

Genesis

Chapter 43:1-34

✧ **Gen 43:1-7** ¹ Now the famine was severe in the land. ² And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, "Go back, buy us a little food." ³ But Judah spoke to him, saying, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.' " ⁴ "If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. ⁵ "But if you will not send him, we will not go down; for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.' " ⁶ And Israel said, "Why did you deal so wrongfully with me as to tell the man whether you had still another brother?" ⁷ But they said, "The man asked us pointedly about ourselves and our family, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?' And we told him according to these words. Could we possibly have known that he would say, 'Bring your brother down?'"

Last week we ended with Joseph's brothers returning to their father and telling him all the things that happened and how Simeon was left behind and this man from Egypt wanting to see their brother who was not with them.

So here it is sometime later, maybe weeks or even months have passed when they finally start to run out of food again. So Jacob says to his sons again, go down to Egypt and buy us some food, just as he did the first time. But Judah reminds his father that they can't return without Benjamin and he even refuses to go without Benjamin.

At this point Jacob gets upset and asks, "**Why did you ever tell him you had another brother?**" **Jacob moaned. "Why did you have to treat me with such cruelty?"** (NLT) Good question, why did they tell this Egyptian (Joseph) that they had another brother? Well you'll remember from last week's study the reason they said this was because there were ten of them and they were accused of being spies. (Even though Joseph knew they weren't) So to cover their hides, they told him that they were all brothers from the same father, and that their father even has two other sons, one that is at home and the other one is just gone.

But I want you to pay attention to Judah's answer again.

✧ **But they said, "The man asked us pointedly about ourselves and our family, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?' And we told him according to these words. Could we possibly have known that he would say, 'Bring your brother down?'"**

Notice first off that it says "**They**" meaning not just Judah saying this, but all the brothers being in agreement of this answer. If I read the conversation correctly back in chapter 42, I only read of three things that Joseph says to his brothers before they tell him about their two other brothers.

The first is in verse 7 *Then he said to them, "Where do you come from?"*

And the second in verse 9 *said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land!"*

And the third is a repeat of verse 9, which is verse 12 *But he said to them, "No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land."*

Right after this in verse 13 is where they spill their guts.

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."

I don't read of Joseph asking them about their families, or if their father was alive, or even asking about any other brothers. But these were the excuses they gave to their father Jacob, and worse is they all agreed on this.

People will say, "But it's a little white lie", or "I just stretched the truth a bit." When God says in the Ten Commandments in *Ex 20:16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.* Which means not to lie. God never put a color on the lie you shouldn't tell.

We try to get as close to sin without actually falling into the sin. God says no sex before marriage, but we ask how far is to far? How far can I go with him or her? Can we kiss, can we touch, and if so, how much can we touch and so on. People may sometimes ask these questions to appear to be spiritual, but in reality and in their minds they want to know what they can get away with.

Here's a good rule of thumb. If your ten year old daughter shouldn't do it, then neither should you. The sad thing today is what ten year old girls and boys are doing today would've made anyone blush 20 years ago. Do we let our children get away with things because we are in a new millennium? Has God changed His mind on what was sin 20 or 2,000 years ago?

† *Mal 3:6-7* ⁶ "For I am the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. ⁷ Yet from the days of your fathers You have gone away from My ordinances And have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," Says the LORD of hosts. "But you said, 'In what way shall we return?'

† *Heb 13:8* *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*

† *James 1:17* *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*

Some people may call you legalist or say that you are old fashioned; some may say that you are a crazy Christian or even a holy roller. But what they don't understand is that we

don't make up the rules as we go. Thinking just because we don't like something we call it sin. No, that's not the way of a Christian, we don't want to do these things any longer because the Lord changes our hearts and opens our eyes to the truth, and the truth is sin is not only bad, but it's bad for you too. That's why God doesn't want us to sin, because He knows it will hurt us. Just as you wouldn't want your child to run out in front of a car because you know they can get hurt or even killed. But kids just think we are trying to spoil their fun. And people think that God is just trying to spoil their fun as well.

✧ **Gen 43:8-10** ⁸ *Then Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones. ⁹ "I myself will be surety for him; from my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. ¹⁰ "For if we had not lingered, surely by now we would have returned this second time."*

Remember last week's study back when they returned from Egypt that Reuben, the eldest son, also offered Jacob his two sons if he didn't return with Benjamin and Simeon.

✧ **Gen 42:37** *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."*

But things were more severe here, because before they just returned with food, but now they were running out of that food. Dad, just send my brother with me and I'll watch over him, is what Judah was saying here. He was also thinking of others and the fact that they were going to die from hunger if something wasn't done; we see this is verse 8. ***That we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones.***

Judah also puts a lot on himself by saying that if he doesn't return with Benjamin then he will take the blame and the punishment forever. Judah also rebukes his father in a sense because he tells him that he is wasting time and that they could have gone and been back by now.

