

Genesis

Chapter 42:1-38

✚ **Gen 42:1-5** ¹ *When Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?"* ² *And he said, "Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may live and not die."* ³ *So Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt.* ⁴ *But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, "Lest some calamity befall him."* ⁵ *And the sons of Israel went to buy grain among those who journeyed, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.*

Last week we ended with the start of the seven-year famine in the world. Joseph had been commissioned by God to help those in need during these seven years.

"Wait a minute. I thought that Pharaoh had Joseph handing out the food. What do you mean God commissioned Joseph to do it?"

Remember that the Lord had allowed certain things to happen in Joseph's life to prepare him for the task at hand. Pharaoh was only God's mouthpiece (so to speak) giving Joseph the instructions to handle the storing of food for the seven years of plenty, and distributing the food for the seven years of famine. Remember that during the interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams that God told Pharaoh how to handle the situation, but in reality, God was speaking to Joseph.

So here we are in the seven years of famine and Jacob (Israel) tells his sons to get up and get some food for them. Jacob sends his ten sons but not the eleventh, which was Benjamin, and the twelfth being Joseph.

So why didn't Jacob want Benjamin to go with his brothers? It's possible that Jacob knew in his heart that the other ten brothers were partly, if not totally, responsible for what Jacob thought was Joseph's death. Jacob didn't want anything like this to happen to his son Benjamin, who you will remember was the son of Rachel who Jacob loved. This was the last piece of his marriage to Rachel that Jacob had to hold onto.

✚ **Gen 42:7-9** *Now Joseph was governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with their faces to the earth.* ⁷ *Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger to them and spoke roughly to them. Then he said to them, "Where do you come from?"* *And they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food."* ⁸ *So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him.* ⁹ *Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them, and said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land!"*

Verse 7 is interesting because it says that Joseph, who was sold into slavery in Egypt, was now the Governor of Egypt selling to those who bought him.

The word governor means: *having mastery, domineering, master*

He who was sold as a slave was now the master over those who purchased him.

Jesus was also sold as a slave to the world, to pay for the sins of the world. But Jesus has completed the work He was sent to do, and is now the King of kings and Lord of lords of those He was sold to.

† **Matt 26:14-16** ¹⁴ *Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests* ¹⁵ *and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver.* ¹⁶ *So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.*

Thirty pieces of silver was the price of a slave.

† **Ex 21:32** *If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.*

† **Zech 11:13** *And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter"--that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter.*

Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy food as they were instructed to do by their father Jacob. And since they were coming before a man who was a governor in Egypt, the proper thing to do is to bow before him as you approach him. Now the brothers had no idea that this was Joseph, because remember he was in Egypt for almost 20 years by this time and had been raised as an Egyptian, therefore he would dress and talk like an Egyptian (Maybe even walk like an Egyptian. I had to say it. Now don't start singing it.)

So Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him, at that moment Joseph is reminded of the dream that the Lord had given him 20 years ago, remember it back in chapter 37?

† **Gen 37:5-8** ⁵ *Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more.* ⁶ *So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed:* ⁷ *"There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."* ⁸ *And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.*

But if you will also remember that Joseph had another dream during this time, which not only his brothers, but also his mother and father would bow down to him. Would this happen? We'll have to see.

Also when Joseph sees his brothers, he may be thinking that this would be a good time to get revenge on them for what they did to him 20 years ago. But as you read on, Joseph is not getting revenge but rather is teaching them a lesson. So Joseph speaks to them roughly and even accuses them of being spies. Let's read their response to Joseph.

✧ **Gen 42:10-13** ¹⁰ *And they said to him, "No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. ¹¹ "We are all one man's sons; we are honest men; your servants are not spies." ¹² But he said to them, "No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land." ¹³ And they said, "Your servants are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and in fact, the youngest is with our father today, and one is no more."*

At this point they are eating their own words that they spoke 20 years ago. ***"Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?"***

Joseph's brothers have to explain to Joseph that they are all the sons of one man, that's why there were so many of them. Notice they also say that there are 12 sons with one being at home and the other being no more. The words "no more" do not mean that he was dead, but as the NLT puts it: *"and one of our brothers is no longer with us."* Joseph responded with.

