

Scripture Reading: Genesis 45:16-28

“16 Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh’s house, saying, “Joseph’s brothers have come.” So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well. 17 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. 18 Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. 19 Now you are commanded—do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. 20 Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.” 21 Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them carts, according to the command of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey. 22 He gave to all of them, to each man, changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments. 23 And he sent to his father these things: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey. 24 So he sent his brothers away, and they departed; and he said to them, “See that you do not become troubled along the way.” 25 Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. 26 And they told him, saying, “Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt.” And Jacob’s heart stood still, because he did not believe them. 27 But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. 28 Then Israel said, “It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.””

'Be Not Troubled'

We are back in the Book of Beginnings and as we approach the final chapters we find the story moving quickly... But there are still several important lessons for us to learn. As we have tried to do from the early chapters on the Creation of the World and the fall of mankind, we have sought to follow the instructions or command of Jesus to always search for and find Him in these pages of the Old Testament!

Today and for the next two weeks we will focus on lessons learned here that can be clearly seen in the New Testament as priorities for when the Kingdom of Jesus fills the whole earth:

- First, we are not to be troubled by our failures as we play our roles in God’s story!**
- Next, we will learn that we must not be afraid as we look at the incredible challenges God puts in our paths.**
- And finally, we are to believe the Great Commission!**

And yes, all three of these relate to the climax of the story of how Jacob and his family are taken to Egypt just as God had promised his grandfather Abraham many years before. When we left off last month, Joseph had witnessed his brothers passing the important test he had given them to demonstrate their repentance and he was overwhelmed again with emotion as he revealed himself to his brothers with many hugs and kisses. The excitement was now spilling over into Pharaoh’s household and now in our text we see Pharaoh himself being informed and his reaction shows the love he had grown to have for Joseph!

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- Keep that comment about having the best of the land in mind for our lesson it two weeks, but for this week it is clear to see that Pharaoh wants Joseph to be reunited with his family and wants to make sure they have all they need... Sparing no expense if you will.**

19 “Now you are commanded—do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. 20 Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.” 21 Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them carts, according to the command of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey.”

- **Joseph now follows the instructions of Pharaoh with great joy and again he gives special blessings to his brother Benjamin...**
- **This time not as a further test for his brothers, but as we shall see shortly, it is a message to his father to help confirm that Benjamin’s brother is alive & well giving him special treatment!**

22 “He gave to all of them, to each man, changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments. 23 And he sent to his father these things: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey. 24 So he sent his brothers away, and they departed; and he said to them, “See that you do not become troubled along the way.”

- **Now here is where we need to pause in our text and consider that important lesson for us today...**

As I have said before, it is not difficult to see Jesus in the Joseph accounts! Here again it is Joseph who has saved his brothers and ministered to them in the midst of their many sins.

- **We could even sense a bit of Trinitarian imagery from last week as both Pharaoh and Joseph now work to bless these brothers and all of Jacob’s family!**

BUT I think where we should truly hear the voice of our Savior is in the final instruction given to these brothers as they departed:

- **Joseph sends them off saying, “See that you do not become troubled along the way.”**

So just what kind of trouble did Joseph have in mind?

--They knew the way home, having made the trip three times already.

--They had PLENTY of provisions, so there was no danger of hunger or thirst.

--There could be danger on the road, but here we have eleven grown brothers traveling together under the protection of Pharaoh, so that is not likely.

- **I believe that the problem Joseph saw rearing its ugly head was not any external situation...**
- **But as is often the case with any of us it would come from within.**

So just what is it that could trouble these brothers in a time of great victory and celebration?

- **Why does Joseph command them to not be troubled along the way?**

For the answer to that we must step back and consider the past that these brothers bring into the current situation AND what lay just ahead...

- **Remember, years ago they were jealous of the favored son Joseph!**
- **This root of bitterness soon grew into envy and hatred that brought them very close to murdering their brother Joseph.**
- **Rather than having blood on their hands they simply sold him into slavery which was a cruel fate in those dark days.**
- **They then had to lie to their father with a tale about wild animals and continue that lie for some 20 years.**
- **With Joseph revealing himself, their father would now know the truth.**
- **And finally they would soon be living under the rule of the one they treated so poorly years ago!**

Now remembering that Joseph represents Jesus here, what will his attitude be toward all of those sins?

That is right: He will choose to not remember them, and in fact as we already saw and will see again in the final chapter of Genesis, Joseph only sees the good that God has worked out in spite of their sin: What they intended for evil God worked for good! So now if we are honest we can ask and answer the simple question: Would any of those past actions trouble these brothers as they had the time to ponder things more fully on the journey home?

- Yes, indeed they would and this is why Joseph warns them to not be troubled!

They would be tempted to be anxious and troubled about oh so many details and yet Joseph wanted them to be filled with great joy as they entered the best land in Egypt with a full family reunion.

