



TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

Talk Genesis 45:16-28: The Brothers Tell Their Father that Joseph is Still Alive!

Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, "Joseph's brothers have come." So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well. 17 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. 18 Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. 19 Now you are commanded—do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. 20 Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.'" 21 Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them carts, according to the command of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey. 22 He gave to all of them, to each man, changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments. 23 And he sent to his father these things: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey. 24 So he sent his brothers away, and they departed; and he said to them, "See that you do not become troubled along the way." 25 Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. 26 And they told him, saying, "Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." And Jacob's heart stood still, because he did not believe them. 27 But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. 28 Then Israel said, "It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

Background Notes

When Pharaoh heard that Joseph's brothers had come to Egypt, he was pleased. In view of five more years of famine yet to come, he invited the whole extended family to come and live in Egypt. As far as the record goes, Pharaoh knew nothing about how the brothers had betrayed Joseph. Joseph graciously concealed all that from the public -- that matter was between Joseph and his brothers alone.

This is the way God deals with us. Aren't you glad that when God forgives us, he doesn't publicize our sins? I believe the judgment seat of Christ for believers will be like that, too -- a private affair between God and the individual believer. 2 Corinthians 5:10 states that we will all stand before the *bema*, or the judgment seat of Christ, but there is no indication that it is a public occasion. It will be obvious to all if we have been faithful, because of the rewards the Lord will give to faithful believers, and the associated glory. But I think the review of our lives at the judgment seat of Christ will be between each one of us and the Lord alone.

Verse 21 tells us that Joseph gave "carts" to his brothers, to bring their families down to Egypt to live. These carts or wagons would have been similar to the covered wagons, or Conestoga wagons, that were used by settlers as they moved west in the early days of our country. In fact, models of this type of ancient wagon have been found in Egypt. And it wasn't until Jacob saw those carts coming that he was finally convinced that Joseph was indeed alive!

One more background note: in verse 22 we read about changes of garments being given to the brothers. Now today that doesn't seem like a big gift, but in those days a change of clothing, or having more than one outfit, was very special. This was a sizable gift, especially for Benjamin, who received five changes of garments!

Doctrinal Points

1. The gospel is more than the forgiveness of sins.

As you know, the word gospel means "good news." Joseph's brothers certainly heard and responded to the good news in Genesis 45 – to the good news of Joseph, or if you will, the "gospel of Joseph." Again we see a beautiful parallel between Joseph and the Lord Jesus. The "good news of Joseph" is an illustration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Notice that the good news of Joseph was more than just forgiveness. For Joseph to have completely forgiven his brothers after what they had done to him would have been grace enough, but there is so much more. Grace was abounding here!

Notice several ways in which the good news is more than forgiveness. Look at verse 15: *"Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him."* Here we see reconciliation and fellowship. In the same way, when we respond to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, there is more than just forgiveness of our sins; there is reconciliation with God, and there is fellowship with Him!

Remember the story of the "prodigal son"? When the lost son returned, the father not only forgave him, he restored him to the place of sonship. It was not just, "OK, I forgive you, but you'd better not do it again. You can come home, but you'll have to live with the servants or live in the barn." No, the son who had left his father and wasted the father's money was welcomed back as a son, with all the rights and privileges of sonship, and there was feasting, reconciliation, and fellowship with the father!

Notice how Joseph provided for his brothers and gave them gifts. This is what God does for us. He does **more** than forgive us for our sins against Him. He provides for us and gives us gifts -- material and spiritual blessings. Romans 8:31-32 says, *"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"*

Then notice how Joseph prepared a new home for his family. They were to love in the **best** part of the land (v18 & v20). It reminds us of the place that the Lord is preparing for us. John 14:2-3 says, *"In My Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."* The Gospel of Christ is more than the forgiveness of sins.

The "gospel of Joseph" is certainly an illustration of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus -- not only of the way the Lord will deal with the nation of Israel in the future, but also of the way the Lord Jesus deals with us in grace. The Gospel is more than the forgiveness of sins.

2. The gospel is more than wishful thinking!

When the brothers returned home and gave their father the good news, Jacob did not believe them! *"And they told him, "Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart stood still, because he did not believe them"(v26).* Isn't it interesting that Jacob was quick to believe the bad news when the brothers brought him Joseph's tunic, stained with the blood -- but here when he heard the good news, he had a hard time believing it? However, he believed *"when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him..."(v27).*

"All the words of Joseph" would have included the words of verses 4-5 of this chapter: *"I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. 5 But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life."* Jacob may have suspected it before, but now he knew for sure that the brothers had not only betrayed Joseph, but had lied to him when they brought him Joseph' bloody coat.

