
SG020120

The Whole Counsel of God – Genesis 43-47

Got questions? Email Pastor Jason at jasonduff7@gmail.com

(You can download this message as a pod cast by searching Jason Duff on I-Tunes)

Introduction & Overview of the Section

Introduction

Tonight we are going to continue our study in the Life of Joseph. This week we get to see Joseph reconciled with his brothers and reunited with his family. The real story however is the transition of the children of Israel, living primary in Canaan to now living in Egypt where they will multiply from 70 people to over 3 million at the opening of the book of Exodus

The Life of Joseph – part three – Genesis 43-47

#1 – Testing – Genesis Chapter 43-44

Joseph forgives his brothers but they still need to be tested. Will they leave their brother Simeon in prison? Is Benjamin really alive or have they killed him too? Joseph forgives his brothers, but before he can bless them he must see that they have grown. It is okay for us to do the same.

#2 – Triumph – Genesis Chapter 45

After years of wondering, “God what are you doing?” we see in chapter 45 the triumph of God’s plan in letting Joseph go through all the pain he did, and we see the triumph of God’s grace seen so clearly in the example of Joseph with his brothers

#3 – Transition – Genesis Chapter 46-47

Israel will go from a family of 70 people to a nation of about 3 million. How they get to such a good part of the land to help them grow and stay separate from Israel is the subject matter of Genesis chapters 46-47. Much to learn here about our own lives!

Key Issues or Words

“Goshen” (45:10) – The land of Goshen was the best of the land of Egypt. Now why would Pharaoh have these foreigners live in the best part of his own country? Well understand it was considered “the best of the land” because of the fields and the ability to feed and care for cattle. Shepherds were seen as an abomination to the Egyptian people (46:34), so they didn’t want the jobs that would require that land. It was also on the outskirts of the main towns, so God not only gave His people the best of the land where they could multiply, but He also kept His people separate from the pagan Egyptians. The God we serve is so wise even if we can’t see it.

By the way...

Genesis 47:24 – “Of the harvest you shall give 1/5th to Pharaoh”

Some read chapter 47 and can’t understand why Joseph seems to be this rich government official taking so much from the poor and giving it to the already rich Pharaoh. However we must understand that the average tax rate in the region in that day was around 40%, with some of the larger countries collecting almost 60% of people income in the form of taxes. Joseph had saved the lives of the Egyptians, and was giving them a very fair flat tax rate of 20%. We see from the people’s reaction that they didn’t see him as a fat cat politician; they saw him as a hero. (47:25)

Homework 4 Next Week – Read Genesis 48-50

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Genesis 43-47

“The Life of Joseph – part three”

Introduction

- Tonight we are going to continue our study in the foundational book of the Old Testament and really all of the Bible
 - Remember the content is not hard to remember, because the title says it all

The word Genesis means “beginnings”

- And truly so many things in scripture have their beginning in the book of Genesis
 - The universe
 - Life in general
 - Man, marriage
 - Sin and evil
 - Language, government, nations
 - Specifically we will see the nation of Israel
- In fact understanding that this book means and is about beginnings really is a good way to divide up our look at this book as you can see in your book intro sheet

Outline for the Book of Genesis

Chapters 1-11 – The Beginning of all nations

- Chapters 1-2 – The Creation
- Chapter 3 - 5 – The Fall
- Chapter 6-9 – The Flood
- Chapters 10-11 – The Tables of Nations

Chapters 12-50 – The Beginning of the Jewish nation

- Chapters 12-23 – Abraham
- Chapters 24-27 – Isaac
- Chapters 28-36 – Jacob
- Chapters 37-50 – Joseph

Tonight we are going to continue our study of the life of Joseph

- When we left Joseph, everything had come full circle for him. He had spent 13 years as either a slave or in prison, no doubt thinking – God what are You doing?
 - But then in one moment everything changed for Joseph

Pharaoh has a dream, the butler remembers Joseph, Joseph interprets Pharaoh’s dream that was about a coming famine and Pharaoh appoints Joseph over the country

- He spent seven years preparing during the times of plenty
 - And two years handing out food as multitudes of Egyptians and people from outside Egypt come to buy food
- And an outside the land of Egypt group comes to Joseph that changes everything
 - His brothers come for food

- He accuses them of being spies and says they must leave one of their brothers there in Egypt in prison and go get their younger brother to prove they are not spies
 - And the brother and their father Jacob think, everything is against me
- But its not, and we see that as we continue tonight

For those of you that like outlines – Tonight is brought to you by the letter “T”.

