

GENESIS Lesson 47 – 10/06/19

Money in their sacks again

44:1: And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth.

44:2: And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.

44:3: As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses.

44:4: And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?

44:5: Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing.

44:6: And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words.

44:7: And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing:

44:8: Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?

44:9: With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen.

44:10: And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words; he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless.

44:11: Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack.

44:12: And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

44:13: Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.

The meal is now over the brothers are in high spirits, Joseph excuses himself and goes out through the back door and calls over his servant. He tells him, “Put their money back in their sacks. Oh, and also put my silver cup in Benjamin’s sack.”

Imagine their elation as they are heading back home. “Boys, it didn’t go as bad as we thought—this lord of the land is an OK guy. We got Simeon back, they didn’t kill Benjamin, we got our food—dad is going to be really happy.”

No sooner had they finished celebrating their successful trip that they see border patrol closing in on them.

A voice yells from the troopers, “Why did you do this evil after we had treated you guys so good?”

Their elation turned into deflation! “What! What did we do?”

The servant tells them, “You have taken the lord’s sacred cup, the one he uses to divine.” To divine means to tell the future.

We know from archeological finds that ancients did use sacred cups as divination devices. Although it is highly unlikely that that Joseph used his cup for divination; he had this ability from God.

Keep in mind, that it was not Joseph who said he used the cup for divination, but his servant. The servant may have wrongfully assumed Joseph’s gift from God to interpret dreams was due to the silver cup he drank from.

But Joseph did tell his brothers that he had the ability to divine.

Gen. 44:15: And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?

This was not a lie on Joseph’s part, but Joseph did have the God-given gift to interpret dreams, and thus far all the dreams Joseph interpreted had to do with future events.

Even today many cultures practice the forbidden act of tea and coffee cup reading. This was considered an abomination by God. Divination was not relegated to ancient cultures; today we have fortune tellers, the Ouija board, tarot cards, palmistry, parapsychology, astrology, mediums, psychics, séances and horoscopes. There is nothing new under the sun.

Deut. 18:10: There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

Deut. 18:11: Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

Deut. 18:12: For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

Joseph had set a trap. He knew how his brothers would react upon being accused of stealing his cup. “God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing.” Had the brothers examined their sacks before they left, they would not have fallen into this trap.

Upon being accused of stealing the Holy Grail, the brothers begin defending themselves. “We brought the money back from the first purchase, and we brought money for this current purchase—why would we want to steal?”

And here they make a rash proclamation; they were so confident they did not steal the cup that they declared the thief should be killed and all the rest taken as slaves.

They were confident that they did no wrong. One commentator makes the suggestion that such is the case with the sinner—he believes he has done nothing wrong.

Joseph's steward agreed, but made an alteration to their proclamation. He said that the one who had the cup would be his slave and the rest would be free to go back home.

Search was made for the cup and it was found in Benjamin's sack. What a turn of events. From "...they drank, and were merry..." to "...they rent their clothes..."

Such is life, one minute everything is OK and the next, when you least expect it, tragedy strikes.

They were caught red handed so they had to go back to Joseph. Could you imagine the self-introspection? "Why has all this befallen us?"

Joseph accuses the brothers of wrong doing

44:14: And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground.

44:15: And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?

44:16: And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found.

44:17: And he said, God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

As we rehearse this scene we can wonder if this was not orchestrated by Joseph that he may keep his brother with him. We know that Joseph was a near perfect type of Christ, but he was human after all.

Upon arriving in Egypt, the brothers meet up with Joseph and they fall before his feet—fulfilling Joseph’s dreams once again who immediately accuses them of wrong doing. Joseph basically says, “Do you know who I am?”

And Judah doesn’t waste much time—he speaks up. He provides no excuses, but says, “God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants...” For the first time a confession is made that they have sinned against God. This was the confession of David regarding the matter with Bathsheba.

Psalm 51:4: Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

Judah takes the same approach. Through his words, Judah has revealed God’s work among the brothers. According to Judah’s testimony the brothers were now destined to live the rest of their lives as slaves in Egypt because they themselves had sold Joseph as a slave, some 20 years ago. “...behold, we are my lord’s servants...” Judah was not going to allow Benjamin alone to be taken as a slave—“you take him you take us all.”

Num. 32:23: But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.

The brothers were innocent of stealing the cup, but they were guilty of a far greater sin.

Judah makes the case for their innocence

44:18: Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh.

44:19: My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother?

44:20: And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.

44:21: And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him.

44:22: And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die.

44:23: And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more.

44:24: And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.

44:25: And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food.

44:26: And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us.

44:27: And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons:

44:28: And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since:

44:29: And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

44:30: Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life;

44:31: It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave.

44:32: For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever.

44:33: Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.

44:34: For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

Judah makes one of the most moving and impassioned speeches you will find recorded in the Bible.

Judah had no way of knowing if Benjamin did or did not take the cup, but Benjamin wasn't going to take the fall alone— Judah had become surety for his brother (see Lesson 46).

But before Judah spoke to Joseph we are told that he “came near unto him.” Joseph guards probably took a step toward Judah, flexing their muscles and rattling their swords. Joseph motions them to stand down as he intently wants to hear what his older brother has to say.

Judah acknowledges Joseph's authority, “...thou art even as Pharaoh.” When we approach God we must acknowledge his authority.

2 Chr. 20:6: And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?

Psalms 115:3: But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

Rom. 14:11: For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

Judah's plea revolves around the fact the Jacob's life is hinged on the life of the lad—Benjamin is around 22 years of age at this time.

Judah reminds Joseph that they brought Benjamin down at his insistence to prove to him that they were not spies.

Judah tells Joseph that only Benjamin is left from his father's wife because his other son was torn to pieces—Judah still hasn't confessed what they did to the other boy. Judah chose his words carefully, he did not say that Benjamin's brother was dead; only that Jacob said, "Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since."

Judah continues his plea and now appeals to Joseph's sensitivities—if I return to my father without the lad, he will surely die!

And then Judah tells Joseph, "I have become surety for the lad! Take me instead and let the lad go." Judah was willing to sacrifice himself so that his brother can live.

Remember it was Judah who convinced the other brothers to sell Joseph rather than kill him.

Gen. 37:26: And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?

Gen. 37:27: Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content.

Judah's last words strike a chord with Joseph—after this Joseph was moved to the point he couldn't keep up the charade, he couldn't hide who he was any longer.

Judah told Joseph I cannot bear the thought of what will happen to my father if I go back without the boy.

Twenty-two years earlier they had no concern what the effect the news of Joseph's demise would have on their father.

This time though that's all they could think about, even willing to offer themselves as servants to that Benjamin would be set free. It is the case with those who have been touched by God.

Moses was willing to offer himself so that God would forgive the sin of his people.

Ex. 32:31: And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold.

Ex. 32:32: Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.

Paul was willing to be accursed (placed under a curse/suffer damnation) in order that all Israel would be saved.

Rom. 9:1: I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

Rom. 9:2: That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

Rom. 9:3: For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

Sacrificial love is evidence of our transformation. We know we have truly been transformed when we reach the point that we are willing to lay down our lives for the other person, we are willing to die so that our neighbor can get saved.

John 13:34: A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

John. 15:13: Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

1 John 3:16: Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

John Knox prayed, “Lord, give me Scotland or I die.” Knox’s ministry of preaching and prayer were so well known that Mary, Queen of Scots, whose government had persecuted Knox, is reported to have said, “I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the assembled armies of Europe.”

Judah had reached this point. For the sake of the well-being of his father he was willing to lay down his life.