

Genesis (2011) 45B

- Last week we witnessed the moment when Joseph revealed his true identity to his brothers
 - As Joseph brought the family through a time of testing, they came to repentance
 - They sought mercy from Joseph
 - They mourned their prior mistakes and sins against their father
 - And then Joseph revealed himself to them
 - And in these circumstances we saw a beautiful picture of Christ
 - Of how the Lord brings Tribulation against Israel in the Last Days
 - Of how Israel will be brought to repentance by that trial
 - Of how Israel will call upon the name of the Lord in their distress
 - And of how Jesus will reveal Himself to Israel in those last days
- So Joseph waited a year or more before finally sharing his secret with his brothers, and how stunning and unexpected the news was when they heard it
 - Quite often, secrets have that effect on other people
 - They can catch us off guard, unprepared for the reveal

A deacon is in the hospital and his good friend, a preacher, goes to visit him.

The preacher notices all the medical equipment attached to the deacon. The deacon is too weak to speak and can barely open his eyes. So the preacher kneels by the bedside to pray for his deacon.

Before the preacher can begin his prayer, the deacon suddenly motions for a pad and pen on the nightstand. The preacher hands his friend the pad and pen, and the deacon begins to write. But just as the deacon finishes writing the last word, his eyes close again, his head slumps over and the deacon breathes his last breath and dies.

The preacher was so moved to have been with his friend at the end and to have received the deacon's last words in writing, he decides to keep the note a secret until he can read it at the funeral service. Not even the preacher himself took an opportunity to read the note beforehand.

At the funeral, the preacher delivers the deacon's eulogy, and at the climax of his sermon, he announces, "I was with him when he died, and as a matter of fact, I have his last thought with me now, right here in my coat pocket."

The preacher reaches into his pocket and pulls out the paper and begins reading, "Please, get up. You're kneeling on my oxygen hose."

- Secrets are at their most dangerous when they are first revealed
 - So now that Joseph has revealed his secret to his brothers, the brothers must be wondering what happens next?
 - Will Joseph take retribution? What will Joseph tell Jacob?
 - And what will Jacob do to them once he realizes they've been lying to him all this time?
 - By these answers, we come to see another strength of Joseph's character in the story
- Finally, we also discover why it was necessary for Joseph to obtain this position of power over his family
 - The promise the Lord made to Abraham is still working itself to fulfillment
 - The family will live in Egypt for hundreds of years, and Joseph's role of authority is essential to fulfilling that promise
- Let's begin in v.7 revisiting Joseph's words of wisdom to his brothers

[Gen. 45:7](#) "God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance.

[Gen. 45:8](#) "Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

[Gen. 45:9](#) "Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay.

[Gen. 45:10](#) "You shall live in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children and your flocks and your herds and all that you have.

[Gen. 45:11](#) "There I will also provide for you, for there are still five years of famine to come, and you and your household and all that you have would be impoverished."

[Gen. 45:12](#) "Behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth which is speaking to you.

[Gen. 45:13](#) "Now you must tell my father of all my splendor in Egypt, and all that you have seen; and you must hurry and bring my father down here."

[Gen. 45:14](#) Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck.

[Gen. 45:15](#) He kissed all his brothers and wept on them, and afterward his brothers talked with him.

- Joseph explained to his brothers that God had placed Joseph in Egypt
 - And that placement was strategic on God's part
 - God was working to accomplish a plan, and Joseph's misery was a part of the plan
 - Just as Jesus had to go before us into the grave, so did Joseph have to go before Israel into Egypt
 - But now Joseph was ruling, a man second only to Pharaoh
 - And in this position of power, Joseph still has work to do in keeping with the Lord's promises to Israel
 - Joseph's journey into Egypt was intended to preserve a remnant of Israel and lead to a great deliverance
 - Joseph's words are prophetic to events that happen long after Joseph's life
 - The remnant refers to the people of Israel who are preserved through many years of captivity in Egypt
 - And the great deliverance refers to the deliverance of Moses described in the book of Exodus
 - Remember, the Lord has already promised that Abraham's descendants would be enslaved in a foreign land
 - But then the Lord would free them and return them to their own land
 - Joseph is telling his brothers that his own journey into Egypt was the beginning of that plan
 - Joseph's faith in this plan is so sure, Hebrews tells us he insisted that Israel take his coffin with them when they left in the coming Exodus

- We'll see those instructions in Genesis 47, but Hebrews summarizes it this way

Heb. 11:22 By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.

