

September 27, 2020

“Revealed Love”
Lesson 4 of Unit

Genesis 45:1-8, 10-15

Intro

“Luke, I am your _____.” You probably filled in the word “father”, even though you may not have ever seen the Star Wars films. That revelation of family connection doesn’t change the dynamics of enmity and hatred at work between the two. There is a strong sense on both sides that, despite family connection, one will have to defeat the other. We connect to this movie plot line because for some of us, our families are the source of our greatest enemies.

Joseph has experienced this as well. His jealous brothers sold him into slavery, but now they are in front of him, bowing to him and calling him “My lord.” In Gen. 43-44, the brothers get Jacob to let Benjamin come to Egypt with them, as Joseph had told them they must. When they leave Egypt with more grain, Joseph sets them up by having his silver cup put in Benjamin’s sack. Joseph commands that Benjamin will stay as a servant. Judah, having sworn to Jacob to bring Benjamin back safely, offers to take the place of Benjamin as a servant to Joseph. The brothers, Judah in particular, have become much more caring and protective of one they know is their father’s favorite (look at Gen. 37:26-27 again). Joseph hears this plea, and the love behind it, and sees how much the brothers have changed.

Read Genesis 45:1-8

1. In vs. 1, why would Joseph make all his attendants leave the room?
2. What is different between Joseph’s crying in vs. 2, and the other times he cried in 42:24 and 43:30?
3. Why would the brothers be surprised that Joseph was speaking directly to them in vs. 3 (see 42:23)? Why don’t the brothers answer? Why are they “terrified at his presence”?
4. What detail in vs. 4 could only be known by Joseph, proving that he is the man talking to them?
5. What reason does Joseph give his brothers for not being angry at them for selling him into slavery? What does this say to you about how to handle a situation when you have been badly wronged?

6. What does Joseph explain in vs. 6? According to vs.7-8, why does Joseph tell them what he does in vs.6?

7. What are some ways (if any) to distinguish between what God “allows” and what he “causes”? What are the potential dangers of claiming to be able to make that distinction?

Text note on vs. 8: “That Joseph referred to himself as a *father to Pharaoh* is in keeping with usage of the word *father* in ancient times to describe someone who served as an advisor to another (perhaps in giving what would be considered “fatherly advice”; see Job 29:16). The image may also reflect Joseph’s role as a fatherly provider for Egypt during a time of great need.”

8. Find Goshen (vs. 11) on an OT map. What does the area look like? Why would that area be attractive to Jacob and all his family? What is Joseph’s promise in vs. 12?

9. What is Joseph doing in what he says to his brothers in vs. 12-13? Why does he feel this is necessary?

10. What happens between Joseph and his brothers in vs. 14-15? How have Joseph’s choices about how to respond to his brothers’ treatment of him created the environment for what happens in these verses?

Application: This story is about the choices we make when we are wronged. Our choices are the starting point for what happens next. If we forgive the wronger, we make it possible for reconciliation to occur. If we harbor anger, reconciliation will likely never happen. Likewise, we need to be able to forgive ourselves for wrong attitudes or actions; if we don’t, reconciliation with Christ isn’t possible. It’s up to us to choose our response.

Prayer: Father God, thank you for the lessons we can gain about how to live a Godly life here and now from the story of Joseph. Help us to forgive others, and ourselves, as we have been forgiven by Christ. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