Genesis 43-47

#1 - Testing – Genesis Chapters 43-44

#2 - Triumph – Genesis Chapter 45

#3 - Transition – Genesis Chapters 46-47

- Let’s look at these one at a time – little bit of reading, but it’s a good story, and the Word doesn’t return void – my comments, sometimes they do...

Genesis 43-47

#1 - Testing – Genesis Chapter 43-44

- Joseph’s brothers don’t recognize him
 - Some of you wonder why – but think it through, Joseph spent 13 years as a slave and in prison, 7 years preparing for the famine and 2 years handing out food
 - So it has been 22 years since his brothers have seen him

How many of you look different than you did 22 years ago

- Some of you think you don’t – and then you see a picture – then and now photos

Pic #1 - You wouldn’t recognize Ben Cever, growing pain

Pic #2 - Some look better – Erckle – I like what direction..

Pic #3 - Others don’t – Luke – the force is not with you

Pic #4 - What happened Ice man (Then next slide)

- Last Sunday someone had left some old Calvary Christian year books out from 10 years ago – and the worship team was thumbing through having a great time – I wasn’t having a great of at time because they kept asking, is this you when you were a youth pastor – you had hair, you look so different

Then Hannah who was the girl singing on Sunday was saying to Trevor Daigle who was leading worship, “Trevor, wasn’t this your freshman year, where are you?”

- And I grabbed the book and said, right there because I knew what Trevor looked like back then, I was his high school pastor – but it was way different than he looks now
 - And that was just 9 or 10 years ago

You may not think you do, but you look different than you did 22 years ago

- You ever go to a 20, or 30 year high school reunion – people are saying, hey, I’m John, remember – no, that guy was awesome, you look like you need a nap and a nutritionist – you look different 22 years later

And add to that, Joseph, is dressed and groomed like an Egyptian, he speaks Egyptian and the brothers have no idea

- and Joseph uses this anonymity to test His brothers
 - now why is he testing them??
 - Because Joseph wants to see if they have changed, if they are matured

- I mean last he knew them, they were throwing him in a pit, having lunch while he cried, and then for an encore they sold him into slavery
 - These brothers were wicked

So Joseph wants to know – are you going to just leave your brother Simeon in prison? Do you still have a younger brother Benjamin or did you kill him too?

- how are you going to react when I bless Benjamin?
 - did you notice that at the end of chapter 43, Joseph lines his brothers up in birth order, gives them food, but gives Benjamin five times as much
- This was the way Joseph's father used to treat him
 - And it drove the brothers insane with jealousy
 - So He wants to see how they will react
- Will they be okay that their brother is being blessed or will they react like they did 20 years ago?
 - He is testing them

You see church it is okay to test people

- we are to be quick to forgive and slow to trust
 - some of you don't like that – no, we are to be quick to trust
 - no – we are to be quick to forgive – God has forgiven you more than you can ever repay – you can not go around holding on to unforgiveness and bitterness

We are to be quick to forgive, but its okay to be slow to trust

- If your spouse cheated on you – you need to forgive, you need to take that sin to the cross and realize it was paid for by Jesus in full
 - You can't carry around bitterness in your heart or you will be consumed
 - You need to be quick to forgive

But it is okay to be slow to rebuild trust

- I need confirmation, you are really working late
 - I need accountability when you travel for work
 - Or forgive me – I do, but we need to rebuild trust

If you were molested by uncle or some other relative

- as difficult as it must be, you need to forgive
 - you need to realize that just as Jesus died for yours sins and your sins are forgiven you
 - Jesus died for the sins that were done against you as well
- You need to forgive
 - But before that relative watches my kids, well there is going to be some significant time of testing – like a million years, but you see what I'm saying
 - Its okay to test

Joseph is testing his brothers and guess what? – they pass!!!!

