



Fulfilment of a Dream

WEEK FIVE – JOSEPH IS STILL ALIVE

Genesis 42:1-2 When Jacob heard that grain was available in Egypt, he said to his sons, “Why are you standing around looking at one another? I have heard there is grain in Egypt. Go down there and buy enough grain to keep us alive. Otherwise we’ll die.”

Read: Genesis 42 and 43

You probably know the story well, but there are many truths here that are pertinent to our lives today. Let us ask ourselves a question at this point.

- Where do we go to find the food necessary to spiritually fulfill our lives?
- Your response may well be that we find it at church and that is important BUT how long do we spend in church each week?

We will return to that question later.

In Week Three Study, we talked about Numbers 23:19 which tells us that God cannot lie and cannot change his mind. He never speaks without acting upon it and he never promises what will not be fulfilled.

Remember how this whole story began? Joseph and his dreams of greatness when all his brothers would bow down to him. Genesis 37:11 ... *but his father kept the matter in mind.* That dream was about to be manifested when Jacob uttered the words: *there is corn in Egypt.*

Ten of the brothers (Benjamin stayed with his father), set off to buy food in Egypt, the only place which had supplies. Verses 6 and 7 tell us that the brothers came before Joseph and ‘*bowed down before him with their faces to the earth.*’ They didn’t recognise him given that it was some twenty years since they last saw Joseph and of course, they, (apart perhaps from Reuben), assumed he was dead. However, Joseph immediately recognised them and remembered his dream. His response seems harsh but no doubt he was covering up his emotions, when he accused them of being spies. Given they were ten men all from the same family it would be highly unlikely they would all be spies, but Joseph was probably thinking on his feet as to how he could detain them longer to find more information about his father and Benjamin.

- What do we learn from verses 14-24, especially verse 22.

- As the story unfolds in chapter 42, we find yet again, it is Reuben who saves the day in offering the lives of his own two sons, should they return home without Benjamin. Imagine the agony Jacob must have gone through in making that decision. Think about God being willing to give up his ONLY son to die for us.

We might wonder if Joseph thought he had done the right thing, but then he saw Benjamin he was overcome. However, he was anxious to know about Jacob. Verse 27: speaking of their father he asked, *“Is he still alive?”*

Read Genesis 44-45

- Why do you think Joseph acted as he did towards his brothers? Write down the reasons for this.
- Was he trying to build on the guilt they clearly felt?
- Yet again we find one of the brothers being prepared to make a sacrifice. This of his own life in order to allow Benjamin to go back to his father.
- Love can so often be about sacrifice. Think about Abraham when he took his son up to Mount Moriah in obedience to God’s instructions. Despite this being the son of promise for whom he had waited so many years, Abraham was still prepared to give him back to God. (Genesis 22) In verses 7 and 8 we find Isaac questioning his father as to the lamb they were to sacrifice. Abraham’s reply was: *“My son, God will provide a lamb for the burnt offering.”*
- In 1 Corinthians 10 we read that God will always make a way of escape for us when we fall into temptation. Never think you have gone too far from God that he cannot reach out to you. **Deuteronomy 7:9** *“Understand, therefore, that the Lord your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and lavishes his unfailing love on those who love him and obey his commands.”*

God honoured Abraham’s faithfulness as he did Joseph’s. He will do the same for you. God will be with you just as he was throughout Joseph’s life providing, we keep his word and live it out every day.

Genesis 46-47

- When you read the detail of this story it should encourage you that God has your life planned for you. When Jacob came to Egypt with all his family, Pharaoh discovered they had brought their sheep with them. Now the Egyptians did not keep sheep, it was considered evil because they viewed so many animals as gods and therefore to see such as the Israelites sacrificing sheep to God was anathema to them. Pharaoh, however, gave the Israelites the best of the land in Goshen where they could look after themselves and their livestock.

That was not the end of the story. There was still famine throughout the land, but God showed Joseph how to deal with the situation. Read Genesis 4:13-26. If you don't know which way to turn, ask God because he will give you wisdom to deal with your situation. We should not try and do everything in our own strength. Pray yourself and ask others to pray with and for you. Read God's word and absorb his teachings.

In Genesis 50:20, we read those wonderful words with which Joseph reassured his brothers: *"You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people."*

God is in control and if you allow him, he will make you to be like Joseph when his father blessed him and said: *Joseph is a fruitful vine ...*

Remember the question at the beginning as to where we find our spiritual food. Yes, we can find it in church, but we also need to feed on God's word and pray daily to be fruitful.

John 15:16 "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit - fruit that will last."

Prayer: Father help me to live my life with love, faith, hope, and integrity. May I be fruitful in my service to you.

