

Trouble, Trust, and Triumph: Facing our troubles, trusting in God’s sovereignty, and rejoicing in our triumphs

Learning from Abraham and Joseph

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Trouble, Trust, and Triumph: Facing our troubles, trusting in God’s sovereignty, and rejoicing in our triumphs -- *Learning from Abraham*
Lesson 1 – God Asked Abraham to Trust Him

Opening Questions

1. What was one big promise that you made to someone? How did you fulfill it?
2. When we trust someone, what is the basis of our trust in that person?

Introduction

Abraham, born approximately 2,100 years before Jesus was born, was the name that God gave to Abram. Abraham means father of a multitude of nations. He was the first Jew and the Father of the Jewish people. God promised him that one of his descendants—Jesus *the Christ* (the promised Savior)—would save God’s people from evil and their sins. Abraham believed in God’s promise. His faith in God has become a role model for many Christians.



To think about:

We do not have control over our lives, but God does. He is the Creator of the universe. He has control over the universe and all lives in this world. If God asks us to trust him in our lives in the present time and the future, would we trust him? Abraham faced a big challenge and uncertainty for his future, and he did the right thing by trusting the God of the universe. God was happy with Abraham’s faith in him. Is God happy with our faith in him?

From the Bible: Read Genesis 12:1-20



Discussion Questions

1. What did God ask Abram to do, and what promise did God give to him (v.1-3)? How old was Abram when he took on a journey with God (v.4)?
2. What do you think are some of the challenges that Abram faced to take on this journey?
3. What did God say to Abram when he passed through the land of Canaan (v.7)?
4. What personal troubles did Abram face, and how did he try to solve them (v.10-13)?
5. How did God help him in all of these (v.17-20)?



Read Genesis 15:1-21

6. Why do you think God identifies himself as Abram’s shield [and our shield] (v.1)?
7. What personal trouble did Abram express to God (v.2-3)?
8. How did God confirm his promise to Abram (v.4-5)?
What do you think about God’s way of confirming his promise to Abram?
9. How did Abram respond to God, and how did God judge that response (v.6)?
10. What did Abram ask of God, and how did God answer him (v.8-9)?
11. What did Abram do with the animals (v.10)?
12. What did God tell Abram about his descendants when he was sleeping (v.13-16)?
13. In that time, when two people made a binding agreement (covenant), they would cut animals in half and lay them on the ground. Then, they would walk between the pieces and declare, “If I break this agreement, let me be cut into pieces like these animals.” Did God let Abram walk between the animal pieces? What did God do for him (v.12, 17-21)? What is the significance of this?
14. How was Jesus “cut into pieces” on the cross, spiritually speaking, as he took the consequences of our sins and rebellions against God and sacrificed himself as our substitute?

Notes

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Genesis 12

The Call of Abram

¹ Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

⁴ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵ And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷ Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. ⁸ From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. ⁹ And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.

Abram and Sarai in Egypt

¹⁰ Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. ¹¹ When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance, ¹² and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me, but they will let you live. ¹³ Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake." ¹⁴ When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. ¹⁵ And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. ¹⁶ And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

¹⁷ But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. ¹⁸ So Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? ¹⁹ Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife; take her, and go." ²⁰ And Pharaoh gave men orders concerning him, and they sent him away with his wife and all that he had.

Notes

The LORD: English translation for God's name in Hebrew "YHWH." It is read "Yahweh" or "Jehovah" or "Yehowah."

Ancient Hebrew did not use vowels in its written form.

Genesis 15:1-21

God's Covenant with Abram

¹After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." ²But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"

³And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." ⁴And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." ⁵And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ⁶And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

⁷And he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." ⁸But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" ⁹He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." ¹⁰And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. ¹¹And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹²As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. ¹³Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. ¹⁴But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

¹⁷When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, ¹⁹the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, ²¹the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites."

Notes

Eliezer of Damascus: he is most likely Abraham's head servant.

Ur of the Chaldeans: was the original home of Abraham. It was one of the greatest cities of the ancient world. Ur was the capital of the ancient Chaldean Empire in ancient Mesopotamia; in present day Iraq.

A smoking fire pot and a flaming torch: physical representations of God's presence (theophany).

Covenant: a binding agreement with promise of faithfulness.

Trouble, Trust, and Triumph: Facing our troubles, trusting in God's sovereignty, and rejoicing in our triumphs -- *Learning from Abraham*

Lesson 2 – God Tested Abraham's Trust in Him

Opening Questions

1. Why do teachers give exams or tests to their students?
2. Have you ever asked someone to trust you on something? What was it?

Introduction

God called Abraham to leave his homeland, and he obeyed and trusted God. God promised to give Abraham a son in his old age and to make him a great nation. He believed in God, and God was pleased with him. God made a covenant with Abraham to show he would fulfill his promise. All these blessings that Abraham received from God are God's grace for him. Abraham did not deserve any of God's blessings, but God gave to him out of his grace. After God gave him a son, Isaac, God tested Abraham's faith and trust in him. God often tests our faith in him. God does not do this for his benefit but for our benefit, including: (a) strengthening our dependence on and trust in him, (b) growing our humility, (c) developing our faithfulness, (c) removing our idols, and (d) maturing us.



To think about:

God knows all things and is a loving Father to all his people. He knows when exactly to test us. He is a perfect God and is in control over all things. He sees a much bigger picture of our lives and the lives of others in his kingdom than we can ever see. Often, when God tests our faith, it is not only for our benefit but also for others.

From the Bible: Read Genesis 16:1-4, 17:1-8, 15-21



Discussion Questions

1. What mistake did Abram and his wife make, and what trouble did it bring to them (16:1-4)?
2. How old was Abram when God appeared again to him and confirmed his covenant promise with him? Why do you think God needed to do that? How did Abram react when God appeared to him (17:1-3)?
3. What was God's covenant with Abram (now Abraham) about (v.6-8)?
4. What are the meanings of Abraham's name (v.4-5) and Sarah's name (v.15)?
5. What personal trouble did Abraham express to God (v.17-18)?
6. How did God answer him (v.19-21)?