- Men and women of faith live this way, the Bible tells us
 - We hear and accept the promises of God, as Joseph heard and understood God's promise to Abraham
 - We tell others what the Lord has told us, as Joseph told his brothers about the coming deliverance
 - As we live our lives according to our understanding, just as Joseph required that his bones be removed from Egypt
- Joseph's faith led to understanding and to his works
- And that same faith in God's promises led Joseph to give his next command to his brothers
- Joseph instructs his brothers to go tell their father Jacob about all they have learned and then to instruct Jacob to bring his family back to Egypt
 - Joseph says they will live in Goshen and have all their family and herds with them
 - Goshen is a fertile valley in northwest Egypt
 - It was adjacent to the Egyptian capital Memphis
 - For Joseph and his family, this region near Memphis would become a new home, a land of grace
 - You might even call it Graceland
 - Joseph tells them to mention all the wonderful things they have seen in Egypt
 - Tell Jacob that Joseph rules
 - And tell him to hurry, for the famine will still last another 5 years and it has the power to reduce them to poverty
 - Clearly, Joseph has been thinking about this for some time, and that makes sense, since Joseph knew he would reach this moment

- He already knew where to put the people of Israel in the land
- And he knew what to tell his father
- This is no easy sell and Joseph knows it
 - Jacob left the land once before, and he worked very hard to get back
 - Now that he has returned to the land, he's unlikely to leave again easily
 - That's why Joseph told the brothers to make the idea sound as inviting as possible
 - He knew he needed to sell Jacob on it
 - Most importantly, Joseph has the Lord's famine working for him
 - Notice the Lord designed a seven famine, but it only took two years to bring reconciliation between the brothers
 - That tells us plainly that the famine's purpose hasn't been met yet
 - Yes, it provoked repentance in the family
 - But it is also designed to bring Israel into Egypt
 - And Joseph knows this as well
- Finally, everyone exchanged embraces and words, and then news spread of Joseph's family

[Gen. 45:16](#) Now when the news was heard in Pharaoh's house that Joseph's brothers had come, it pleased Pharaoh and his servants.

[Gen. 45:17](#) Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: load your beasts and go to the land of Canaan,

[Gen. 45:18](#) and take your father and your households and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you will eat the fat of the land.'

[Gen. 45:19](#) "Now you are ordered, 'Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father and come.

[Gen. 45:20](#) 'Do not concern yourselves with your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.'"

[Gen. 45:21](#) Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them wagons according to the command of Pharaoh, and gave them provisions for the journey.

[Gen. 45:22](#) To each of them he gave changes of garments, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments.

[Gen. 45:23](#) To his father he sent as follows: ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and sustenance for his father on the journey.

- Pharaoh learns that Joseph's brothers have arrived, and it pleases him
 - We can safely assume two reasons for why this news might please Pharaoh
 - First, the Pharaoh and all Egypt have been incredibly blessed by Joseph's leadership, and the Pharaoh wants to ensure Joseph never leaves
 - Having his family with him is the surest way to keep Joseph happy and settled in Egypt
 - Secondly, the Pharaoh shares something in common with the family of Joseph
 - This Pharaoh is a Hyksos, a semitic people like the Jewish people
 - As we learned in past lessons, the Pharaoh would like nothing better than to encourage more semite immigration
 - So bringing Joseph's family into the land fits his political goals as well
 - This kind of invitation would never have happened if the Hyksos people weren't in power at this time
 - In fact, it will be the rise of a new dynasty of non-Hyksos people that will eventually lead Israel into slavery
 - So God's timing and sovereignty over world events is clearly evident here
 - God promised Abraham He would send Israel into Egypt
 - Then hundreds of years later, the Lord brought a strange, semitic people into power over Egypt