Judah is pretty bold here with the things he is saying to his father, some of them may be true, but the fact is that if they had not sinned against their brother, then they wouldn't have to be in such a predicament. So it's very possible that Judah is not that brave and he is only thinking of food here, because he's hungry. Also Judah may want to pay for his wrong and is trying to make things right with his father.

We all do the same thing sometimes. We fall into sin then we try to do works to make up with God. If you went out and got drunk last night, you may think, *"I'll just give more money to God on Sunday"*, which is really only trying to buy God's forgiveness. God doesn't want your works or your sacrifices in order for Him to forgive you. No, God just wants your repentant heart, that's all.

‡ **Psalms 51:16-17** *For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart--These, O God, You will not despise.*

Also by trying to buy off God with your money or good deeds, is a slap in the face to God and Jesus Christ. It would be like saying, "You did a good job on the cross Jesus, but it's wasn't enough." But when Jesus was on the cross He said, **"It is finished!"**

‡ **John 19:30** *So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.*

Meaning there is nothing more that needs to be done, Jesus has completed the work He was sent to do, and that work was to die for your sins. All you have to do is accept God's forgiveness.

So what was Jacob's response to his sons?

✧ **Gen 43:11-14** ¹¹ *And their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this: Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry down a present for the man--a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. ¹² "Take double money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight. ¹³ "Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man. ¹⁴ "And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved!"*

Reading Jacob's response you may be thinking, "If they had all these food items to give, why would they need to go back", or "were they really out of food?"

It reminds me of the Bugs Bunny cartoon where Bugs is captured and thrown in the pot and the person will add carrots, celery etc. to the pot. If he was starving then where did he get the vegetables? I know that this is only a cartoon and you can't compare the two. But in the case here in Genesis, read what the items were again that they were giving.

A little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds.

Good to snack on but not good to live on. Plus remember that Jacob was a rich man, and these things that were being offered were what we would call today as "staple food" meaning they are dried foods, which would last a long time. They are good for adding to foods, but by themselves there is no nutrition or at least not enough to live on.

Jacob also gives them double the money, just incase this was an oversight and they didn't take the money by mistake. Jacob is trying to cover all the bases here to protect his son's and make sure they return and that they are unharmed. But out of all the things Jacob gave to his son's, nothing was better then what he gave them in verse 14, God's blessing and a prayer.

“And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man”

Prayer is such a mighty thing, not because it gives God our shopping list of things we need. No, prayer allows us to see things through God’s eyes and seek His will, which is the best we can ever have. Prayer conforms us to God’s will, and isn’t that what we really want to be doing, God’s will?

Jacob also realizes that he was wrong for placing the lives of all his family in the hands of one man, his son Benjamin. Jacob realized that by holding back his son that the rest of the family would die from hunger. Jacob is ready to accept the deaths of his son’s Benjamin and Simeon if that will save others.

✧ **Gen 43:15-17** ¹⁵ *So the men took that present and Benjamin, and they took double money in their hand, and arose and went down to Egypt; and they stood before Joseph.* ¹⁶ *When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Take these men to my home, and slaughter an animal and make ready; for these men will dine with me at noon."* ¹⁷ *Then the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.*

Finally they return to Egypt with the gifts, and Benjamin, and they come before Joseph, and what does he do? He has a party. He celebrates because he sees his brother Benjamin, that you will remember was his only full brother.

There is so much joy when someone who has fallen away comes back to the Lord. Why, because when they are away from the Lord, their family, friends, and brothers and sisters in the Lord worry about them. I know when I walked away from the Lord, that there were many praying for me to return. Situations happened in my life where I knew the Lord was with me and watching over me.

I remember many years ago as a young Christian that a brother in the Lord had decided to go back to the world. He was now into drugs and wanted to party. I went to his house and spoke with him one on one with no one else around. I shared the love of Jesus with him and knew he was heading in the wrong direction. Even though when I left we both had tears in our eye’s because He knew the Love of Jesus was real and the words where from the Lord not myself. But still he decided to walk away, even with tears in his eyes. Sad to say I never heard from him again. What has happened to him, I don’t know, but even now as the Lord reminds me of him, I will continue to pray for him.

But even though he turned his back on the Lord, as soon as he comes to his senses and returns to the Lord, there will be a celebration in heaven. The same thing can happen for you too. Maybe you were at that point at one time in your life where you turned your back on the Lord and just walked away. Maybe this young man I just told you about is just like you. But you have been reading this study because the emptiness you have been feeling and you want it to go away, so you are searching for a way to restore your joy that you used to have.

Today, won't you start a celebration in heaven? Won't you let those in heaven rejoice at your return?