Read Genesis 21:1-7, 22:1-19

7. What was the name of Abraham's son? How old was Abraham when his son was born (21:1-5)? How did Sarah feel about having a son in her old age (v.6-7)?
8. What did God ask Abraham to do to Isaac? Did Abraham question God? (22:1-3)?
9. What did Isaac ask Abraham about, and what was Abraham's answer to him (v.7-8)?
10. What did God provide Abraham for the burnt offering (v.13)?
11. What name did Abraham give to that place? Why (v.14)?
12. What foretelling did God tell Abraham about people from all nations (v.18)?
13. When Jesus came to this world, he said, "I come not to be served but to serve and give my life as a ransom for many." How does Jesus fulfill what God had told Abraham (see also John 1:29)?

Notes

Covenant: a binding agreement with promise of faithfulness.

Idol: an image or representation of a god used as an object of worship. Spiritually speaking, it is anything more important than God to us.

John 1:29

The next day he [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ..."

Genesis 16:1-4

Sarai and Hagar

¹ Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. ² And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. ³ So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. ⁴ And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress.

Genesis 17:1-8, 15-21

God Promised Isaac's Birth

¹ When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, ² that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly." ³ Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, ⁴ "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. ⁵ No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. ⁶ I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. ⁷ And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. ⁸ And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

¹⁵ And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶ I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her." ¹⁷ Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!" ¹⁹ God said, "No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. ²⁰ As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. ²¹ But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year."

Notes

Abraham: means *the father of a multitude of nations*.

Sarah: in Hebrew it means *princess*.

Genesis 21:1-7

The Birth of Isaac

¹The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised. ²And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him. ³Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac. ⁴And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. ⁵Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. ⁶And Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me." ⁷And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

Genesis 22:1-19

The Sacrifice of Isaac

¹After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ²He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." ³So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. ⁴On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. ⁵Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you." ⁶And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. ⁷And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" ⁸Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together.

⁹When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. ¹¹But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ¹²He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." ¹³And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴So Abraham called the name of that place, "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

¹⁵And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven ¹⁶and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, ¹⁸and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice." ¹⁹So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba. And Abraham lived at Beersheba.

Notes

Visited: God supernaturally blessed Abraham and Sarah to enjoy sexual intimacy in their old age as God told them to do so, and God blessed Sarah to get pregnant after.

Burnt offering: a form of sacrifice offering something to God as an act of worship to him. All sacrifices practiced only in the Old Testament point to Jesus—the ultimate sacrifice. One of Jesus' title is *the Lamb of God*.

The angel of the Lord: when the definite article "the" is used, it refers to a specific being who speaks as God. It is a physical appearance of God (theophany). It is believed that he was God the Son (Jesus Christ).

Trouble, Trust, and Triumph: Facing our troubles, trusting in God’s sovereignty, and rejoicing in our triumphs -- *Learning from Joseph*
Lesson 3 – Joseph Experienced Great Troubles

Opening Questions

1. What causes us to be envious or jealous of others?
2. Have you ever worked diligently and honestly but were not treated well?

Introduction

God called Abraham when he was seventy-five years old to leave his homeland and promised to give him a son in his old age and to make him a great nation. God told Abraham that one of his descendants (Jesus) would save God’s people ([John 8:56](#)), and he believed God. Abraham’s son, Isaac, was born when Abraham was a hundred years old—twenty-five years after God made him the promise. Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob. Jacob had four wives, twelve sons including Joseph, and one daughter. As a young boy, Joseph received many gifts from Jacob. This made his older brothers envious and hate him. God had a plan to teach, mature, and use him to help others greatly.



To think about:

God is a perfect and wise God. His wisdom is perfect. He knows all things and is in control of all things. God is also a patient God. He patiently teaches and matures each of his people. He used all situations and things (good and bad) to accomplish his purpose for his people.

From the Bible: Read Genesis 37:1-36



Discussion Questions

1. Why did Jacob love Joseph more than his other sons, and how did they react to this (v.3-4)?
2. What might Joseph’s attitude be towards his brothers as a teenager who was loved the most by his father? How would his attitude affect his brothers’ treatment of him?
3. What were Joseph’s dreams? How did his brothers and father react when he told them about his dreams (v.6-11)?
4. What did Joseph’s brothers do to him (v.18-28)?
5. How would Joseph feel being sold as a slave and taken to another country?
6. What did Joseph’s brothers tell their father about Joseph (v.31-34)?
7. Where did the Midianites bring Joseph to, and whom did they sell him to (v.36)?



Read Genesis 39:1-23

8. What does “The Lord was with Joseph” mean? Did Joseph work hard and honestly in Potiphar’s house? Did his master like him? What did he make Joseph to be? (v.2-4)?
9. What did God do for Potiphar because of Joseph (v.5)?
10. What did Potiphar’s wife want from Joseph? How did he handle the situation (v.6-10)?
11. How did Potiphar’s wife bring trouble to Joseph, and what happened to him (v.11-20)?
12. Why do you think that God allowed Joseph to be mistreated and suffer? Was God always with Joseph? Do you think God had a purpose in allowing Joseph to suffer and be mistreated? What happened to him in prison (v.21-23)?
13. From this story, what can we learn about (a) life in this world, (b) how we should work, and (c) trusting in God’s sovereignty? Is there anything else that we can learn?
14. One of Jesus’ titles is *Immanuel*. He promises to be with his people permanently and not temporarily ([Matthew 1:23](#), [28:20](#)). How does this affect the way we live our lives?

Notes

John 8:56

[Jesus says] “ ... Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.”

Matthew 1:23

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name **Immanuel**” (which means, God with us).