"But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. 28 Then Israel said, "It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die." When Jacob saw the carts, this was positive evidence that the brothers were not making up their story. Joseph was **really** alive! This good news was more than just wishful thinking -- it was the **truth**, and Jacob believed. No wonder Israel, Jacob's new name, is used at this point.

Do you see the lesson here? The basis of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is that Jesus is alive and exalted today. This good news is more than wishful thinking -- it is true! **Jesus is alive!** And guess what? There is plenty of evidence available -- there are "wagon-loads" of evidence available to back up the truth that Jesus is alive! Just as Joseph provided evidence for doubting Jacob, and just as the Lord Jesus provided evidence for doubting Thomas, so the Lord has provided evidence for doubters today.

Some of you have listened to my recorded course on "Christian Evidences" [see * below]. In those recordings there is not only plenty of evidence for the existence of God, there is also sufficient evidence for the resurrection of Christ.

Take the empty tomb, for example. No one denies the evidence of the empty tomb. Down through 2000 years of history, no one who has really investigated the evidence (and this includes the scholars and skeptics) has ever denied the evidence of the empty tomb. They have tried to explain it away in many different ways, such as the "stolen body" theory, the "swoon" theory, the "wrong tomb" theory, and many other feeble attempts to explain it away -- and all these theories are filled with flaws in logic, by the way. There is only one explanation that fits all the evidence: there really was a resurrection, just as the Bible reports! **Jesus is alive!** The Gospel is more than wishful thinking!

Practical Applications

1. Don't quarrel along the way.

As Joseph sent his brothers off to Canaan, his parting request was "Do not quarrel along the way!" You see, Joseph knew that even though his brothers were changed men and forgiven men, during the long journey home they just might start to rehash the whole betrayal incident. They might start to blame one another, and point the finger at one another, and get into a quarrel with one another. So Joseph said, "Don't quarrel along the way!"

Do you see the parallel? The Lord Jesus says the same to us: "Don't quarrel along the way!" Do you know any Christians who need to hear this advice? We all do! Unfortunately some Christians have destroyed one another and destroyed entire church fellowships because they quarreled along the way. Galatians 5:15 says, *But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!*

The Lord pleads with each one of us as His forgiven followers -- "Please don't quarrel along the way!"

2. Let's never get too set in our ways!

Let's never get too set in our ways! This lesson is particularly helpful for senior saints, but it's good for all believers. How old do you think Jacob was when he had to pick up and move to Egypt? He was 130 years old! Even though people lived longer in those days, 130 was pretty old. Jacob lived for 17 more years in Egypt, and died at the age of 147 years.

Do you think Jacob wanted to move to Egypt? He certainly wanted to see Joseph again, but I'm sure he didn't want to move away from his homeland, the land that God had given to his forefathers Abraham and Isaac -- especially at the age of 130! I'm sure he would rather have had Joseph come back home to him.

But God had other plans for Jacob and his family. There was an on-going famine, and Joseph had an important job to do in Egypt, a job that was essential for saving many lives throughout the affected area. Moreover, God had plans for forging the nation of Israel down there in Egypt. God wanted Jacob and his family to relocate in Egypt in order to accomplish His plans.

Let's never get too set in our ways. It's not easy to stay flexible. It's not easy to adapt to changes -- to new people or new places or new ideas -- especially as we get older. In Jacob's senior years, he had to move out of his "comfort zone." He had to leave his homeland and make a long journey. He had to adapt to life in a new country, among different people, in an alien culture. But change was part of God's plan for Jacob -- and change may be part of God's plan and purpose for your life and my life as well.

We may not welcome the changes -- in fact, we may even initially dislike the changes God permits to come into our lives. But we can be sure that any new situation **He** brings to us will be part of **His** plans and **His** program for our lives. He will give us the strength to adapt, if we're willing to stay flexible and conform with joy to the changes He brings to our lives, whatever they may be!

God may have some changes planned for us in the future, so -- let's never get too set in our ways!

* The course on "Christian Evidences" is available, free of charge, in RealAudio on this website, and for purchase on CD in the website store.