

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Afternoon

Date 3rd March 2024

Preacher Rev Philip Knowles

Hymns ps 130 martyrdom, 669, 322

Read: Genesis 43:15-28 Text Genesis 43:15-28

Series: Joseph Title: Joseph's steward & sovereignty.

The time had now come for Israel to send his son meet the sovereign ruler of Egypt.

Having prepared his sons to present various items of worth and value, honour to the sovereign.

Israel now obeys the sovereigns command in sending Benjamin with his brothers.

All the other tokens of honour and reverence would only be accepted by the sovereign if the brothers came with Benjamin.

Without Benjamin, there was refusal, and death by the famine, but with Benjamin, there was acceptance and life saved from death by the famine.

Just before his sons leave home, to take their journey, he doesn't know if they will return, like Joseph and Simeon, and for that reason Israel says, ***If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.***

Therefore, he commits this children in prayer to **God almighty**, meaning **El Shaddai**, **God all sufficient**.

He prays that his children will find mercy, favour, kindness before the man, acceptance with him and provision saving them from death by the famine,

but also, that Benjamin and Simeon will be spared, and return home safely, to fulfil covenant promises made to Israel concerning the coming Saviour in Genesis 32 & 35.

Therefore, dear Father, dear parent, follow Israel's godly example, that when your children leave home to take their journey, to school, work, any other reason,

pray for them, bring God's promises before Him, commit them into the hands of God almighty, El Shaddai, the God all sufficient, that He will give mercy, favour, kindness, through Christ in saving their souls from eternal death, and they will be brought safely home.

In reaching Egypt I want to focus upon **Joseph's steward, and sovereignty**, and then next consider **Joseph's sympathy and seating**.

I FIRST, JOSEPH'S STEWARD

Its interesting to note in **verse 16**, that when the brothers arrive in Egypt, Joseph commands the ruler of his house also named in **verse 19** as the Steward of Joseph's house, to **Bring these men home, and slay, and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon.**

That is exactly what the steward does, look at **verse 17**, **And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.**

He fulfils the command of Joseph, to lead these men to Joseph, to meet with Joseph, dine with Joseph and partake of the good things provided by Joseph.

The stewards presence in meeting the brothers, causes them to be anxious, as **verse 18** begins, **and the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house...**

The word **afraid** means **to be terrified, to be filled with dread, anxious. Its the same word and expression used in Genesis**

42:35 that is because the fear in view refers to the same situation, the money found in their sacks.

That is confirmed as **verse 18** continues, ***and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses.***

In their mind they suggest they are brought into the house belonging to the sovereign, to be accused and sentenced to slavery for thief.

Now remember at this stage the Steward is still them leading to the house, and they are now communing or talking to him at the door of the house as **verse 19** shows, but he remains silent.

That is amazing, because the Steward has not spoken any word to them at this stage, rather he comes to them where they are to guide the way to Joseph.

His purpose is to point them to another, namely Joseph the sovereign, but his very presence, appearance and the fact he is leading them to the sovereign, causes them to enter into conversation about the past, just as being in prison did the same.

In **Verses 20-22** they relate what took place when everyman found his own money in their sacks, and they brought it back to Egypt, and extra.

They are despair, turmoil, anxious, troubled, and afraid, about being falsely accused, and how the sovereign Lord of Egypt will view and treat them.

He has all power given to him by King Pharaoh to rule and he could cast them all into prison or make them his servants, if he pleases.

Now, over all, God is using this situation and scene, as He has done previously, and will continue until chapter 44, as object lessons to teach the brethren **they are guilty concerning their brother Joseph and must acknowledge their wrong doing.**

In response to their fear, and terror, notice, the Steward then speaks, in **verse 22**, ***And he said, Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them.***

Did you see the first word the Steward speaks, it's of peace.

Joseph didn't leave his brothers comfortless, rather he sends his Steward, another comforter until He comes.

The word **peace** is the word ***shalom***. To the Jew **Shalom** was a greeting, farewell, and expression, meaning ***to keep well, make well, well-being, soundness which is another term for health, and prosperity.***

And that is backed up by words following, ***Peace be to you, fear not.***

shalom, don't be terrified, afraid.

But also, when Joseph asks his brothers in **verse 27** ***of their welfare***, or ***well being***, and said ***is your father well...***

the words are ***shalom***, how is your father's wellbeing.

They answered in **verse 28**, ***thy servant our father is in good health...he is in shalom***, it is well with our father.

But at present it was not well with the brothers, it is not shalom with them, because they are afraid, but the Steward was sent by the sovereign in his place and speaks words of shalom on the basis of the sovereign's plan.

Genesis 42:25 ***Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn and to restore everyman's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way, and thus did he unto them.***

The words of salmon spoken by the steward are based upon Joseph's sovereign command to provide for his brothers, in giving them abundantly, that's the human and natural side of the story.

But also, the Steward lifts the scene higher, and says, ***your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks***: The money was given on purpose.

The money in your sacks was put there by the goodness and mercy of God. He brought Simeon unto them.

Now at this point, the brothers should have caught on something is different about this Egyptian Steward, because he is using language, phraseology, known to Jews.

He is going out of his way to comfort these troubled men. He uses the word **shalom**, he speaks of ***your God, and the God of your father***.

The brothers should have been thinking a long the lines, someone knows more information about us than we realised, what if they know something about Joseph.

what if they know what we did to Joseph, but because they never expected to see Joseph again, it never crossed their mind.

To the brothers, Joseph is the brother who is not, the brother who is dead.

Verse 24, the Steward leads the men to Joseph's house for cleansing by water to wash their feet.

Remember they had travelled from Canaan into Egypt, their feet would have been dusty and dirty, and they could not enter the sovereign's presence unclean and unwashed.

