UNIT THREE: The Life of Joseph

Lesson 7: “Reconciliation”, The Week of September 23rd, 2024

Learning Objectives: that the disciple see that in God’s way, and in his timing, He can bring healing and restoration in the worst of circumstances

Reading : Genesis 44:1-34; 45:1-5

“Reconciliation”

In this lesson, we will see how the Lord brings resolution to the saga of the conflict and estrangement within Joseph’s family, and some lessons that we can take away from it.

Chapter forty-four opens with Joseph’s brothers preparing to leave Egypt and return again to their father. Joseph told his steward to stuff his brothers’ sacks with as much food as he could get into them, and to once again put their money for groceries back into their sacks. Joseph told him to also put his silver cup into his youngest and full brother Benjamin’s sack.

As soon as the brothers had gotten out of the city, Joseph’s steward , as instructed by him, pursued and overtook his brothers. He asked them, per Joseph’s instructions, why they had repaid Joseph’s kindness towards them by stealing his silver cup. The brothers denied, in earnest, that they took it. They said that the very fact that they brought back the money that they found in their sacks from their first trip for supplies should show them to be honest, and that they would not do such a thing.

The brothers said that if the steward were to find the silver cup in any of their sacks, that brother would die, and the rest of them would become Joseph’s bondservants ,or slaves.

However, Joseph’s steward said that the only person who would be held responsible would be the person who actually had the cup. He searched all of the sacks; and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack. The brothers all tore their clothes in lamentation, as was the custom of the Jews; and they all returned to Joseph’s house.They all bowed down before Joseph ( as God had shown Joseph in his dreams).

Joseph asked his brothers what they had done, and asked them if they understood that he could “divine” ( or in his case actually discern by the Spirit of God) the truth of a matter. Judah became the spokesman for the brothers. He basically said that they had no answer for how his cup got into Benjamin’s sack. [They believed among themselves that it was God’s judgment against them for selling Joseph into slavery]. Judah said that they would become Joseph’s servants , or slaves (V.16).

Joseph himself reiterated to the brothers that the only one of them that he would detain to be his servant was Benjamin- the one who supposedly “took” the cup. He told the rest of the brothers to go back home to their father.

Judah however asked for permission to plead Benjamin’s cause before him; because he was as Pharaoh in regards to his place of authority.Judah recounted to Joseph all of the events that had occurred up to that point. He recounted how they were accused of being spies the first time they went to Egypt to buy food, and how they were told that they had to bring Benjamin back with them to prove that they were not spies. Judah spoke of how their father did not want him to go because he was afraid of losing him too, as he had Joseph, but finally relented and let him go back to Egypt only after Judah pledged that he himself would be surety for him, and bear the responsibility to his father if anything were to happen to Benjamin. He told Joseph that his father would be destroyed and die of grief if Benjamin did not come back to him. Judah ended by asking that he become his servant in Benjamin’s stead, so that he could return to his father.

The Bible says that when Joseph heard this, he could not contain his emotions any longer; and he cried openly in front of them all. He ordered all of his servants to leave him alone with his brothers, and told them that he was their brother, Joseph ( Gen.45:1). He asked how their father was; but they were so “troubled” at seeing him, that they could not even answer him (V.3).

Joseph told his brothers to come near to him. He then told them again that he was Joseph, “ whom you sold into Egypt” (V.45:4); but he said to them not to be grieved, nor angry with themselves, that they had sold him into Egypt; because “ God did send me before you to preserve life”(V.45:5).

The story of Joseph being sold into slavery by his jealous, heartless brothers, Joseph’s forgiveness and graciousness towards them, and their reconciliation is one of the most moving and meaningful in all of Scripture.

Joseph suffered wrongly at the hands of his brothers. He was torn away from his father, and his beloved younger brother, Benjamin. He was falsely accused of attempted rape by Potiphar’s wife, thrown into prison wrongly for 2 years, and was seemingly forgotten. Many people in his shoes would have been very bitter, unforgiving, and vengeful; but he did not allow himself to sink into that kind of morass. Perhaps this was in part because he understood that God had a purpose, overall, in allowing those things to happen to him. God raised him up in Egypt to become second in command only to the king, Pharaoh himself. God gave him the wisdom , not only to deliver his own people, Israel, but also Egypt and the world during a devastating period that could have destroyed all of the inhabitants of the earth .What an extraordinary example for God’s people for all generations !

Answers to Last Week’s Question:

Q1 What happened when Joseph’s brothers returned to Egypt?

Answer: They were brought into Josph’s house to share a noonday meal together.

Q2: When Joseph’s brothers recounted how they found the money for their groceries placed back in their sacks, what was the response of Joseph’s steward?

Answer: Joseph’s steward told them not to fear- that he put their money back in their sacks.

Q3 What was Joseph’s response to seeing Benjamin ?

Answer: He left out of their presence and wept.

4 Why didn’t Joseph and the Egyptians eat at the same table?

Answer: Egyptians thought that it was an abomination to eat with Jews

No Questions This Week.