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Genesis 37:1-36

Joseph's Dreams

¹ Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan. ² These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. ³ Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors. ⁴ But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him. ⁵ Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. ⁶ He said to them, "Hear this dream that I have dreamed: ⁷ Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf." ⁸ His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. ⁹ Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." ¹⁰ But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?" ¹¹ And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

Joseph Sold by His Brothers

¹² Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. ¹³ And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." And he said to him, "Here I am." ¹⁴ So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock, and bring me word." So he sent him from the Valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. ¹⁵ And a man found him wandering in the fields. And the man asked him, "What are you seeking?" ¹⁶ "I am seeking my brothers," he said. "Tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock." ¹⁷ And the man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan. ¹⁸ They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. ¹⁹ They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. ²⁰ Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams." ²¹ But when Reuben heard it, he rescued him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." ²² And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him"—that he might rescue him out of their hand to restore him to his father. ²³ So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the robe of many colors that he wore. ²⁴ And they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

²⁵ Then they sat down to eat. And looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. ²⁶ Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? ²⁷ Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers listened to him. ²⁸ Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt.

²⁹ When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes ³⁰ and returned to his brothers and said, "The boy is gone, and I, where shall I go?"

Notes

Israel: another name for Jacob, who is the father of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Rueben: the oldest son of Jacob.

³¹ Then they took Joseph's robe and slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. ³² And they sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father and said, "This we have found; please identify whether it is your son's robe or not." ³³ And he identified it and said, "It is my son's robe. A fierce animal has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces." ³⁴ Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. ³⁵ All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." Thus his father wept for him. ³⁶ Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.

Genesis 39:1-23

Joseph and Potiphar's Wife

¹ Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. ² The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master. ³ His master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD caused all that he did to succeed in his hands. ⁴ So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. ⁵ From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had, in house and field. ⁶ So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him he had no concern about anything but the food he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. ⁷ And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me." ⁸ But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. ⁹ He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" ¹⁰ And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.

¹¹ But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house, ¹² she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house. ¹³ And as soon as she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled out of the house, ¹⁴ she called to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to laugh at us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. ¹⁵ And as soon as he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried out, he left his garment beside me and fled and got out of the house." ¹⁶ Then she laid up his garment by her until his master came home, ¹⁷ and she told him the same story, saying, "The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to laugh at me. ¹⁸ But as soon as I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment beside me and fled out of the house." ¹⁹ As soon as his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, "This is the way your servant treated me," his anger was kindled. ²⁰ And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison. ²¹ But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. ²² And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. ²³ The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because the LORD was with him. And whatever he did, the LORD made it succeed.

Notes

The LORD: English translation for God's name in Hebrew "YHWH." It is read "Yahweh" or "Jehovah" or "Yehowah." Ancient Hebrew did not use vowels in its written form.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Sin against God: Joseph knows that all sins, including wrongdoing against another person, are ultimately sins against God.

Trouble, Trust, and Triumph: Facing our troubles, trusting in God's sovereignty, and rejoicing in our triumphs -- *Learning from Joseph*

Lesson 4 – God's Good and Unexpected Plan for Joseph

Notes

Opening Questions

1. If you ever lived in another country, how long was it for, and what did you do there?
2. How important are honesty, humility, and kindness for a manager or a supervisor?

Introduction

Living in a foreign land can be difficult. We need to learn the language and culture of the land to adapt. Joseph was sold as a slave and was brought to Egypt. In Egypt, though he worked hard and was honest, he was mistreated and was thrown into prison. However, God was with him and blessed him. In prison, he was put in charge of taking care of all the other prisoners. God had a good and unexpected plan for him.



To think about:

God is perfectly wise and sovereign. He does not always give us a *good* life but allows us to experience troubles and suffering. God is always with his people, including in difficult times. It is when we depend on God the most that he strengthens our faith in him and teaches us to trust him completely.

From the Bible: Read Genesis 40:1-23



Discussion Questions

1. What did Pharaoh do to his chief cupbearer and chief baker? Why (v.1-3)?
2. Who was appointed to serve them (v.4)?
3. Why were the cupbearer and the baker feeling discouraged when Joseph saw them one morning (v.5-8)?
4. What was the cupbearer's dream, and what interpretation did Joseph give (v.9-13)? What ability did God give to Joseph? What did Joseph ask of the cupbearer (v.14-15)?
5. What was the baker's dream, and what interpretation did Joseph give (v.16-19)?
6. What happened to the cupbearer and the baker in three days (v.20-22)?
7. How might Joseph feel about being forgotten for his service and kindness (v.23)?



Read Genesis 41:1-57

8. After two years have passed, what dream did Pharaoh [the king of Egypt] have (v.1-7)? How was he the next day, and what did he do (v.8)?
9. Who told Pharaoh about Joseph, and what did he say about Joseph (v.9-13)?
10. How might have Joseph's character grown or matured as he spent years in prison?
11. What interpretation did Joseph give for Pharaoh's dream (v.25-32)?
12. What advice did Joseph give to Pharaoh to do (v.33-36)?
13. What did Pharaoh think about Joseph; what did Pharaoh make him to be (v.37-44)?
14. How old was Joseph when he got this new job? Did he do his job well (v.46-49)?
15. What are the meanings of his two sons' names (v.50-51)?
16. What happened after the seven years of plenty? What did Joseph do (v.53-56)? Who else came to Joseph to buy grain besides Egyptians (v.57)?
17. How did meeting the cup bearer and the baker in prison affect Joseph's life? Do you think Joseph meeting them in prison and interpreting their dreams was a coincidence or a plan of God? How do you see God's sovereignty in all of these?
18. How does God's plan of sending Jesus to die on the cross, bearing the punishment of all our sins and rebellions against God as our substitute, affect our lives?

Joseph's Dreams

¹Some time after this, the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and his baker committed an offense against their lord the king of Egypt. ²And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, ³and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where Joseph was confined. ⁴The captain of the guard appointed Joseph to be with them, and he attended them. They continued for some time in custody.

⁵And one night they both dreamed—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison—each his own dream, and each dream with its own interpretation. ⁶When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were troubled. ⁷So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in custody in his master's house, "Why are your faces downcast today?" ⁸They said to him, "We have had dreams, and there is no one to interpret them." And Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell them to me."

