

Joseph, Sermon #11

Genesis 42

I want to remind you starting Wednesday night, Lord willing, I will be preaching on Samson the luster.

Regarding our study in the life of Joseph, we will now begin to pick up the pace. Many of these last chapters are long stories.

I've entitled today's message "One Is Not."

Genesis 42:7

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word.

Genesis 42:7-20

Let us pray.

You may be seated.

One Is Not

Over 20 years had passed and the 10 brothers had kept the secret regarding Joseph from their father, letting their father believe that Joseph was dead.

Chapter 42 is about bringing those 10 brothers to repentance—bringing them face to face with their sin.

I want to pick out nine lessons for life in general.

First, be sure our sins will find us out.

- I. The first step God used in “bringing the chickens home to roost” was through crisis—famine in the land, causing the 10 brothers to journey down to Egypt—they did not want to go.
- II. The second step God used in awakening the conscience of Joseph's brothers was to have Joseph treat them harshly.

In vs. 7, Joseph spoke roughly unto them.

In vs. 9b, Joseph falsely accused them.

Let me reassure you there was no vengeance in Joseph's heart.

Joseph was rough and harsh with them.

So, what was Joseph doing to his brothers? He was testing them.

God used Joseph as an instrument of bringing correction.

Joseph accused them of spying—this was a very serious charge, punishable by death.

Four times Joseph accused them of being in Egypt under false pretense (42:9, 12, 14, 16), and each time the ten brothers affirmed their innocence as “true men.”

We are true men! We are honest men! Really?

Second lesson, folks, we can deceive ourselves and believe things that are not true. James said, we forget what manner of man we are.

Vs. 10-11—we are all part of one family, said the brothers.

They are accused again by Joseph in verse 12, and they divulge more information (vs. 13).

Then, Joseph says, I want to see the younger brother; one of you is going to fetch him. Choose one man and send him back to get your brother, but before Joseph let one go, he put them all into prison.

Vs. 17

This is another way of bringing down the callous conscience of Joseph's brothers—by having them imprisoned.

In prison, you have time to think—you are not going anywhere.

Notice he also put them all together—time to talk.

They are pleading and they are in jail. Remind you of anyone?

At the end of three days, Joseph told them he had a change of heart—I will keep only one brother—and he told them why—because “I fear God” (vs. 18).

That should have tipped them off.

They agreed with Joseph, but look what has come to the forefront of their minds.

Sin—their sin—(vs. 21a) each one of them said it—they are confessing to each other.

It is amazing how God can bring us back to a place that we have tried to bury.

Vs. 21

They believed and rightly so, that their distress in their life was a result of what they did over 20 years ago—they had ignored Joseph's cry.

Third, distresses sometimes are jabs to us regarding something else.

They admitted their guilt in refusing to spare Joseph when they remembered the anguish of his soul.

OK, what do we do with guilt?

Verse 21 shows three aspects of repentance: conscience—“we are verily guilty”; memory—“we saw the anguish of his soul”; and reason—“therefore is this distress come upon us,” but this is not far enough.

We must bring it before God.

Turn to I John 1:9, *“If we confess our sins [agree with God—You’re right, I’m wrong], He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

If they are fully repentant when they get home, what will they say to their father?

Tell him the truth.

Zaccheus was fully repentant.

Fourth lesson—let God have His full work and do not cut Him off short—many Christians do just that.

The brothers were being brought to the point of repentance, but they are still a ways out.

This whole experience brought the ten men to the place where conviction was starting to germinate in their hearts.

Vs. 22

Reuben didn’t solve the problem by saying, “I told you not to do it.”

Yet, he was still a part of it.

This is an important lesson here—**#5**—feeling bad after a crime does not remove the consequences of it.

We must think of the consequences before we do it.

Remember, Reuben tried to help Joseph (37:20-22).

But now, Reuben was sure that Joseph was dead and that Divine judgment was imminent, for he said, “Now comes the reckoning for his blood” (42:22).

They knew the age-old principle we reap what we sow—life for life.

But notice **vs. 23**

Now, look at Joseph’s reaction as he heard his brothers.

Vs. 24a

At this point, Joseph’s pent-up emotions simply had to come out, so he left the room and wept privately.

This is the first of six times that Joseph wept—for Joseph also wept when he saw his brother Benjamin (43:29-30), when he revealed himself to his brothers (45:2), when he met his father (46:29), when his father died (50:1), and when he assured his brothers that they were truly forgiven (v. 17).

Sixth lesson—what makes a person cry is a good test of character.

Joseph gets himself back together—returns to face his brothers and then the nine brothers watch as Simeon is selected and bound in front of their eyes (vs. 24e).

Why did Joseph select Simeon to be the hostage when Reuben was the firstborn?

We don’t know for sure, but most likely because Reuben tried to save him.

Simeon was Jacob’s number two son.

Simeon was also known to be a very cruel man (34:25; 49:5-7), and perhaps the worst brother was selected.

Vs. 25—we see Joseph’s heart—he gave their money back and extra food for travel.

Their journey back home was over a distance 250 miles and would take them about three weeks.

Vs. 26-28—what is God doing to us?

This kindness was the heaping of coals of fire on their heads.

Lesson #7

Romans 12:20, *“Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.”*

A guilty conscience was very evident in the brothers now, and they misinterpreted the kind gifts.

Proverbs 28:1, *“The wicked flee when no man pursueth. . .”* /mind, guilty conscience, paranoid

Vs. 29-34

★They told Jacob a lot of stuff except for one thing!—what happened to Joseph.

Vs. 35-36

Jacob expressed a gross lack of faith.

All he could see was the immediate circumstances and, as far as he was concerned, there was no hope.

Quite the contrary, as a matter of fact, in reality all things were working together for good.

So it often is with God's people.

#8—Even when all the circumstances seem negative, God is working positively.
The just shall live by faith.

Vs. 37

Reuben tried to assure his father that Benjamin would be safe when they took him to Egypt.
Kill your two grandsons—outlandish proposition, overcompensation

Vs. 38

The statement “he is left alone” means “Benjamin alone is left of Rachel's two sons.”
It was another selfish statement from Jacob that made the other sons feel they were second-class members of the family.

Benjamin must be protected even if the whole family starves!
Jacob was revealing his true affections.
He would rather Simeon be lost, than Benjamin.

#9 lesson—Jacob is holding tight to Benjamin, but God has a way of prying our grip.
Keep an open hand with God—let God put in and let God take out.

Let us stand for closing invitation.

Nine lessons for life in general—Has God spoken to us?

Is God dealing with our conscience on anything?

Does our heart condemn us?

Let us clear our consciences

God uses distresses to prick the conscience.

Gospel