✧ **Gen 42:14-17** ¹⁴ *But Joseph said to them, "It is as I spoke to you, saying, 'You are spies!' ¹⁵ "In this manner you shall be tested: By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. ¹⁶ "Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether there is any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies!" ¹⁷ So he put them all together in prison three days.*

Joseph really let's them have it and he gives them three days in prison to think about it. Joseph knew how much his father loved Benjamin, but I'm sure Joseph was anxious to see his brother since he was his only full brother with the other ten being half brothers, (Same father but different mothers.) Joseph may have also thought that his father would also come with them if Benjamin was coming.

We give our children a time out or send them to their rooms, not only to teach them a lesson and have them think about what they have done, but also to give ourselves a cooling off period so that we don't do something stupid.

I think the Lord does this to us sometimes. We fall into sin and the Lord just stops everything for a time. It could be our ministry, any advancement at work, even our relationship with our spouse or someone you are dating will be put on hold for a time. During this time we think about what we have done and how stupid it was, realizing how we fell into such a sin. I believe the Lord allows this to happen to strengthen us and allow us to see how we fell into the sin so that we don't do it again.

Now you must also remember that the Lord has not left you at this time and is always with you, but the separation that happens is our separating ourselves from the Lord not the Lord leaving us. But just as with your child, after a short time you call them from their room and sit down and talk to them about it, the same thing happens with the Lord and us. We really realize our sins and what we have done and come to the Lord seeking His forgiveness because we know that we were wrong in our ways. And as a loving Father, the Lord does forgive us and as Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery.

✠ **John 8:10-11** ¹⁰ *When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?"* ¹¹ *She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."*

These three days also gives Joseph time to cool off a little, as he rethinks what he told his brothers.

✠ **Gen 42:18-20** ¹⁸ *Then Joseph said to them the third day, "Do this and live, for I fear God: ¹⁹ "If you are honest men, let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house; but you, go and carry grain for the famine of your houses. ²⁰ "And bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die." And they did so.*

The God that Joseph is speaking of here, is not just any god, as the Egyptians had many so-called gods. But rather Joseph uses the name: 'elohiym which we know as God in the plural form or if you remember the first study in Genesis, chapter one, it's the same name used for God who created the heavens and the earth.

✠ **Gen 1:1** *In the beginning God ('elohiym) created the heavens and the earth.*
(Bracketed text mine.)

You would think that this would have tipped off Joseph's brothers that he wasn't an Egyptian, because the Egyptians did not worship the God of heaven and earth, but worshipped hundreds of false gods, but they were so afraid at this time that they weren't thinking straight. So Joseph offers for only one to be left behind, instead of nine of them. That way they could take food back for the families and then return with Benjamin. But which one will stay behind?

✠ **Gen 42:21-24** ²¹ *Then they said to one another, "We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us." ²² And Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not speak to you, saying, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us." ²³ But they did not know that Joseph understood them, for he spoke to them through an interpreter. ²⁴ And he turned himself away from them and wept. Then he returned to them again, and talked with them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.*

20 years later and the sin that they committed against their brother is still fresh in their minds as they remember how Joseph pleaded with them to let him go. Reuben, who was the oldest, also remembers this time as well, as he reminds them that he tried to stop them and did not take part in their scheme to get rid of Joseph.

† **Gen 37:21-22 & 29-30** ²¹ *But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him."* ²² *And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"--that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.*

²⁹ *Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes.* ³⁰ *And he returned to his brothers and said, "The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?"*

Joseph could understand all that they were saying, although they did not know this, because he pretended that he couldn't speak Hebrew. And listening to them talk about it, brought back even more memories of the hurt he felt 20 years ago, as he was rejected by his brothers, and as far as Joseph knew, he would never see his father again.

Before we go on any further, we need to stop and think about this and maybe even someone you have hurt recently or even as far back as 20 years ago or even longer. Have you ever asked them to forgive you?

"But that was a long time ago, they probably don't even remember it." You may be thinking. But that doesn't matter and it doesn't answer the question, it only makes an excuse not to seek their forgiveness. Maybe even as you were reading this, a certain situation and/or person was coming to mind that happened a long time ago? It's very possible that this is the Holy Spirit speaking to your heart; tugging away reminding you that you hurt someone badly, and you haven't ever asked him or her to forgive you. Maybe this was so bad that you haven't even spoken with him or her since?

If you think they forgot about it, let today's study show you that hurt does go deep, even if it's between a brother or sister, even in the Lord. Sure we are to forgive others and they may have very well already forgiven you. But have you told them you were sorry and asked them to forgive you?

† **Eph 4:25-27 (NLT)** ²⁵ *So put away all falsehood and "tell your neighbor the truth" because we belong to each other.* ²⁶ *And "don't sin by letting anger gain control over you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry,* ²⁷ *for anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil.*

It may have been many a nights that the sun has gone down while you were angry with this person. I would encourage you not to let the sun go down this day until you have made amends with him or her.