⁹So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph and said to him, "In my dream there was a vine before me, ¹⁰and on the vine there were three branches. As soon as it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and the clusters ripened into grapes. ¹¹Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand." ¹²Then Joseph said to him, "This is its interpretation: the three branches are three days. ¹³In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office, and you shall place Pharaoh's cup in his hand as formerly, when you were his cupbearer.

¹⁴Only remember me, when it is well with you, and please do me the kindness to mention me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house. ¹⁵For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the pit."

¹⁶When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was favorable, he said to Joseph, "I also had a dream: there were three cake baskets on my head, ¹⁷and in the uppermost basket there were all sorts of baked food for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating it out of the basket on my head." ¹⁸And Joseph answered and said, "This is its interpretation: the three baskets are three days. ¹⁹In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head—from you!—and hang you on a tree. And the birds will eat the flesh from you."

²⁰On the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast for all his servants and lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants. ²¹He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. ²²But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. ²³Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

Cupbearer: a person who serves wine, especially in a royal or noble household.

Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dreams

¹ After two whole years, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile, ² and behold, there came up out of the Nile seven cows, attractive and plump, and they fed in the reed grass. ³ And behold, seven other cows, ugly and thin, came up out of the Nile after them, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile. ⁴ And the ugly, thin cows ate up the seven attractive, plump cows. And Pharaoh awoke. ⁵ And he fell asleep and dreamed a second time. And behold, seven ears of grain, plump and good, were growing on one stalk. ⁶ And behold, after them sprouted seven ears, thin and blighted by the east wind. ⁷ And the thin ears swallowed up the seven plump, full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and behold, it was a dream. ⁸ So in the morning his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was none who could interpret them to Pharaoh.

⁹ Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, "I remember my offenses today. ¹⁰ When Pharaoh was angry with his servants and put me and the chief baker in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, ¹¹ we dreamed on the same night, he and I, each having a dream with its own interpretation. ¹² A young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. When we told him, he interpreted our dreams to us, giving an interpretation to each man according to his dream. ¹³ And as he interpreted to us, so it came about. I was restored to my office, and the baker was hanged."

¹⁴ Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they quickly brought him out of the pit. And when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came in before Pharaoh. ¹⁵ And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." ¹⁶ Joseph answered Pharaoh, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer."

¹⁷ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Behold, in my dream I was standing on the banks of the Nile. ¹⁸ Seven cows, plump and attractive, came up out of the Nile and fed in the reed grass. ¹⁹ Seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and thin, such as I had never seen in all the land of Egypt. ²⁰ And the thin, ugly cows ate up the first seven plump cows, ²¹ but when they had eaten them no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they were still as ugly as at the beginning. Then I awoke. ²² I also saw in my dream seven ears growing on one stalk, full and good. ²³ Seven ears, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprouted after them, ²⁴ and the thin ears swallowed up the seven good ears. And I told it to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me."

²⁵ Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁶ The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years; the dreams are one. ²⁷ The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty ears blighted by the east wind are also seven years of famine. ²⁸ It is as I told Pharaoh; God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁹ There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, ³⁰ but after them there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt. The famine will consume the land, ³¹ and the plenty will be unknown in the land by reason of the famine that will follow, for it will be very severe. ³² And the doubling of Pharaoh's dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about.

Notes

The Nile: the Nile River.

Blight: a plant disease, typically one caused by fungi such as mildews.

³³ Now therefore let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. ³⁴ Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land and take one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plentiful years. ³⁵ And let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. ³⁶ That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine that are to occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine.”

Joseph Rises to Power

³⁷ This proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants. ³⁸ And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?” ³⁹ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. ⁴⁰ You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you.” ⁴¹ And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.” ⁴² Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck. ⁴³ And he made him ride in his second chariot. And they called out before him, “Bow the knee!” Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁴ Moreover, Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no one shall lift up hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.” ⁴⁵ And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphenath-paneah. And he gave him in marriage Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On. So Joseph went out over the land of Egypt.

⁴⁶ Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went through all the land of Egypt.

⁴⁷ During the seven plentiful years the earth produced abundantly, ⁴⁸ and he gathered up all the food of these seven years, which occurred in the land of Egypt, and put the food in the cities. He put in every city the food from the fields around it. ⁴⁹ And Joseph stored up grain in great abundance, like the sand of the sea, until he ceased to measure it, for it could not be measured.

⁵⁰ Before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph. Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, bore them to him. ⁵¹ Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh. “For,” he said, “God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house.” ⁵² The name of the second he called Ephraim, “For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.”

⁵³ The seven years of plenty that occurred in the land of Egypt came to an end, ⁵⁴ and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. There was famine in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. ⁵⁵ When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph. What he says to you, do.”

⁵⁶ So when the famine had spread over all the land, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. ⁵⁷ Moreover, all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe over all the earth.

Notes

Famished:
extremely hungry.

Trouble, Trust, and Triumph: Facing our troubles, trusting in God's sovereignty, and rejoicing in our triumphs -- *Learning from Joseph*

Lesson 5 – Joseph Forgave and Reunited with His Brothers

Opening Questions

1. When was the last time you were hungry and needed to wait a long time for a meal?
2. How hard is it to forgive someone who has hurt or done something wrong to you?

Introduction

Forgiving someone who has hurt us may not be easy. We naturally tend to seek payback immediately. One who has a forgiving heart usually has experienced a lot of forgiveness. Living as a slave and being in prison in Egypt, Joseph learned much and matured. He acknowledged his own sins against God and trusted him for what would happen in his life. He cared for the lives of other prisoners and took good care of them in prison. When the king of Egypt set him free and appointed him as the governor over the entire land of Egypt, Joseph was ready to take this job and responsibility to take care the people of Egypt.



To think about:

How does God see our lives together as a family, a community, a city, a country, and a world? Suppose we can see things the way God sees people's lives. If we are wise enough, would forgiving and caring for others become a very important part of our thoughts, words, and actions in daily lives?

