

JOSEPH MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN TO HIS BRETHREN

BIBLE TEXT : Genesis 43:1-34; 44:1-34; 45:1-15.

LESSON 38 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another" (Ephesians 4:32).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Genesis 43:1-34

- 1 And the famine *was* sore in the land.
- 2 And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food.
- 3 And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother *be* with you.
- 4 If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food:
- 5 But if thou wilt not send *him*, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother *be* with you.
- 6 And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye *so* ill with me, *as* to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?
- 7 And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, *Is* your father yet alive? have ye *another* brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down?
- 8 And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, *and* also our little ones.
- 9 I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever:
- 10 For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time.
- 11 And their father Israel said unto them, If *it must be* so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds:
- 12 And take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry *it* again in your hand; peradventure it *was* an oversight:
- 13 Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man:
- 14 And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved *of my children*, I am bereaved.
- 15 And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.
- 16 And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring *these* men home, and slay, and make ready; for *these* men shall dine with me at noon.
- 17 And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.

Bible References:

Notes:

Another Trip to Egypt

It was a big moment for Joseph when his brothers returned with Benjamin, his favourite little brother who had grown up since they had last seen each other. Joseph wanted to do something to please them, so he had a great feast prepared in his own home to which he invited them. They should have been very happy to have dinner with the governor of Egypt, in the beautiful palace with its rich furnishings and many servants. But their consciences still hurt them, and they immediately thought they were going to be accused of stealing the money they had found in their sacks of grain.

As soon as the brothers met the steward, they began making excuses about the money. No one had said anything about it, and they had done no wrong; but when there is condemnation for past sins in a person's life he will often feel guilty whether he has done evil at the present time or not.

Many times when God convicts people of their sins they will try to explain that what they have done is not very bad and that they had no evil intentions. Perhaps no one knows of their deeds; but when the Spirit of God begins bringing the secret things to light, the natural tendency of a sinner, is to cover it up or try to make his deeds appear innocent.

The steward tried to put Joseph's brothers at ease by telling them that their God had returned their money to them, and it was all meant for good. We do not know whether Joseph had told him that these men were his brothers, but he at least recognised them as Hebrews who were supposed to worship the true God, He also brought Simeon out of prison, which should have encouraged the brothers that all was well. Every courtesy of Egyptian hospitality was shown to these poor Hebrew shepherds who were tired and dusty from their long trip.

The brothers had brought presents from their father, the best that they could find in the land of Canaan and they bowed themselves low before Joseph as they once more sought his favour. The Bible does not say that Joseph was at all interested in the presents. All he could think about was the welfare of his father. Jacob was getting quite old, and what if he should not live until Joseph could see him again? Those must have been anxious days for Joseph when the reunion with his family was so near, and all his years of loneliness would be ended. When he saw Benjamin he was so touched that he had to leave the room so his brothers would not see him weep.

Another Trial

Everyone had a wonderful time at the dinner. When the brothers were ready to leave, the steward filled all their sacks with food, and they started on their way. But their contentment was short-lived. Joseph had one more trial for them. Their money had again been put into their sacks with the corn, also Joseph's cup had been placed in Benjamin's sack. They were hardly out of the city when the steward overtook them and accused them of stealing from the governor's house. They were so sure that the steward was mistaken that they offered to be slaves if he were proved

18 And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house; 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.

19 And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they communed with him at the door of the house,

20 And said, O sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food:

21 And it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, *every* man's money *was* in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand.

22 And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks.

23 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.

24 And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave *them* water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender.

25 And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there.

26 And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which *was* in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth.

27 And he asked them of *their* welfare, and said, *Is* your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? *Is* he yet alive?

28 And they answered, Thy servant our father *is* in good health, he *is* yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance.

29 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, *Is* this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son.

30 And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought *where* to weep; and he entered into *his* chamber, and wept there.

31 And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread.

32 And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that *is* an abomination unto the Egyptians.

33 And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another.

34 And he took *and sent* messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

Genesis 44:1-34

right; and they also condemned to death the one with whom the cup should be found. It was a terrible shock to them that the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. After all they had promised their father, they absolutely could not leave Benjamin in Egypt. So, they all went back to Joseph's house, and once more bowed themselves to the ground before him. These were the brothers who had once said they would never bow before Joseph, but this is the fourth instance we find recorded where they humbled themselves before their younger brother (**Genesis 42:6** 6 And Joseph *was* the governor over the land, *and he it was* that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him *with* their faces to the earth. **Genesis 43:26** 26 And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which *was* in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth. **Genesis 43:28** 28 And they answered, Thy servant our father *is* in good health, he *is* yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance. **Genesis 44:14** 14 And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he *was* yet there: and they fell before him on the ground.).

Judah's Supplication

Judah made an eloquent plea before Joseph. He told him of the years of suffering Jacob had endured because of the loss of one other son, and how he had begged them not to take away his youngest. Judah said the grief of the bereavement would kill his father, and he begged to be allowed to remain in Benjamin's place.