- So that when He changed world weather patterns to create a famine, it could lead Israel into Egypt to be welcomed by a friendly ruler
- God did all these things in a perfect ballet of cause and effect, directing the sinful wills of men until everything arrived exactly where it must
- If the Lord can conduct an orchestra like this, over centuries of time, thousands of miles and millions of people, and every note plays perfectly in tune with His will, how much authority does He have in your life?
 - In fact, isn't that the wrong question?
 - The better question is how much of the Lord's power do you acknowledge in your life?
 - He is in control of your life with or without your recognition
 - But if you come to know Him, take time to learn His word, and discipline yourself to obey His voice, you can see the evidence of His work as it happens
 - If you don't, then you'll only see it in hindsight, if you see it at all
 - And it's so much easier to see the Lord at work and join Him, when your eyes are open, just as Joseph's were
- So Pharaoh tells Joseph that his family will experience the best Egypt has to offer, which tells us how pleased the Pharaoh was with Joseph's work
 - The Pharaoh says to send wagons from Egypt to pick up Israel and deliver them to the land of Goshen
 - In fact, the Pharaoh says don't worry about trying to bring their household with them
 - Even the provisions needed for the journey would be provided by Pharaoh
 - Every detail was accounted for, even a change of clothes
 - Joseph lavishes the gifts of money and clothing on Benjamin again

- I can think of two reasons why Joseph might do this
- First, he continues to favor Benjamin out of love for his only full brother
- Secondly, he wants to prove to Jacob that Joseph is truly alive
 - Favoring Benjamin in this way is sure to catch Jacob's eye and give evidence to support the brothers' testimony
- The Pharaoh's instructions create another, remarkable picture of Christ and the end times events
 - We remember that as Joseph is a picture of the Second Person of the Godhead, then Pharaoh becomes a picture of the First Person, the Father
 - And therefore, as Pharaoh was pleased with Joseph, so is the Father in Heaven pleased with the work of Christ
 - And because the Father is pleased with His Son, He will gladly welcome Christ's people into the Kingdom
 - Isaiah tells us this very thing

Is. 49:5 And now says the LORD, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant,
To bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel might be gathered to Him
(For I am honored in the sight of the LORD,
And My God is My strength),

Is. 49:6 He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant
To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel;
I will also make You a light of the nations
So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

Is. 49:7 Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and its Holy One,
To the despised One,
To the One abhorred by the nation,
To the Servant of rulers,
"Kings will see and arise,
Princes will also bow down,
Because of the LORD who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen You."

Is. 49:8 Thus says the LORD,
"In a favorable time I have answered You,
And in a day of salvation I have helped You;
And I will keep You and give You for a covenant of the people,

To restore the land, to make them inherit the desolate heritages;

- Consider Isaiah's words concerning Christ
 - He was formed by the Father in the womb for the purpose of bringing Jacob (that is, Israel) back to Himself
 - And this salvation would reach beyond Israel to the ends of the Earth
 - This Redeemer will be abhorred by the nations and despised in Israel
 - Nevertheless, everyone will bow down to Him, because the Father has chosen Him
 - And then the Father will reward His Son by giving Him a covenant people, who He will restore to a land
- All of these promises are pictured in the way the Pharaoh elevated a despised and rejected Joseph
 - And as Joseph served the Pharaoh, he pleased the Pharaoh
 - And this led the Pharaoh to restore Israel to a land with a wonderful inheritance
- Furthermore, consider the way this family entered Egypt
 - They were called to come wearing new clothes, clothes provided by Pharaoh
 - And in the future day of Israel's salvation, they will receive new clothes
 - They will be given robes of righteousness and new incorruptible bodies that can never sin again
 - And these clothes are provided by the Lord
 - Salvation is a gift, given to us by the Lord
 - And He gives us these robes not because we please Him, not by our works, for our works can never earn righteousness
 - Instead, we receive our righteousness because of the work of Christ, who pleased the Father

