

Joseph, Sermon #12

Genesis 43

In Genesis 42-45, we have four chapters that give a very detailed account of Joseph's dealings with his brothers

In Genesis 42—they meet face to face for the first time in over 20 years.

- And they call Joseph “the lord of the land.”
- They do not know it is Joseph they are dealing with.
- All of these events are leading up to when Joseph finally reveals his identity / himself to his brothers.

In Genesis 43—three scenes:

1. Jacob needs to build his faith (vs. 1-14)
 - Vs. 15 – they make their second trip into Egypt
2. And they are taken to Joseph's house—that is the second scene (vs. 16-31)
3. And the final scene is lunch—they have a meal together (vs. 32-34)

I've entitled today's message “Growing in Faith”—say it with me.

Genesis 43:1

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

Genesis 43:1-14

Let us pray.

You may be seated.

“Growing in Faith”

What is the virtue Jacob lacks? Faith

Genesis 42:36—Jacob is thinking of everything in terms of himself.

God wants us to think in the terms of others.

- Many of our debilitating mental problems are due, in fact, to focusing on self. We need to be “other orientated.”

Philippians 2:3-5, *“Let nothing be done through strife [selfish ambition] or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem [consider] other better than themselves.*

- Concerned for the interests of others.

Because preoccupation with oneself is sin

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

5 Let this mind [attitude] be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

It is hard to have faith when my eyes are focused on me.

Genesis 42:38a

Jacob said, “Never!” “No way—I will not allow Benjamin to go to Egypt.”

This is called stubbornness / self-willed

God has a way of taking our “nevers” and our “will nots” and turning them into reality.

- It’s not “our will be done,” but “Thy will be done.”
- That is the mindset of Christ.
- This mindset of selectability—choosing what parts of Christianity will apply to me or what parts of the Bible I want to do or believe—is part of the American culture, but it is not part of being a Christian.

Jonah learned this the hard way—I’m not going to Ninevah; I’m not going to do what You told me to do.

Well, the cruise ship deckhands tossed old Jonah over the side of the boat and a big fish helped Jonah change his mind.

Jacob said, Benjamin will not go down to Egypt, but God has a way of breaking our wills.

Look at Genesis 43:1.

They ran out of grain again—they had other food, but they lacked bread, the staple of life.

When the grain was gone, Jacob told his sons to go (vs. 2) “buy a little food.”

- That was the opportunity for Judah to step forward and take command of a delicate situation.
- Judah reminded his father that they couldn't return to Egypt without taking Benjamin along (vs. 3-5).
- Jacob tried to make the brothers feel guilty for even mentioning their little brother (43:6).

God has put them in a place where there are no doors except one.

- #1 – no alternatives—it is either faith or total bitterness—walk out on God

In Vs. 11 & Vs. 13—Jacob releases Benjamin to go.

God is at work to draw out of us faith until the day we die.

Jacob is an old man—in his senior years—God is still working on Jacob's faith!

In Genesis 42:36e—that is not a statement of faith.

That kind of response certainly doesn't sound like the Jacob of Bethel who claimed the promises of God.

His feelings of grief and despair had almost extinguished his faith.

★ Faith is one of the most precious things that we can give to God. ★

Turn to Hebrews 11 – faith in action

Hebrews 11:6, *“But without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”*

Not talking about a saving faith, but a living faith—living faith is not self-confidence, but a confidence in God, Christ, and His Word.

“The just shall live by his faith” Habakkuk 2:4.

Noah (vs. 7), Abraham (vs. 8), Joseph (vs. 22), Moses (vs. 24)

God desires faith from us. Faith is the one thing that really spotlights and magnifies everything that He is.

It's like with children—the real test of a child's obedience is not when he obeys when he understands; it's when he obeys and he doesn't know why you told him to do that.

When a child obeys when you don't tell him why or explain—that's the greater faith.

What is easier? To have faith when health is good or when health is bad?

- Having faith in the midst of pressure, trials, blindness (I can't see; I don't understand)—that gives credit to God.
- God will draw out of us faith.

Genesis 43

And, in verse 14, Jacob finally just throws himself on God's mercy.

Verse 14—“If I be bereaved, I am bereaved—all these things are against me.”

- This is not the best setting in which to demonstrate faith.
- This is the last resort.

If God has boxed us in, the only alternative is “Yes, God, I will trust You and believe.”

We don’t have anywhere else to turn.

Faith will release the tension in our spirits.

Unbelief just restricts the spiritual life in us—just chokes it out.

But, when we can trust in God, it relieves us and we will find God’s grace sufficient.

Jacob was resigned to finally leave the matter with God.

If he was to be deprived of his children, then it would have to be that way.

Jacob’s faith seems to flicker again.

Having done everything that he could do, humanly speaking, he now simply had to trust the Lord to work things out according to His own good will.

He sent them off with his blessing (vs. 14), asking that *El Shaddai* (God Almighty, the All-Sufficient One)

Look back at **verse 6**

It is interesting that, at this point in the narrative, the name Israel begins to be used instead of Jacob.

- This name had not been used since Genesis 37:13, the last time Jacob saw Joseph—over 20 years ago.
- It seems that, as long as Jacob seemed completely defeated because of Joseph’s apparent death, his old name, Jacob, is used as a sign of his lack of faith—Joseph’s dreams—Jacob should have believed in them.

Some people, due to some kind of circumstance, just check out on God—loss of job, health, children, spouse, parent, finances.

Job’s faith—“Though You slay me, yet will I trust You.”

Don't be discouraged if we lack faith

- Sometimes people, who profess a deep belief in God, are deeply ashamed when a crisis occurs and they find their faith is weak.
- Trials reveal our faith.

Don't be in despair

- The Bible gives plenty of examples of men and women who struggled with faith testing challenges.

Hebrews 11:34—they grew in faith through challenges, setbacks, failures, hardships

Our faith needs to mature

- Living a life of obedience and service to Christ will lead to difficulties that will challenge our faith.
- Mark 9:24—"Lord Jesus, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief"—help my unbelief

We must grow in faith

Hebrews 11:39

- They were commended for their faith
- Living faith emerges as a result of a maturing relationship with God.

When we see fellow Christians, when we read of other believers in the Bible—that encourages our faith—they did it, we can do it.

Faith is believing God will do what He says He will do

The Bible tells us how God wants us to live—it tells us God's will for us.

Romans 15:4, *"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."*

Luke 18:1, *“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”*

Fail in heart—not to give up.

There is a link between faith and obedience

Everyone’s faith will be tested.

I Peter 1:7, *“That the trial [proving, or the testing] of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”*

Daniel 6

Daniel obeyed God—even if it meant death.

When we decided to follow God, eventually we will run into tests

- Don’t compromise the truth
- We may be uncomfortable with man
- But faith in God and His Word is pleasing to Him

Let us stand for closing invitation—every eye closed.

Before you can have a growing faith, you need a saving faith first.

First, Romans 10:17, *“Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”*

Ephesians 2:8, *“For by grace are ye saved through faith.”*

Saving faith is confidence and trust that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for my sins, shed His blood for me, the sinner, that He was buried and rose again from the dead.

Now, will you ask and receive salvation of your soul, trusting Christ.

Second, you’re already saved—we all can grow in our faith.

Maybe our faith is weak; maybe our faith is wavering.

Could it be that we are selfish, compromising, weary, or tired—just want to give up.

Maybe we just need to cry out to God and ask Him to help our unbelief.