Yes, Joseph wanted them to be anxious for nothing, but I will not return again to the usual and very famous verse from Philippians. I want instead to turn to middle chapter of the Sermon of the Mount as given to us by Matthew in chapters 5-7: Certainly Matthew chapter six could be seen as an entire chapter to remind us that we are NOT to be troubled!

- Jesus focused on this important teaching because He knew well that it would not only be those brothers of Joseph who had such struggles!

I certainly do not need to look any further than my own life to see examples of this for today. I was not converted until the age of 26 so yes, I must live with many wicked actions I took in those younger years when I was not a Christian. Many of our older members have similar experiences and know well how those sins can come back to haunt us... Not just with real consequences like ruined lives or fortunes but also those torturous memories.

- Even after forty years, some can still be overwhelming and of course our enemy is always trying to bring them to our remembrance!

And sadly, I must add to these the sins committed after my conversion which can in some ways be even more troubling because I should have known better and had to resist the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit in order to commit them!

- Satan can really have a field day with such memories if we allow it.

This is clearly what Joseph knew could trouble his brothers on the journey and what Jesus knows can trouble us today. The reason Jesus and the Apostle Paul tell us to NOT be troubled or anxious is because they want us to see our lives the way Jesus sees us:

- As forgiven sinners, standing in the Righteousness of Jesus!
- And that means God has chosen to NOT remember our sins and in His grand plan has used even our weaknesses & rebellion for His own glory, just as He did with the sins of those brothers.

So let me quickly move through some passages in Matthew six that flesh out this understanding...

In Matthew chapter five & the opening of chapter six Jesus has encouraged the disciples to not be hypocrites like the Pharisees who do things for show and when the Master comes to the subject of prayer we see the first instruction with regard to trouble...

Matthew 6: “5 “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. 7 And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.”

In those times where we see trouble everywhere the very first important step we must take is to remember this simple truth:

- **Our Father knows the things we have need of BEFORE we ask Him.”**

Jesus then gives them what we know as the Lord’s Prayer: 9 “In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. 13 And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

- **Jesus then reminds the disciples and all of us that to know God’s forgiveness, we must be forgiving!**

14 “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

- **I think it is interesting, and important, to note that ‘forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors’ is the only portion of the Great Prayer where Jesus then offers some further commentary! [not a matter of works but how we are seen positional]**

Looking back on our account, Joseph knows that as the noise of the celebrations here in Egypt fade on the road home, there will be thoughts about all those past sins and trespasses returning to trouble them and thus he commanded them to NOT be troubled.

- **They could wonder how Joseph could ever forgive them, or dread the upcoming discussion with Dad about what they did to Joseph and of course be very trouble about what his reaction could be!**

Thus, Joseph wanted them to remember how he told them that what they intended for evil God had worked out for good and thus they were to know forgiveness & receive the blessings of the best land in Egypt!

- **And thinking about that future life is where the other major teaching about being troubled is found in the Sermon on the Mount:**

Jesus teaches the disciples about proper fasting and then turns to having proper priorities to avoid being troubled about the wrong things... 19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” This does not mean we can have no treasure or earthly possessions...

- **Just think about the wealth that Joseph had just bestowed on his brothers before he gave them to warning about being troubled!**

They could enjoy those and many more living in the best land in Egypt as long as they had the proper priorities...

- **The moment their eyes turned from God to the blessings God had given them, they would be very troubled again.**
- **This is why I urge people to ask an important question when it comes to material possessions or even earthly institutions like family...**
- **IF they were taken away tomorrow: Would it change my relationship with Jesus?**

This is why Jesus goes on to say at verse 24 “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

- **Then we come to the crux of the matter that was at the heart of what Joseph was teaching his brothers.**

**25 “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?
26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”**

- **Yes, there is a proper understanding self-esteem, but as with material goods it is seeing our worth as a gift from God rather than something we earn or do ourselves.**

And so Jesus continues with some powerful illustrations: 27 “Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 28 “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

- **So whether we are being haunted by old forgiven sins or tempted by the allure of worldly treasures, Jesus joins with Joseph in telling us to not be troubled along the way!**

This is why the Apostle Paul tells us to rejoice before his warning about anxiety and why Jesus prayed that His joy might be ours! Yes, Jesus said, “Sufficient for the day is its own trouble,” so IF you want to be troubled on the way, there is no lack of opportunity!

When we turn to the end of chapter 45 I think we see brothers who heeded the advice of their new ruler Joseph as they bring comfort to their father even in the midst of some pretty heavy-duty confessing that needed to be done...

- **A private affair where we are not given any details of, just as the resurrection morning meeting of Peter and Jesus after Peter’s denials was just between them!**

Genesis 45:25 “Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. 26 And they told him, saying, “Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt.” And Jacob’s heart stood still, because he did not believe them. 27 But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. 28 Then Israel said, “It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.””

- **They have brought joy to their father’s heart and next week we will learn why we are not to fear when God calls us into any new or challenging places!**
- **But for this week, let us remember the words of Joseph and Jesus: Let not your hearts be troubled on the way!**

Communion Meditation: Psalm 23

“A Psalm of David. 23 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. 3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake. 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.”