- in fact the greatest example – his brother Judah
 - the one who married some pagan girl
 - who was such a poor father, God killed his first two sons
- the one who had relations with a prostitute, who turned out to be his daughter in law

And the one who, don't forget, actually suggested back in chapter 37, instead of letting Joseph go out of this pit, let's sell him into slavery

That Judah, who was such a wretch, we see him at the end of chapter 44, making a speech, (the longest speech in the book of Genesis) to this man who he just thinks is an Egyptian ruler about wanting to stand in and take the punishment for his younger brother Benjamin

- For Judah it isn't about him anymore, it isn't about what he wants
 - It is about his love for his Father and His brothers
 - And so let me be punished in their place

And don't let this escape your attention

- because remember who is going to come from the tribe of Judah
 - none other than Jesus
 - and in this moment, Judah is the most like his future, great, great, great... grandson than he was ever before
- not concerned for himself, concerned only for the love of his Father, and the love of his brothers
 - Judah was willing to stand in there and take the punishment for them
 - Just like Jesus, almost 2,000 later from this event would do for you and me, because He loves us and He loves His father
 - These boys have grown
 - And Joseph can't contain himself any longer

Genesis 43-47

#1 - Testing – Genesis Chapters 43-44

#2 - Triumph – Genesis Chapter 45

- Joseph sees the growth in his brothers and he just starts weeping – (You have to admit, Joseph has a little bit of his daddy in him)
 - What do I mean? – you remember –his daddy Jacob was a momma's boy

He cries when he sees Rachel, he cries with her dad Laban, he cries when he meets his brother Esau

- he cries when he watches Oprah and listens to Mariah Carey
 - He's just a crier
 - And we see a little bit of the family trait here in Joseph
- Because he is not just tearing up like most of us men do – we do cry, we just don't want anyone to see it
 - You are watching old Yeller, and the very end, “no pop, I put him down, he's my dog, you know you wiped away a tear” – are you crying – no, its just a dog, I would have shot him years ago
 - That is not what Joseph is doing

He is wailing, so the whole neighborhood is going, what is happening

- But even though that is how the chapter starts, this chapter is not sad - It is a blessing
 - This chapter is a chapter of triumph

It is a triumph of God's plan – Joseph says to his brothers – “don't be afraid, don't guilt yourself - it was God who sent me here to save you”

- You see Joseph understood what Jacob was learning, that things weren't against Him, God had his absolute best in mind, even when you can't see it
 - But in this chapter we see it

- We see the triumph of God's plan
- God was working all along – just like He is by the way in your life
- And doesn't that just give you great freedom, to sit back, be faithful right where God has you
 - If the grand plan was up to you, well, I would, worry, fretting, sweating – but how refreshing to know God You are in control – even when it seem things are out of control

It is so freeing to me, to think about the 144,000 in Revelation chapter 14

- they live in a horrible time to try to serve Jesus, you think your life is tough, but you don't have things falling out of the sky, stinging locusts running around and a world leader who likes to be called the Beast, trying to hunt you down –
 - they have got it really bad
 - and yet God blesses them and uses them and the word says about them

“These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” – Revelation 14:4

- it seems super basic, but it is surprising to me how often I and many I talk to, just don't do this
 - you don't have to figure out the plan
 - you don't have to figure out how you are going to make it all work
 - you just need to follow the Lord wherever He goes

You know and when I see that, I think – I can do that

- I can just follow the Lord
 - This chapter shows us the triumph of God's plan

We also see the triumph of God' Grace

- I mean let's be honest, if I was Joseph, I would have been so tempted to say, “I am your brother, you sold me into slavery and God raised me up so now I am the guy who has his own jail, stinks to be you!!!! - and now – payback time”
 - But that wasn't Joseph – friends – praise God, that's not the Lord either
- I mean how many times have we blown it with the Lord, and we crawl back to Him half expecting to hear Him say, oh now you want me, why don't you cry out to the idol of yours and see if it can save you – but that is not what we hear Him say