But to enter the sovereign's presence, to dine with him, to enjoy blessings he offered at his table, they must be cleansed from their filthiness.

The Steward prepares the men to meet the sovereign.

We even see this with Joseph himself in Genesis 41, after he was set free from prison, and before he stood in Pharaoh's presence he must shave and change his clothes.

What a picture there is to a greater than Joseph the sovereign ruler of Egypt, and his Steward, to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Sovereign Lord of all lords, and the Holy Spirit who prepares sinners to meet the sovereign Lord.

The Lord Jesus Himself taught the need for cleaning in **John 13** by the object lesson of foot washing, in the context of serving one another. But to serve Christ and enjoy fellowship with Him, He said ***If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me***, the word **part** means ***fellowship communion***.

The Lord Jesus sends out the Holy Spirit to fulfil His word, to seek out sinners He has been sent to gather, and by His presence, trouble sinners, while they remain in their filthiness, and therefore, by the water of the word prepare them to meet Christ, to fellowship with him.

As the Holy Spirit speaks to saint and sinner, He does by the word of Christ, and He brings a word of comfort to the troubled one, leading them to Christ for pardon and for the believer to sanctification.

The Lord Jesus taught His disciples in **John 14:18** ***I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you***. The Holy Spirit is called in **John 14:16** ***another Comforter***.

The words **another Comforter** underline the position the Holy Spirit would occupy in this world, and continues to occupy, until Christ returns.

He was sent and has come to act on Christ's behalf in this world. The word **another** means, ***another of the same kind***. The Spirit operates or serves saints and sinners, in the same manner as Christ during His earthly ministry.

To the troubled and anxious sinner, and saved sinner, the Holy Spirit by His presence, comes to speak of peace given by Christ, to instruct through the Word, to testify of Christ and lead to Jesus for salvation and sanctification. **John 15:26** ***But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.***

And there is a double picture, Joseph sent his Steward to bring his bothers to him and Joseph met them.

Joseph sent his Steward to prepare the bothers to meet him.

but also, Joseph sent his Steward to bring his bothers to him until He returned to meet them, and feast with them.

The Holy Spirit brings sinners to Christ, for Him to meet with them, prepare them and provide for them but also, The Holy Spirit will bring sinners to Christ and continues to do so until Christ returns to meet them and fellowship with them.

That is both present and future.

I Joseph's Steward, Notice:

II SECOND, JOSEPH'S SOVEREIGNTY.

The time had come for Joseph to meet the men and to dine with them. **Verse 26** records, ***when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house....***

if you remember I had suggested that this present was separate present from the other items such as honey and spices.

It was present suited to the one to whom it was given to honour the office and position held.

In bringing the present to sovereign ruler of Egypt they then bowed themselves to him to the earth.

They acknowledged by their present and posture of bowing, they stood in the presence of Royalty, the sovereign ruler of Egypt.

They were acknowledging one whom they bowed to, has power and dominion over them.

Now again, the brothers don't know this ruler is Joseph. We do, as we have the complete record as can look back, but in Genesis 43 they are living this moment as they knew.

They bowed themselves to the sovereign to the earth. If you like they behaved themselves.

They honoured the one in authority, they showed respect to his position.

That is also seen by the fact that when they are bowed down, they lift their heads only to answer the Sovereign's question about their welfare or being and their father, then immediately they put their heads back down in respect.

Look at **verse 28** *they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance.* The meaning of the word **obeisance** means **to bow down**.

Once again unknown and unaware to the brothers, they are fulfilling scripture, the message God gave to Joseph in his dreams recorded in **Genesis 37**.

(What was the message communicated to Joseph in his dreams. The first is recorded in **verse 7** "*For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.*

verse 8 confirms that Joseph's brethren knew what the words meant. *And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?* There

was no confusion, or play on words, it was simple and plain language.

Joseph used the language and illustration of the field. Joseph's sheaf, his stack of grain, was standing up, placed upright, whereas the sheaves or bundles of grain belonging to his brothers are in a lower position.)

It meant that Joseph would one day will be exalted and will rule over his brethren and they would bow before him.

Of course by their envy and hatred of Joseph they rejected such words.

Yet this is just one of many times they bow in his presence and it wouldn't be the last.

Therefore, men and woman, believer and unbeliever, do you realise everyday, you live in the presence of Christ the King, immortal, invisible God only wise.

Believer, do you realise when you have your devotions at home, reading His word and praying to Him, you have entered into His heavenly presence, you come before His royal throne?

Do you realise as we gather together in His house as He commands, it is to meet with Him and Him to meet with us?

Do you realise, He is our Creator, therefore our times are in His hands?

That should cause us to bow in humility before Him. we live because He choses to keep us alive. Every breath I take, He gives it. Every heart beat, He permits it. **And yet many take the goodness of God for granted and don't bow.**

He is the only Redeemer of His elect people, that should cause us to bow in humble adoration, that God sent His only begotten son, to die and take away my sin.

He chose to save a wretched like me, when He had every sovereign right to leave in my sin. **And yet many take the grace of God for granted and don't bow.**

He is the Judge the world, that should cause us to bow before Him, believer, He judged you as forgiven by His own precious blood. unbeliever He will judge you. **And yet many take the mercy of God for granted and don't bow.**

He is the exalted Lord, that will cause all to bow, and confess Jesus is Lord. All will see Him as the Highly exalted KING of Kings and LORD of Lords.

At that time, Believer our praise and worship with continue with Him for all eternity.

At that time, Unbeliever your punishment and wailing will begin for all eternity.

Jospeh's brothers refused the message they bow before Him, but God's word was fulfilled, and they bowed before him as Ruler. That is a truth for all to learn, to take God at His word.

Next time we will consider, **JOSEPH'S SYMPATHY & JOSEPH'S SEATING**