From the Bible: Read Genesis 42:1-38



Discussion Questions

1. Why did Jacob send his ten sons [Joseph's brothers] to go to Egypt (v.1-5)?
2. Who was Joseph in Egypt? What did his brothers do when they saw him (v.6)?
3. What were the dreams that Joseph remembered (v.9; Genesis 37:6-9)?
4. How did Joseph test his brothers (v.9-17)?
5. What did Joseph decide to do to his brothers (v.18-20)?
6. How did they feel about it (v.21-22)? Did they know that Joseph understood their language (v.23)? How did Joseph feel about what they were saying (v.24)?
7. What did Joseph do for his brothers and their families, including his father (v.25-26)?
8. What was it that shocked them (v.27-28)?
9. How did Jacob react after hearing them (v.36)?
10. How was Reuben willing to guarantee the safety of Benjamin (v.37)?

Read Genesis 43:1-34

11. What situation did Jacob and his sons face (v.1-5)?
12. How was Judah willing to guarantee the safety of Benjamin (v.8-9)?
13. What did Jacob suggest them to bring to Joseph (v.11-14)?
14. When Joseph saw them, what did Joseph ask the steward of his house to do (v.16)?
15. How did Joseph's brothers feel being brought to Joseph's house (v.18)?
16. How did the steward of Joseph's house calm their fear (v.19-23)?
17. What did they do when Joseph came, and what did he ask them (v.26-29)?
18. How did Joseph feel seeing his younger brother (v.30)?
19. What was surprising to Joseph's brothers (v.33-34)?
20. When we trust our lives to Jesus, who has sacrificed himself and died bearing the punishment of all our sins (past, present, and future) on the cross as our substitute, we are forgiven. How does receiving total forgiveness from God change our daily lives?

Notes

Genesis 37:6-9

⁶He said to them, "Hear this dream that I have dreamed: ⁷Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf." ⁸... ⁹Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

Joseph's Brothers Go to Egypt

¹When Jacob learned that there was grain for sale in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?" ²And he said, "Behold, I have heard that there is grain for sale in Egypt. Go down and buy grain for us there, that we may live and not die." ³So ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. ⁴But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with his brothers, for he feared that harm might happen to him. ⁵Thus the sons of Israel came to buy among the others who came, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

⁶Now Joseph was governor over the land. He was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground. ⁷Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke roughly to them. "Where do you come from?" he said. They said, "From the land of Canaan, to buy food." ⁸And Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. ⁹And Joseph remembered the dreams that he had dreamed of them. And he said to them, "You are spies; you have come to see the nakedness of the land."

¹⁰They said to him, "No, my lord, your servants have come to buy food. ¹¹We are all sons of one man. We are honest men. Your servants have never been spies." ¹²He said to them, "No, it is the nakedness of the land that you have come to see." ¹³And they said, "We, your servants, are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan, and behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is no more." ¹⁴But Joseph said to them, "It is as I said to you. You are spies. ¹⁵By this you shall be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go from this place unless your youngest brother comes here. ¹⁶Send one of you, and let him bring your brother, while you remain confined, that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you. Or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies."

¹⁷And he put them all together in custody for three days.

¹⁸On the third day Joseph said to them, "Do this and you will live, for I fear God: ¹⁹if you are honest men, let one of your brothers remain confined where you are in custody, and let the rest go and carry grain for the famine of your households, ²⁰and bring your youngest brother to me. So your words will be verified, and you shall not die." And they did so. ²¹Then they said to one another, "In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he begged us and we did not listen. That is why this distress has come upon us." ²²And Reuben answered them, "Did I not tell you not to sin against the boy? But you did not listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood."

²³They did not know that Joseph understood them, for there was an interpreter between them. ²⁴Then he turned away from them and wept. And he returned to them and spoke to them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes. ²⁵And Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, and to replace every man's money in his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. This was done for them. ²⁶Then they loaded their donkeys with their grain and departed.

²⁷And as one of them opened his sack to give his donkey fodder at the lodging place, he saw his money in the mouth of his sack. ²⁸He said to his brothers, "My money has been put back; here it is in the mouth of my sack!" At this their hearts failed them, and they turned trembling to one another, saying, "What is this that God has done to us?"

Notes

Israel: another name for Jacob, who is the father of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Benjamin: The youngest brother of the twelve and Joseph's only brother from the same mother.

Canaan: in north of Egypt; the land where Jacob and his family lived.

Rueben: the oldest son of Jacob.

Simeon: Jacob's second eldest son.

²⁹ When they came to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them, saying, ³⁰ “The man, the lord of the land, spoke roughly to us and took us to be spies of the land. ³¹ But we said to him, ‘We are honest men; we have never been spies. ³² We are twelve brothers, sons of our father. One is no more, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan.’ ³³ Then the man, the lord of the land, said to us, ‘By this I shall know that you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me, and take grain for the famine of your households, and go your way. ³⁴ Bring your youngest brother to me. Then I shall know that you are not spies but honest men, and I will deliver your brother to you, and you shall trade in the land.’”

³⁵ As they emptied their sacks, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack. And when they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were afraid. ³⁶ And Jacob their father said to them, “You have bereaved me of my children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and now you would take Benjamin. All this has come against me.” ³⁷ Then Reuben said to his father, “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 the only one left. If harm should happen to him on the journey that you are to make, you would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol.”

Genesis 43:1-34

Joseph's Brothers Return to Egypt

¹ Now the famine was severe in the land. ² And when they had eaten the grain that they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, “Go again, buy us a little food.” ³ But Judah said to him, “The man solemnly warned us, saying, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.’ ⁴ If you will 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 Israel said, “Why did you treat me so badly as to tell the man that you had another brother?” ⁷ They replied, “The man questioned us carefully about ourselves and our kindred, saying, ‘Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother?’ What we told him was in answer to these questions. Could we in any way know that he would say, ‘Bring your brother down?’” ⁸ And Judah said to Israel his father, “Send the boy 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 will be a pledge of his safety. 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 If we had not delayed, we would now have returned twice.”

