



True Reconciliation

June 25, 2017

(Scripture Reading: Gen. 45:1-8)

Gen. 44:1-3. 1Then he commanded his house steward, saying, “Fill the men’s sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man’s money in the mouth of his sack. 2“Put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his money for the grain.” And he did as Joseph had told him. 3As soon as it was light, the men were sent away, they with their donkeys.

Joseph told his steward to do the same thing what he did before. Gave them back their money along with grain, but in Benjamin's bag, Joseph's personal silver cup was to be planted. The steward did just like that.

Gen. 44:4-6. 4They had just gone out of the city, and were not far off, when Joseph said to his house steward, “Up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid evil for good? 5’Is not this the one from which my lord drinks and which he indeed uses for divination? You have done wrong in doing this.’” 6So he overtook them and spoke these words to them.

After they had just gone, Joseph sent his steward after them. The steward scolded them as Joseph told him. Why have you repaid evil for good? Is not this the one from which my Lord drinks, and which he indeed uses for divination? Was Joseph involved in divination?

Gen.44: 7-9. 7They said to him, “Why Does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing. 8“Behold, the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks we have brought back to you from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord’s house?

9 “With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord’s slaves.”

The brothers were taken back by the steward's words. They challenged him to find it and if it is found, that person is to be put to death.

Gen. 44:10-13 10So he said, “Now let it also be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and the rest of you shall be innocent.” 11Then they hurried, each man lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack. 12He searched, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest, and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack. 13Then they tore their clothes, and when each man loaded his donkey, they returned to the city.

The cup was found in Benjamin's sack. The brothers were gripped by grief and they tore their clothes!

Gen. 44:14-17. 14When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph’s house, he was still there, and they fell to the ground before him. 15Joseph said to them, “What is this deed that you have done? Do you not know that such a man as I can indeed practice divination?” 16So Judah said, “What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? And how can we justify ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; behold, we are my lord’s slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup has been found.”



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17But he said, “Far be it from me to do this. The man in whose possession the cup has been found, he shall be my slave; but as for you, go up in peace to your father.”

All the brothers went back again to Joseph and they fell on his feet and wept. Joseph rebuked them. How could you do this to me? Then he went on to confess a strange confession: Don't you know that I can indeed practice divination? What is this divination practice righteous person like Joseph practiced?

Judah's reply can be our reply to our Lord Jesus when He meets us face to face! "What can we say to my Lord? What can we speak? How can we justify ourselves? we will be all standing before Him as sinners! The only thing that can justify us is that precious blood of Jesus. The only thing that can redeem us is His saving grace and His compassion. We are all condemned sinners. Who can deliver us? Thanks be to our Lord Jesus Christ!

All the brothers volunteered themselves to be Joseph's slaves. But Joseph insisted that only the person who took his cup must become his slave. He permitted the rest to go in peace.

Gen. 44:18-32 (no need to show). I will just narrate that passage.

Judah explained in detail the relationship between his father and Benjamin!

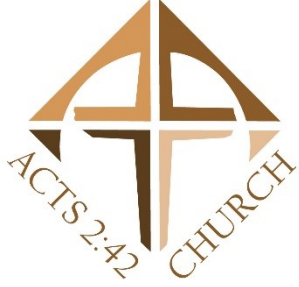
Gen. 45:29-34 says it all!

29'If you take this one also from me, and harm befalls him, you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow.' 30'Now, therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, 31when he sees that the lad is not with us, he will die. 32'For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then let me bear the blame before my father forever. 33'Now, therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. 34'For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me—for fear that I see the evil that would overtake my father?"

Basically, Judah was saying, his father will not survive without Benjamin. Therefore Judah offered himself as a slave instead of Benjamin. Jesus Christ our Lord came through the tribe of Judah. We can see the sacrificial love already! He was ready to lay down his life for Benjamin! Judah was wicked before and he was willing to sell Joseph as a slave. Now his heart was transformed, regenerated. He was willing to lay down his life for his brother! What a change of heart! Judah learned from his past mistakes. There must have been true repentance. Now he paved the way for true reconciliation with his other brother, Joseph!

Joseph was touched so much by the sacrificial love of Judah and he could not control his emotions anymore. He wept very loudly!

Gen. 45:1-3. 1Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried, “Have everyone go out from me.” So there was no man with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. 2He wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard of it. 3Then Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?” But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence.



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The whole world heard Joseph cry! Finally, Joseph disclosed who he was. The brothers were troubled, distressed, terrified. The Hebrew word is "nibha lu", literally means dismayed. But in this context, that may not be the right translation as NASB offers. Best in this context would be, the brothers were utterly shocked!

Gen. 45: 4-8. 4Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come closer to me." And they came closer. And he said, "I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. 5"Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. 6"For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. 7"God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. 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.

This is a very beautiful passage. We can see the signs of true reconciliation very clearly.

First of all, he told them to come closer. If we have a problem with somebody and if we want to reconcile, we must come close to each other!

Second, Joseph spoke the truth without adding or subtracting any information.

Third, he did not get angry at them and start screaming.

Fourth, Instead of getting angry, he actually calmed them down and comforted them. He prevented them from becoming too guilty. Instead of punching their faces and kicking them hard, he hugged them!

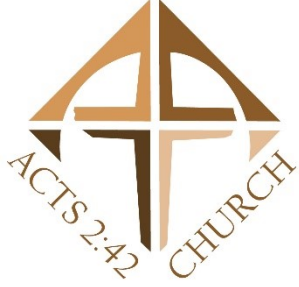
Fifth, he gave the real reason why he actually ended up in Egypt! Because God sent me before to preserve life! It is not just preserving his own family members, but the people of Egypt and nearby country. We are called to preserve life. I do not understand why Christians are not taking global warming as a serious threat, trying not to preserve life.

Sixth, God sent Joseph to preserve God's chosen people, Children of Jacob which became the Nation of Israel.

Finally, In verse 8, Joseph emphasized again the truth, "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.

The brothers were just instruments in God's hand to bring Joseph to Egypt, and God raised him up to be number two in Egypt. What a great honor! Joseph was all about God! When Potiphar's wife enticed him, he said very clearly, he cannot sin against God. When Pharaoh asked for interpretation Joseph said, do not interpretations belong to God? He named his son Manasseh which means God has made me forget all my troubles. Later on, he would say, you intended to harm me, but God intended it for good! In Gen 45:4-8 we can see Joseph referring everything to God.

But one thing I cannot understand. Why should Joseph go through so much suffering before he was lifted up? Some scholars think that Joseph was very proud when he was seventeen, and he was boasting about



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the dreams he had. God had to make him walk through the valley of the shadow of death in order to teach him humility!

But I have a different take on it. We as Christians are like the olive fruits. We may have to be squeezed and crushed through trials and sufferings to bring out the oil! God may have to melt us and mold us to become the way He wants us to be. So count it all joy when you face severe trials and tribulations! God is not finished with us yet, there is always some larger purpose and meaning behind all our suffering!

Conclusion:

True Reconciliation stems from God-centered relationship, and it is the work of the Holy Spirit!

True Reconciliation requires forgiveness on the part of the victim.

The offender needs to become remorseful and show the fruits of repentance.

The victim is the one who should draw the offender closer and comfort and share the true feelings.

The truth of genuine confession from both sides heal the wounds.

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