Now, Joseph binds Simeon in front of his brothers, which could have been to show them how they too were bound by their sin, and the only way for Simeon to be set free was for

Joseph's brother to confess their sin to their father. That's what sin does in our lives; it binds us and restricts us from doing what we should be doing and can even steal the joy that we have. Just as Joseph's brother needed to confess their sin to their father, so we need to confess our sins to our Heavenly Father who will forgive us if we confess them to Him.

✠ **1 John 1:9** *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

So don't be afraid to confess your sins to God, you won't surprise God with your sins because He already knows about them anyway!

✠ **Romans 10:9-10** *⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* (underlined for emphasis)

So why was Simeon taken by Joseph? The bible doesn't really say, but it could have been that Simeon was an instigator of trouble, and it's possible that he was the one who started the whole thing with Joseph being rejected by his brothers. I say this because if you will remember back in chapter 34 with the Dinah incident, that their sister Dinah, who was rapped by Shechem, and Simeon and Levi went and killed the men of the city for what Shechem did?

✠ **Gen 34:30** *³⁰ Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have troubled me by making me obnoxious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and since I am few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and kill me. I shall be destroyed, my household and I."*

So once again this is only speculation but it's possible that Simeon was responsible for this whole incident, that could possibly be why Joseph held him while his brothers went back home to get Benjamin.

✠ **Gen 42:25-28** *²⁵ Then Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain, to restore every man's money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. Thus he did for them. ²⁶ So they loaded their donkeys with the grain and departed from there. ²⁷ But as one of them opened his sack to give his donkey feed at the encampment, he saw his money; and there it was, in the mouth of his sack. ²⁸ So he said to his brothers, "My money has been restored, and there it is, in my sack!" Then their hearts failed them and they were afraid, saying to one another, "What is this that God has done to us?"*

So the brothers are sent back home with the food for their families, but Joseph not only gave them food, but has also given them their money back so the food was at no cost to them.

You may be thinking that at this point Joseph is playing with their minds, but I don't think so. I think that Joseph loved his brothers and returned their money out of love not to freak them out. But when they saw the money in their sacks they did freak out and blamed God. ***Then their hearts failed them and they were afraid, saying to one another, "What is this that God has done to us?"*** But what they didn't notice is that this was a blessing not a punishment.

When we fall into sin, we expect God to pounce on us and to really let us have it. But sometimes in the mist of our sin, God will bless us, showing us that He loves us and is with us. But we freak out and wonder what God is doing to us. Just remember that He is showing His sovereign grace and mercy towards us. Not that God is saying that He approves of our sins, but He wants us to come back to Him, because He is our great provider and healer.

✚ **Gen 42:29-34** *²⁹ Then they went to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan and told him all that had happened to them, saying: ³⁰ "The man who is lord of the land spoke roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. ³¹ "But we said to him, 'We are honest men; we are not spies. ³² 'We are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no more, and the youngest is with our father this day in the land of Canaan.' ³³ "Then the man, the lord of the country, said to us, 'By this I will know that you are honest men: Leave one of your brothers here with me, take food for the famine of your households, and be gone. ³⁴ 'And bring your youngest brother to me; so I shall know that you are not spies, but that you are honest men. I will grant your brother to you, and you may trade in the land.'*

So they tell the whole story to Jacob. But there's more.

✚ **Gen 42:35-38** *³⁵ Then it happened as they emptied their sacks, that surprisingly each man's bundle of money was in his sack; and when they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. ³⁶ And Jacob their father said to them, "You have bereaved me: Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and you want to take Benjamin. All these things are against me." ³⁷ Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying, "Kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you; put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you." ³⁸ But he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If any calamity should befall him along the way in which you go, then you would bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave."*

Each one of the brothers open their sacks and finds their money there. At this, they and Jacob freak out and are scarred to death. Jacob feels he has lost his son Simeon forever and refuses to let them take Benjamin back, he's afraid that he will lose him also. Reuben even offers Jacob his two sons lives if he doesn't return with both Simeon and Benjamin. But still Jacob will have no part of it.

So is Simeon gone for good now?

Do they have enough food for the whole seven years?
If not, how will they go back for more food without Benjamin?
We will find out next week, or you can read ahead in chapter 43.

May God richly bless you in His love, grace and mercy through His Son Jesus Christ!