¹¹ Then their father Israel said to them, “If it must be so, then do this: take some of the choice fruits of the land in your bags, and carry a present down to the man, a little balm and a little honey, gum, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds. ¹² Take double the money with you. Carry back with you the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks. Perhaps it was an oversight. ¹³ Take also your brother, and arise, go again to the man. ¹⁴ May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man, and may he send back your other brother and Benjamin. And as for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.”

Notes

Sheol: grave.

Judah: one of Jacob's sons (the 4th eldest).

¹⁵ So the men took this present, and they took double the money with them, and Benjamin. They arose and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph. ¹⁶ When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Bring the men into the house, and slaughter an animal and make ready, for the men are to dine with me at noon."

¹⁷ The man did as Joseph told him and brought the men to Joseph's house. ¹⁸ And the men were afraid because they were brought to Joseph's house, and they said, "It is because of the money, which was replaced in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may assault us and fall upon us to make us servants and seize our donkeys."

¹⁹ So they went up to the steward of Joseph's house and spoke with him at the door of the house, ²⁰ and said, "Oh, my lord, we came down the first time to buy food. ²¹ And when we came to the lodging place we opened our sacks, and there was each man's money in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight. So we have brought it again with us, ²² and we have brought other money down with us to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks." ²³ He replied, "Peace to you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has put treasure in your sacks for you. I received your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them. ²⁴ And when the man had brought the men into Joseph's house and given them water, and they had washed their feet, and when he had given their donkeys fodder, ²⁵ they prepared the present for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they should eat bread there.

²⁶ When Joseph came home, they brought into the house to him the present that they had with them and bowed down to him to the ground. ²⁷ And he inquired about their welfare and said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?" ²⁸ They said, "Your servant our father is well; he is still alive." And they bowed their heads and prostrated themselves. ²⁹ And he lifted up his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me? God be gracious to you, my son!" ³⁰ Then Joseph hurried out, for his compassion grew warm for his brother, and he sought a place to weep. And he entered his chamber and wept there.

³¹ Then he washed his face and came out. And controlling himself he said, "Serve the food." ³² They served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians could not eat 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 at one another in amazement. ³⁴ Portions were taken to them from Joseph's table, but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. And they drank and were merry with him.

Notes

Abomination:

dislike or hateful feeling.

Joseph's brothers were shepherds, and shepherds were looked down upon by Egyptians for various reasons.

Some of those reasons are:

(1) Shepherds sacrificed animals that Egyptians adored.

(2) Egyptians considered shepherds as low class and dirty people.

Trouble, Trust, and Triumph: Facing our troubles, trusting in God’s sovereignty, and rejoicing in our triumphs -- *Learning from Joseph*
Lesson 6 – God’s Good Plan for Joseph’s Families

Opening Questions

1. What are some hopes you have in life?
2. Do you think you are more loving now than you were ten years ago?

Introduction

How do we grow to be more loving people? We do not naturally develop this quality trait. It requires much effort and strong motivation. To be loving means to be patient, to be selfless or not selfish, to care for others, to put the needs of others first, and to try to meet those needs. To be loving requires us to sacrifice much of our time, energy, and resources for others. This is hard, but it is not very hard if we have experienced much love and sacrifice from someone else. Joseph experienced God’s love for him. Being sold as a slave by his brothers and being imprisoned in Egypt had taught him to trust God in all things. In prison, he learned to take care of the lives of many other prisoners. Then he was appointed by Pharaoh to be the governor of Egypt and to care for the lives of many people. Joseph met his brothers, and he planned to take care of them and their families.



To think about:

Many true Christians can share how the love and sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, bearing the punishment of their sins as their substitute, has changed them. They grow in loving others because they keep experiencing the love of Jesus in their daily lives. Jesus’ love for them motivates them. Those who keep experiencing much love can love much as well.

From the Bible: Read Genesis 44:1-34



Discussion Questions

1. What did Joseph command his steward to do? What was the purpose (v.1-2)?
2. What did Joseph tell his steward to do after his brothers left the city (v.3-4)?
3. How did they answer the steward (v.7-9)? How do you think they might feel about this?
4. How did they feel when Joseph’s cup was found in Benjamin’s sack (v.12-13)?
5. Which of Joseph’s brothers begged to Joseph (v.14-16)?
6. Why do you think Joseph would let them go and arrest only Benjamin (v.17)?
7. How was Judah willing to sacrifice himself to save Benjamin (v.33-34)?



Read Genesis 45:1-28

8. What was the impact of Judah’s words to Joseph (v.1-2)?
9. Did Joseph blame his brothers for selling him as a slave to Egypt? How did Joseph see that it was part of God’s plan for him and his family (v.7-8)?
10. What did Joseph ask his brothers to do (v.9-13)?
11. What supplies did Joseph give them for their journey (v.21-23)?
12. What last words did he say to them before they departed (v.24)? Why did he say so?
13. How did Jacob feel hearing Joseph was alive and was the governor of Egypt (v.26-28)?
14. Jesus died on the cross but rose from the dead. He appeared to his disciples and went back to heaven. A famous song describes, “Because Jesus lives, I can face tomorrow, and all my fear is gone. He holds my future.” What is the significance of Jesus watching over his people’s lives (our lives) and guiding us?

Joseph Tests His Brothers

¹ Then he commanded the steward of his house, "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 and put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, with his money for the grain." And he did as Joseph told him.

³ As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away with their donkeys. ⁴ They had gone only a short distance from the city. Now Joseph said to his steward, "Up, follow after the men, and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you repaid evil for good? ⁵ Is it not from this [cup] that my lord drinks, and by this that he practices divination? You have done evil in doing this.'"

⁶ When he overtook them, he spoke to them these words. ⁷ They 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 that we found in the mouths of our sacks we brought back to you from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? ⁹ Whichever of your servants is found with it shall die, and we also will be my lord's servants." ¹⁰ He said, "Let it be as you say: he who is found with it shall be my servant, and the rest of you shall be innocent." ¹¹ Then each man quickly lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack. ¹² And he searched, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest. And the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. ¹³ Then they tore their clothes, and every man loaded his donkey, and they returned to the city.

