

“Now, About Those Family Scandals and Scoundrels!”

10-13-13

What a ride we've been having being with Joseph! So far in this series we've focused on getting through anything, especially because God is with us every step of the way. But sometimes we make a stupid mistake, and then make more stupid mistakes to cover it up! The one thing we can depend on is that our God is always good!

Joseph was the special child and was spoiled rotten! His father, Jacob, didn't have a clue on good parenting! Let's be honest, Jacob's family was dysfunctional! In his family were pride, deception, favoritism, hatred, and neglect! It didn't begin with the brothers throwing Joseph in a pit and then selling him. They were just following the example of their father, Jacob!

Jacob tricked his brother to give him his birthright for a bowl of stew. He lied and tricked his father into giving his blessing to him instead of his older brother! He was also the favorite of his mother! With a family history like that, is it any surprise the brothers would throw their least favorite brother in a pit?

When we meet Joseph and his brothers now as the brothers come to Egypt for food and have to appear before Joseph, more than twenty years had passed. Joseph could have told them he was their brother but Genesis 42:7 says, *“Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke roughly to them.”* Sometimes family pain is the deepest pain!

My sister, who now is with Jesus, was five years older than me. When she learned that my parents had chosen me to be the executor of their estate, she was upset. She was a help to my mother who had dementia, but the only time she spoke to me was if there was a need for more money. We didn't communicate much for years! There are few things tougher to handle than old family hurts!

It wasn't until my sister had a brain tumor that would take her life that we talked to each other almost every week. I missed seeing her at the end by three days, but I was there as we celebrated her life.

When Joseph saw his brothers he decided to leave the past in the past. He didn't seek revenge now that he was the one in control, but instead would leave the room to cry and wipe his eyes in private. Even though they had treated him so terribly, he loved seeing them again! It is true he kind of played with them and made them squirm a little, but he was going to make sure his entire family was taken care of, including his father!

Maybe your family failed you. They were the ones who should have cared for you, but they didn't. Life was tough, but you decided to just move on. You began a life for yourself and even though it might not have been easy, you succeeded!

Those family hurts many times leave a hole in your heart. You don't have that completeness you wish you had. But God knows that. God wants your whole heart and wants your heart whole! God wants to help you for your sake! God wants you to be restored!

Open to Romans 12. Restoration and reconciliation might take some time, maybe even a lifetime, but let God do His work in you! Verses 1-2, *“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living*

sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

God loves you! He sees you as His precious child. You're part of His family. Even if your earthly family wasn't the best, and you felt betrayed and neglected, your heavenly family is perfect! Unlike us, God never gives up on you!

God has some words for you to guide and lead you through the hurt you might have had throughout your life from your family and friends. Ephesians 4:31 says, *“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.”* And adding to that, God says in Colossians 3:13, *“bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”*

Open to Luke 4. Fix your family and enemies? That's God's job! Forgive your family and enemies? That's your job! Peace is God's goal. Forgiveness is God's tool!

God sent His One and Only Son to show you what true peace and forgiveness look like! Look at Jesus' words in verse 18, *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.”*

Jesus is your brother! He came to earth to suffer and die for you. He willingly gave His life for you! He did this because of love. He knows your weaknesses and desires to hold you close. He forgives you all your sins as you come to Him and confess them. His purpose is to have you in His family!

Jeremiah 29:11 tells us, *“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”* When He rose on that first Easter morning, He proclaimed victory over sin and Satan. That victory is yours as you walk with Him as His precious brother or sister!

Always remember, if He can heal Joseph and his family, don't you think He can heal you and yours?