"But you don't understand, I messed up too much. If you only knew the things I did and said, God would never allow me to come back."

Don't allow Satan to lie to you and tell you that God has forsaken you and will never let you back. He will, I know it personally, as do many others.

† **Heb 13:5** *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*

These are God's words to you today. You may have left Him, but He has never left you.

† **Luke 15:7** *I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.*

All you have to do is come to the Father and ask His forgiveness. It's just as easy as when you came to the Lord.

† **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 today, seek the Lord once again and His forgiveness, and have the joy you had once before, and allow the Lord to fill that emptiness and void that has been in your life!

So what was Joseph's brother's response to this kindness?

✧ **Gen 43:18-22** ¹⁸ *Now the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, "It is because of the money, which was returned in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may make a case against us and fall upon us, to take us as slaves with our donkeys." ¹⁹ When they drew near to the steward of Joseph's house, they talked with him at the door of the house, ²⁰ and said, "O sir, we indeed came down the first time to buy food; ²¹ "but it happened, when we came to the encampment, that we opened our sacks, and there, each man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it back in our hand. ²² "And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks."*

To put it simply, they were scared to death. They thought that Joseph was setting them up so that he could make them slaves. They even talked to one of the servants and tried to explain what had happened to him. Too bad they didn't know this Proverb.

† **Prov 25:21-22** *If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; For so you will heap coals of fire on his head, And the LORD will reward you.*

So many times we want to pay back someone for the wrong they have done to us, or we even pray like David did.

† **Psalms 58:6** *Break their teeth in their mouth, O God! Break out the fangs of the young lions, O LORD!*

But God wants us to have compassion, even on our enemies. Jesus taught the disciples about this.

† **Matthew 5:38-48** *"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. 'You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.*

Pretty heavy words from our Savior. But they are words that we should live by!

So the brothers try to explain everything to the servant, and his response is.

☩ **Gen 43:23-24** ²³ *But he said, "Peace be with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them. ²⁴ So the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys feed.*

Joseph, who was a pretty big person in Egypt, did not let it go to his head. Notice the servant's response. *Your God and the God of your father has given you.* Now how did he know about their God?

Remember they had many so-called gods in Egypt, but this Egyptian was talking about the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and his master Joseph.

Joseph didn't let his position altar his walk with the Lord or his witness. When things were going bad, Joseph acknowledged the Lord was with him. And even now that things were going good, very good in fact, Joseph still remembers who and why he was in that position in Egypt. Joseph knew that God had put him there, and that God could take him out before he could get the words out of his mouth.

This happened to someone in the bible. This king named Nebuchadnezzar thought that he was a great person and that his kingdom was so grand because of himself. But before he could even finish bragging on himself, God intervened.

† **Dan 4:30-33** ³⁰ *The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?"*

³¹ While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! ³² And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses." ³³ That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

But God is a forgiving God as we talked about earlier, and God did have compassion on Nebuchadnezzar as soon as he repented.

† **Dan 4:34-37** ³⁴ *And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever:*

*For His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
And His kingdom is from generation to generation.
³⁵ All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing;
He does according to His will in the army of heaven
And among the inhabitants of the earth.
No one can restrain His hand
Or say to Him, "What have You done?"*

³⁶ At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. ³⁷ Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.

So Joseph's brothers hear this, and they get their presents ready for Joseph.

✧ **Gen 43:25-34** ²⁵ Then they made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there. ²⁶ And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed down before him to the earth. ²⁷ Then he asked them about their well-being, and said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?" ²⁸ And they answered, "Your servant our father is in good health; he is still alive." And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves. ²⁹ Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son." ³⁰ Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought somewhere to weep. And he went into his chamber and wept there. ³¹ Then he washed his face and came out; and he restrained himself, and said, "Serve the bread." ³² So they set him a place by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians. ³³ And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in astonishment at one another. ³⁴ Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

So Joseph asks about his father, and sees Benjamin and is overwhelmed when he sees him. So he goes off and cries for joy, as his heart is comforted being able to see his own flesh and blood once again whom he thought he might have never been able to see again. Then Joseph returns and they sit down to celebrate with Joseph in another room. And even though Joseph was not an Egyptian, he still kept the customs of not eating with those who were not Egyptian. Then as the food is brought to his brothers they are set in rank by their age. And Benjamin is given five times more than any of the others. I wonder what the brothers thought of this.

So by this time, things look pretty good for the brothers. They are probably ready to return home to their father with Simeon and Benjamin, so that he can see what a good job they have done. Except, there is one thing missing, and that is Joseph's father. I'm sure he was dying to see him too.

So I wonder how Joseph will get his father to leave Canaan and return to Egypt? Any ideas? Read ahead in chapter 44 and come back next week for more in God's word.

May God richly bless you in His love, grace and mercy!