¹⁴ When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, he was still there. They fell before him to the ground. ¹⁵ Joseph said to them, "What deed is this that you have done? Do you not know that a man like me can indeed practice divination?" ¹⁶ And Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how can we clear ourselves? God has found out the guilt of your servants; behold, we are my lord's servants, both we and he also in whose hand the cup has been found." ¹⁷ But he said, "Far be it from me that I should do so! Only the man in whose hand the cup was found shall be my servant. But as for you, go up in peace to your father."

¹⁸ Then Judah went up to him and said, "Oh, my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not your anger burn against your servant, for you are like Pharaoh himself. ¹⁹ My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father, or a brother?' ²⁰ And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a young brother, the child of his old age. His brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him.' ²¹ Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.' ²² We said to my lord, 'The boy cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' ²³ Then you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall not see my face again.'

²⁴ "When we went back to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. ²⁵ And when our father said, 'Go again, buy us a little food,' ²⁶ we said, 'We cannot go down. If our youngest brother goes with us, then we will go down. For we cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.' ²⁷ Then your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons. ²⁸ One left me, and I said, "Surely he has been torn to pieces," and I have never seen him since. ²⁹ If you take this one also from me, and harm happens to him, you will bring down my gray hairs in evil to Sheol.'

Divination: a superstitious practice of ancient Egyptians to find the course of the future. Joseph, as a believer in the true God, most likely did not follow this practice. He used the notion as a strategy for testing his brothers.

Sheol: grave.

³⁰ “Now therefore, as soon as I come to your servant my father, and the boy is not with us, then, as his life is bound up in the boy's life, ³¹ as soon as he sees that the boy is not with us, he will die, and your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant our father with sorrow to Sheol. ³² For your servant became a pledge of safety for the boy to my father, saying, ‘If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father all my life.’ ³³ Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a servant to my lord, and let the boy go back with his brothers. ³⁴ For how can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? I fear to see the evil that would find my father.”

Genesis 45:1-28

Joseph Provides for His Brothers and Family

¹ Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him. He cried, “Make everyone go out from me.” So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. ² And he wept aloud, so that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. ³ And 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.

⁴ So Joseph said to his brothers, “Come near to me, please.” And they came near. And he said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵ And now do not be distressed 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 yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. ⁷ And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. ⁸ So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

⁹ Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not tarry. ¹⁰ You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. ¹¹ There I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come, so that you and your household, and all that you have, do not come to poverty.’ ¹² And now your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you. ¹³ You must tell my father of all my honor in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here.”

¹⁴ Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. ¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them. After that his brothers talked with him.

¹⁶ When the report was heard in Pharaoh's house, “Joseph's brothers have come,” it pleased Pharaoh and his servants. ¹⁷ And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: load your beasts and go back to the land of Canaan, ¹⁸ and take your father and your households, and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you shall eat the fat of the land.’ ¹⁹ And you, Joseph, are commanded to say, ‘Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. ²⁰ Have no concern for your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.’”

²¹ The sons of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the command of Pharaoh, and gave them provisions for the journey. ²² To each and all of them he gave a change of clothes, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five changes of clothes. ²³ To his father he sent as follows: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and provision for his father on the journey. ²⁴ Then he sent his brothers away, and as they departed, he said to them, "Do not quarrel on the way."

²⁵ So they went up out of Egypt and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob.

²⁶ And they told him, "Joseph is still alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt." And his heart became numb, for he did not believe them. ²⁷ But when they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. ²⁸ And Israel said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

Notes

Israel: another name given by God to Jacob, who is the father of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Trouble, Trust, and Triumph: Facing our troubles, trusting in God's sovereignty, and rejoicing in our triumphs -- *Learning from Joseph*

Lesson 7 – Experiencing and Rejoicing in God's Good Purposes

Opening Questions

1. If you had to move to a new country, which one would you choose? Why?
2. When was the last time you had a gathering with extended family and relatives?

Introduction

When we have a close relationship with God, we become more like God. Spiritually speaking, we see ourselves, our problems, other people, and the world's problems a little clearer. We learn to see things as God sees them. God teaches us to see things from his perspective when we study his Word (the Bible). God is not surprised by anything. God is eternal, all-knowing, and sovereign. He is in control of our past, present, and future. God works through all things (good and bad) for the good of his people. He can turn bad things into good things for his people. Joseph learned to see his life and the lives of others from God's perspective, and it changed him. He became a savior—one who saves others.



To think about:

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came from heaven to this world, was born as a man, experienced troubles, sacrificed himself, and died on the cross for the punishment of all our sins against God as our substitute. He is our true Savior. He has made a close relationship with God possible for us. When we trust our lives to him, we receive God's forgiveness that changes our lives from the inside out. We will have a close relationship with Jesus and be transformed to be more and more like him—one who saves others.

From the Bible: Read Genesis 46:1-7, 26-34



Discussion Questions

1. What did Jacob do when he reached Beersheba (v.1)?
2. What did God say to him in visions (v.2-4)?
How did this encourage Jacob to go to Egypt?
3. How many people of the house of Jacob went to Egypt (v.27)?
4. How did Joseph and Jacob feel when they met again (v.29-30)?
5. What was the occupation of Joseph's brothers (v.32)?



Read Genesis 47:1-12, 27-31; 50:15-26

6. Was Pharaoh happy that Joseph moved his father's household to Egypt (v.5-6)?
7. How old was Jacob when he moved to Egypt (v.9)?
8. How was the condition of the people of Israel in Egypt during Joseph's time (v.27)?
9. How old was Jacob (Israel) when he died (v.28)? What did Jacob ask his sons to do for him (v.29-31)?
10. What were Joseph's brothers afraid of after Jacob died (v.15)?
11. What did they do accordingly (v.16-17)? How did Joseph feel about this (v.17)?
12. What else did Joseph's brothers do (v.18)?
13. What did Joseph say to his brothers (v.19-21)?
14. What do you think about Joseph's statement, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good?" How does this show God's sovereignty and control over all things?
15. How old was Joseph when he died (v.22, 26)? What did he ask the people of Israel to do for him (v.25)?