A Happy Reunion

Joseph could see that his brothers were repentant and had been humbled, and he could keep back the tears no longer. He asked all the Egyptians to leave the room, and he told his brothers, "I am Joseph."

What a happy moment it was for Joseph when he could tell his brothers he loved them, that he had forgiven them for all the suffering they had caused him! How happy we are when we forgive someone who has wronged us, and feel the heavenly fellowship that comes when there is nothing between us, and our brothers! Jesus is happy, too, to forgive the sinner who comes before Him in repentance; and the angels in Heaven rejoice with Him when a wandering child comes home. When we are united in the family of God, we can say with David, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1).

Joseph told his brothers not to blame themselves for selling him into Egypt, because he knew God had sent him to help keep the people alive during the years of famine. Joseph recognised the hand of God in all that had happened to him; and his constant faith through the years of trial was being rewarded. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:6).

Joseph told his brother all about the good fortune that had come to him in the land of Egypt, and he wanted them to hurry home and tell the good news to his father. He told them there would be five more years of famine, so they must all come down to this land to live on the bounty that had been stored up through the years of plenty. They were all so happy and excited about their reunion that the Egyptians in Pharaoh's house heard them; and they were happy, too, because of Joseph's joy.

One in Christ

All the glory and pomp of the Egyptian court, all the honours that had been placed upon Joseph (No man could lift a hand or a foot in all the land unless Joseph said he could -- **Genesis 41:44** 44 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I *am* Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.)

1 And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks *with* food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth.

2 And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.

3 As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses.

4 *And* when they were gone out of the city, *and not yet* far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?

5 *Is* not this *it* in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing.

6 And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words.

7 And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing:

8 Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?

9 With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen.

10 And he said, Now also *let* it *be* according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless.

11 Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack.

12 And he searched, *and* began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

13 Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.

14 And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he *was* yet there: and they fell before him on the ground.

15 And Joseph said unto them, What deed *is* this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?

16 And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we *are* my lord's servants, both we, and *he* also with whom the cup is found.

17 And he said, God forbid that I should do so: *but* the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

18 Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou *art* even as Pharaoh.

19 My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother?

20 And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father

had not made him conceited or proud. He loved the humble Hebrew herdsman who had come from Canaan, more than all the lords and ladies of the king's court. The Hebrews were an abominations to the Egyptians, but not to Joseph. He had kept the love of God in his heart, which overlooked all the faults in the lives of his brothers.

The Egyptians thought they were so much better than the Hebrews that they would not eat at the same table with them. There seems to have been race prejudice from the beginning of time, and it has brought much sorrow and heartache to many people. God did not mean it to be that way. In Proverbs 22:2, we read: "The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all." In New Testament times the Jews considered themselves the chosen people of God, and anyone else as unclean. Even Peter had that idea, but one day he admitted, "God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10:28). Later the Apostle Paul told the Galatians: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). Jesus came to save the "whosoever will," and His Blood was shed as much for the coloured man as for the white man, as much for a slave as for a king.

Jesus expects His followers to be kind to everyone. When He was on earth He loved the poor, the weak, those whom no one else cared for; and He did good to them. He healed the lepers whom most people avoided. That love is still extended to all men; and He wants us to love the least of His little ones.

We have learned the Golden Rule, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." We know the rule, but do we practice it? Jesus said, "For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them" (Luke 6:32). When the love of Jesus fills our hearts it is so great that we will not speak harsh words, we will not discriminate against the poor, nor fawn for the favour of the rich. When some of that spirit begins to creep in, we must pray to God and ask Him to cover us afresh with His Blood, and put more of His love into our hearts. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think Joseph's brothers were so troubled when they found the money in their sacks?
2. What did Joseph do to make the brothers feel welcome when they came again to buy corn?
3. What effect did Judah's supplication have upon Joseph?
- 4 Did Joseph show a spirit of forgiveness toward his brothers?
5. How had Joseph saved the lives of his brothers?

loveth him.

21 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him.

22 And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for *if* he should leave his father, *his father* would die.

23 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more.

24 And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.

25 And our father said, Go again, *and* buy us a little food.

26 And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother *be* with us.

27 And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two *sons*:

28 And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since:

29 And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

30 Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad *be* not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life;

31 It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad *is* not *with us*, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave.

32 For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever.

33 Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.

34 For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad *be* not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

Genesis 45:1-15

1 Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

2 And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

3 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I *am* Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.

4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I *am* Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

6 For these two years *hath* the famine *been* in the land: and yet *there are* five years, in the which *there shall* neither *be* earing nor harvest.

7 And God sent me before you to preserve

you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8 So now *it was* not you *that* sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

9 Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not:

10 And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast:

11 And there will I nourish thee; for yet *there are* five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.

12 And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that *it is* my mouth that speaketh unto you.

13 And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.

14 And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.

15 Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.