I am so often moved by Jesus' words from the cross, but specifically when He is being spat upon and mocked

- He looks at the people, and then speaks to the Father
 - He could have said – strike them down
 - You just know there were 10,000 angels just saying, give the Word, we will wipe the map clean of these folks
- But instead of vengeance, instead of payback, we hear Jesus say – “Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they do”

Literally Jesus was saying – Father – don't even account to them this sin, they don't understand what they are doing

- And that so hits me – because I hear Him speaking that about me
 - I go my own way – do my own thing
 - Spit on Him, His Word

- And yet He responds with – “Father, forgive Jason, He doesn’t understand what he is doing, not really, he does not understand what a plague sin is, forgive him....
 - Friends – that’s grace
 - Some pastors are afraid to share that with their people – because if you tell them, God loves and forgives – then that will make them sin more
- For me – It makes me want to do better, help me to honor You – who loves me so much.
 - Lord help me, change me, make me yours

Genesis 43-47

#1 - Testing – Genesis Chapters 43-44

#2 - Triumph – Genesis Chapter 45

#3 - Transition – Genesis Chapters 46-47

- now this is an important section

Important because it shows us how the nation of Israel comes to Egypt

- God gives the nation of Israel the best land in Egypt
 - And the way it comes to pass is, shepherds, those that look after sheep were an abomination to the Egyptians
 - it would be like today, if someone said what do you do for a living and you say, I clean out sewers – whenever there is a human waste spill, I jump right in, swim around, clean it up
 - if that was on a blind date and someone said that to you, you be like, oh, can I have my hand back – purell.....
- well, in their day to say you took care of sheep was kind the same
 - oh – you do what?

Well, then stay away from the main population centers of Egypt, and if you have men who are good at that, well they can take care of my livestock, because I can’t find anyone who wants that job

- take the great pasture land up in Goshen, its far enough away from the main cities, plenty of fields for the flocks to graze, its perfect
 - and you see this and realize what God did

Because of their profession, the Pharaoh wanted them away from the Egyptian population

- meaning what? – they were safe to grow and multiply and more importantly, stay God fearing people, not mix in and become swallowed up by the pagan Egyptians
 - it was all because of what they did for a living

Friends, I am convinced, what you are doing right now – it may seem like a dead end job, it may seem like you are beating your head against a wall

- it may seem like there is no future for you in this

And there may not be

- but I am convinced, where God has you right now, is tied greatly into what God wants to do in you and through you next
 - so your job, just be faithful, don’t grumble and complain, don’t be part of the problem
 - be faithful – just follow the lamb wherever He goes
- and I know you will discover, man it was all part of the plan

- You were working for my good all along
- amazing

One last thing before we go our way (I talked about the land deal in the study guide) and that is I am fascinated by the picture of how easy it was for the nation of Israel to get into Egypt as we read in this chapter and you contrast that with what most of you know as the Exodus story, how difficult it was to leave

- It's like the Hotel California
 - Check in anytime you want, but oh, you want to go, no that is not happening

It becomes interesting because all through the Bible the nation of Egypt is a picture of the sin and the world

- whenever someone goes down to Egypt, it is like them walking away from God
 - from Abraham, to the people in Jeremiah's day – going down to Egypt is never a good thing

And you need to see this church because the world, just like Egypt will welcome you in and promise how good it is going to be

- it will let you in, but then just like Egypt, it is so difficult to leave

And I think we need to ponder that in our own lives

- Is compromise beckoning you to come and join
 - Is sin telling you just once, just a short season

See the contrast tonight – see the heartache and pain it took to leave Egypt

- See the pharaoh welcome Jacob in, and yet do everything he can to keep the children of Israel in – may that be a Word from the Lord 4 you!
 - Because that is how it will be for you

Next week we will finish the book, and see the rich prophecies given to Jacob's sons, and see how they worked out in history – hope you can be with us