- Just as Joseph's family received robes from Pharaoh because of Joseph's righteous work in Egypt
- Finally, they are told to leave everything else behind and come expecting provision
 - Every believer welcomed into the Kingdom takes nothing from this world, as Paul reminds us

[1Tim. 6:7](#) For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.

[1Tim. 6:8](#) If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

- And we enter with nothing but our track record of service to the Lord

[1Cor. 3:12](#) Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

[1Cor. 3:13](#) each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.

[1Cor. 3:14](#) If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.

[1Cor. 3:15](#) If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

- Paul also teaches us that upon our entry into Christ's presence, we stand for a moment of judgment, and come to that moment alone
 - And we can't take letters of recommendation
 - We don't stand with our family or friends
 - We don't offer words of wisdom or excuses
 - In fact, our words count for nothing...only our actions count
- Like Jacob's family headed to Egypt, we leave everything behind, resting in the righteousness of Christ, to stand or fall on the basis of our work for Christ
 - Our goal in this life must be to come ready for that moment
 - To have eyes for eternity
- In response to the Pharaoh's order, Joseph sends ten male and ten female donkeys loaded with provisions for the journey

- The number ten in scripture is symbolic of a testimony
 - Here, Joseph is making a testimony to Jacob of the goodness to be found in Egypt
 - He is hoping this demonstration of prosperity will convince his father to leave the land and come to Egypt
- Then, Joseph gives his brothers final instructions

[Gen. 45:24](#) So he sent his brothers away, and as they departed, he said to them, “Do not quarrel on the journey.”

[Gen. 45:25](#) Then they went up from Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob.

[Gen. 45:26](#) They told him, saying, “Joseph is still alive, and indeed he is ruler over all the land of Egypt.” But he was stunned, for he did not believe them.

[Gen. 45:27](#) When they told him all the words of Joseph that he had spoken to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived.

[Gen. 45:28](#) Then Israel said, “It is enough; my son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”

- Joseph’s first order of business to his brothers is “don’t quarrel”
 - In Hebrew, the word is *ragaz*, which is most often translated fear or trembling
 - It seems odd that Joseph would tell his brothers not to quarrel
 - On the other hand, it seems perfectly understandable to tell his brothers not to be fearful
 - They are headed home to tell their father that Joseph is actually alive
 - They must have expected that Jacob would ask many questions, including questions that would lead to uncomfortable answers
 - They might have even been tempted to forget the whole plan, tell Jacob a different story to avoid confessing the truth
 - And maybe they might never return to Egypt

- After all, they have plenty of provisions to last them, at least for a while
 - So Joseph tells the brother not to fear, not to worry, do what's right and trust the Lord with the result
- And with that, they leave Egypt and come to Jacob in Canaan
 - They tell Jacob that Joseph is still alive
 - More than this, he is ruler of Egypt
 - And we're told Jacob was stunned
 - The word in Hebrew literally means "numb"
 - Jacob was numbed by the news
 - More importantly, he didn't believe the report, we're told
- Then he heard the words of Joseph and saw all that had been sent from Egypt, and then the spirit of Jacob was revived and he believed
 - And once he believed, he was ready to go see Joseph
 - Once more we find a beautiful picture of the work of Christ
 - When Israel of today is confronted with the story of Jesus Christ, most do not believe
 - They are numb to the message of the Gospel
 - But when the word of Christ reaches them, as it will one day, then they will respond
 - And when they see the mercy and goodness of the Lord as He defends them from the nations who seek to destroy them, they take notice
 - And when the word of Christ comes to them, they will believe
 - And they will turn to Christ and say, "I will see Him before I die."