Notes

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

16. Think about some of the similarities between Joseph and Jesus Christ. Many role models of faith in the Bible, including Joseph, point to Jesus Christ.
How can our lives point to Jesus, so that others can see Jesus through our lives?

Some similarities and differences between Joseph and Jesus Christ

- Joseph was betrayed by his brothers and sold for the price of a slave. Jesus was betrayed by Judas, one of his disciples, and sold for the price of a slave.
- Joseph faced temptations. Jesus faced greater temptations by the devil.
- Joseph was thrown into prison. Jesus was beaten, whipped, and held captive.
- Joseph began his ministry to save the lives of many people at the age of 30. Jesus began his ministry to save the lives of all God's people at the age of 30.
- People bow their knees to Joseph in Egypt. All people will bow their knees to Jesus when he returns.
- Joseph forgave his brothers who wronged him. On the cross, Jesus forgave those who wronged him.
- Joseph went through suffering before he was lifted up as the governor of Egypt. Jesus went through greater suffering (the cross) before he was lifted up (resurrected from death and ascended to heaven).
- Joseph learned to be humble, and God lifted him up. As the Son of God, who was fully and truly God, Jesus came to this world and was born fully and truly as a human with the purpose to sacrifice himself to die for his people's sins, so they can be saved. He models the greatest humility for mankind; therefore, God the Father has lifted him up to the highest throne (the throne of God) [see [Philippians 2:5-11](#)].

Notes

Philippians 2:5-11

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Genesis 46:1-7, 26-34

Joseph Brings His Family to Egypt

¹ So Israel took his journey with all that he had and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. ² And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here I am." ³ Then he said, "I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. ⁴ I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again, and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes."

⁵ Then Jacob set out from Beersheba. The sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to carry him. ⁶ They also took their livestock and their goods, which they had gained in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his offspring with him, ⁷ his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters. All his offspring he brought with him into Egypt.

²⁶ All the persons belonging to Jacob who came into Egypt, who were his own descendants, not including Jacob's sons' wives, were sixty-six persons in all. ²⁷ And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two. All the persons of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were seventy.

Jacob and Joseph Reunited

²⁸ He had sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph to show the way before him in Goshen, and they came into the land of Goshen. ²⁹ Then Joseph prepared his chariot and went up to meet Israel his father in Goshen. He presented himself to him and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while. ³⁰ Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face and know that you are still alive." ³¹ Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and tell Pharaoh and will say to him, 'My brothers and my father's household, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me. ³² And the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock, and they have brought their flocks and their herds and all that they have.' ³³ When Pharaoh calls you and says, 'What is your occupation?' ³⁴ you shall say, 'Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers,' in order that you may dwell in the land of Goshen, for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians."

Genesis 47:1-12, 27-31

Jacob's Family Settles in Goshen

¹ So Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, "My father and my brothers, with their flocks and herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan. They are now in the land of Goshen." ² And from among his brothers he took five men and presented them to Pharaoh. ³ Pharaoh said to his brothers, "What is your occupation?" And they said to Pharaoh, "Your servants are shepherds, as our fathers were." ⁴ They said to Pharaoh, "We have come to sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. And now, please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen." ⁵ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. ⁶ The land of Egypt is before you. Settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land. Let them settle in the land of Goshen, and if you know any able men among them, put them in charge of my livestock."

Notes

Beersheba: a city in present-day southern Israel.

Sacrifices: God required animal sacrifices for a temporary covering of sins and foreshadowing the perfect and complete sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Israel: another name given by God to Jacob, who is the father of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Abomination: dislike or hateful feeling. Joseph's brothers were shepherds, and shepherds were looked down upon by Egyptians for various reasons. Some of those reasons are:
(1) Shepherds sacrificed animals that Egyptians adored.
(2) Egyptians considered shepherds as low class and dirty people.

⁷ Then Joseph brought in Jacob his father and stood him before Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. ⁸ And Pharaoh said to Jacob, “How many are the days of the years of your life?”

⁹ And Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The days of the years of my sojourning are 130 years. Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their sojourning.” ¹⁰ And Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from the presence of Pharaoh. ¹¹ Then Joseph settled his father and his brothers and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. ¹² And Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with food, according to the number of their dependents.

²⁷ Thus Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen. And they gained possessions in it, and were fruitful and multiplied greatly. ²⁸ And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were 147 years.

²⁹ And when the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, “If now I have found favor in your sight, put your hand under my thigh and promise to deal kindly and truly with me. Do not bury me in Egypt, ³⁰ but let me lie with my fathers. Carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying place.” He answered, “I will do as you have said.” ³¹ And he said, “Swear to me”; and he swore to him. Then Israel bowed himself upon the head of his bed.

Genesis 50:15-26

God's Good Purposes

¹⁵ When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him.” ¹⁶ So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, “Your father gave this command before he died: ¹⁷ ‘Say to Joseph, “Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.”’ And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.” Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸ His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, “Behold, we are your servants.” ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, “Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? ²⁰ As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. ²¹ So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.” Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

The Death of Joseph

²² So Joseph remained in Egypt, he and his father's house. Joseph lived 110 years. ²³ And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation. The children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were counted as Joseph's own. ²⁴ And Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” ²⁵ Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.” ²⁶ So Joseph died, being 110 years old. They embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

Notes

Jacob blessed Pharaoh: Jacob, who was much older than Pharaoh, wished him a good life and good health.

sojourning: temporary stay.

Jacob considers that he is (1) a sojourner in a foreign country and has not settled in the land that God has promised Abraham and Isaac, and (2) a sojourner on earth, as he sees that his home is with God in God's kingdom (heaven). Abraham lived 175 years and Isaac lived 180 years.

transgression: wrongdoing; sin (thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God).

God will surely visit you: Joseph believes that God will fulfill his promise to bring the children of Israel to the promised land.

Resources

Life Application Study Bible. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publisher, Inc., 1991.

Serendipity Bible. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998.

The ESV Study Bible. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.