were all actually served in different areas of Joseph's house to preserve proper protocol. It was an abomination for Egyptians to dine directly with foreigners.

The brothers were filled with wonder when they were seated according to age. They had evidently never revealed their relative ages to the Egyptians and very likely believed that "the Egyptian ruler" must have determined this by divination.

Joseph again tested his older brothers by showing favoritism to Benjamin. He was no doubt observing them closely for signs of the old jealousy he remember all too well.

Chapter 44

By implicating Benjamin for the theft of the ruler's cup, Joseph was arranging one final test for his brothers. He gave them the chance to escape with their lives if they would give up Benjamin. The brothers he had known in his youth would have gladly accepted Joseph's offer. His brothers now demonstrated the change that had been wrought in them by not only refusing to give up Benjamin but also by offering to take his place.

In Judah we see not only a changed man but also a picture of his most famous Descendant. As Judah was willing to sacrifice himself for the sake of both his brother Benjamin and his father, so Christ Jesus willingly sacrificed himself for all mankind.

Chapter 45

The moment of revelation was a private moment between Joseph and his brothers, therefore he orders all Egyptians from the room. Like Moses after him, living the life of a wealthy, powerful Egyptian had not changed Joseph's allegiance.

Joseph demonstrates no lingering animosity toward his brothers. He recognized the hand of God in what had happened and was thus able to truly forgive them.

There has been some attempt in modern times to characterize the land of Goshen as substandard land passed off to the Children of Israel as something valuable. This land was in fact very valuable and remains fertile to this day. The area was given to Joseph's family at a time when Joseph was at the height of his power in Egypt. All of Egypt, from Pharaoh on down, looked with grateful eyes upon Joseph as their national savior. It seems unlikely they would have rewarded him with poor land or that Joseph, second only to Pharaoh, would have accepted a poor region for his family. The picture of Jacob's sons revealing the news to their father that Joseph was alive is one of the

most poignant and heartwarming in all of the Bible. We should view this scene as but a small taste of the indescribable joy all Christians will one day experience in heaven.

STUDENT PRAYER

Lord Jesus, help me to remember always that You make all things work for the good of Your children. Make me realize the love and mercy You have for me. May I be ever grateful for all you have given me especially for the forgiveness and salvation through my Savior Jesus. Lord, strengthen the faith You have given me and keep me ever faithful. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit and grant me the courage to share the message of forgiveness and salvation with others. In Jesus name. Amen

PRESENTATION

The account is too long to read in class. It will be best if you tell this Bible truth in your own words using the written account as your guide. Emphasize that God worked all things for good for Jacob's family; and that He still does that for us today. God sent Jacob's family to Egypt to make a great nation of them. Above all, emphasize that it was from this nation, the Children of Israel (specifically the tribe of Judah) that the Savior of the world would come.

APPLICATION

1. God's grace is at the forefront of this Bible story. We see clearly the love and forgiveness He has for us and that we should have for one another. Emphasize in the first part of this lesson the repentance of the brothers (turning from sin and in faith turning to God for forgiveness). Emphasize the forgiving nature of our Lord and the excellent example provided by Joseph. To demonstrate how difficult it might be to freely forgive someone who actually does great harm to us, try to get your students to imagine how they would act and feel if they had been in Joseph's place. Because of our sinful nature we have a tendency to want to get even. Show the students how Joseph truly acted in a God-pleasing manner. Show them how in faith Joseph realized that what had happened to him God worked for the good of him and his family. Encourage them to look for God's hand in everything that happens to them, good and bad.
2. There are times when we can't understand how something can be working for our good (sickness, sadness, etc.) and when it is very difficult for us to understand why God allowed something to happen to us or to someone we love. In faith (believing what we cannot prove) we cling only to the promise of our Lord: ***"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."*** (Romans 8:28) We will probably not understand why God allows what He does allow until we arrive in heaven.
3. Impress upon the students that we are all members of a family through our faith in Jesus. Our Lord gives many wonderful blessings to us as part of His family. Have the children give examples (e.g., forgiveness, salvation, peace, comfort, fellowship, confirmation class, earthly blessings, etc.) When we are brought to faith in Jesus as our Savior, God becomes our dear Father and we His dear children. What a precious blessing it is to know that we are members of God's family through Spirit-worked faith in Jesus Christ.
4. Ask the children to think of a Christian love done who has "fallen asleep in the Lord." Remind the student that one day he or she will be united with that loved one in heaven. This is only possible because Jesus has paid for all of our sins on the cross.

Additional Teacher's Aids

What God's Word Tells Us - Discuss the following.

(Try to lead discussion of the Lord's hand in our lives turning things we thought we bad into good.)

(Examples: Woman is followed by a trucker in the middle of the night after she leaves a gas station. She can't seem to shake him even when she exits and reenters the highway. Finally she stops at another gas station and runs inside to call the police, as she does the trucker goes to the her car and pulls a man out of the back seat! She felt the trucker was bad...now she understands how he is good. Many events in our lives can be like this.

I can remember a difficult break up in high school. I felt empty, the only thing that seem to fill the void was the time I spent in devotion with my Lord. This bad break up definitely strengthened my relationship with the Lord. How about the man who was a slave, then falsely imprisoned, and ended up ruling...okay we're back to Joseph.)

Prayer ACTivity

Guide the students is writing a group prayer that reiterates main lessons of the day. This acrostic approach can help the students remember how to build a prayer.

ACTS

I've found it helpful to assign groups to work on each 'letter' of the prayer and then use an overhead projector transparency and have a leader from each group write their part of the prayer where everyone can see and pray it at the end of class. We also used a secretary to keep a log of each prayer we wrote and the reference it was based on with the intention of printing a class prayer booklet.

A (Acknowledge who you are praying to along with a characteristic)

Ex - Dear just and forgiving Father in Heaven.

C (Confess)

Ex. - We admit that we sinfully resist the correction Your Word. We at times lack the wisdom to see that it is out of love for our souls that You instruct our parents to punish us.

T (Thank)

Ex. - We praise You for Your indescribable love that led You to send Your Son to save us from our sins and for those you have placed over us to help us recognize our need for repentance.

S (Supplicate - ask)

Ex. - We ask for the continued blessing of the Holy Spirit to lead us to confess and repent of our sins and that through Christ we may one day be with You in heaven. Amen.

PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

Lower

Psalms 103:8 - *The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.*

Romans 8:28 - *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

Galatians 3:26 - *For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*

Middle

Luke 6:27 - *But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.*

Romans 8:28 - *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

Ephesians 4:32 - *And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.*

Upper

Psalms 103:8 - *The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.*

Jeremiah 31:34 - *No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.*

Romans 8:28 - *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

HYMN CHOICES

“Oh, Blest the House, Whate’er Befall” TLH #625:1, 2

“Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken” TLH #423:3

“My Spirit On Thy Care” TLH #435:1 & 4

“With The Lord Begin Thy Task” TLH #540:1 & 4