



Come & See What God Has Done

Forgiveness

Dec. 9

We will conclude the second week of Advent devotionals with what I think is one of the biggest lessons we can glean from the life of Joseph. That lesson is the act of forgiveness. Joseph's brothers are sent from Canaan, by their Father, to obtain grain from Egypt. They are brought before Joseph, and he recognizes them, yet they do not recognize him. He acts as if he does not recognize them, and that is where we pick up this last part of our look into Joseph's life.

From Genesis 42:18-26 we read, On the third day Joseph said to them, "Do this and you will live, for I fear God: if you are honest men, let one of your brothers remain confined where you are in custody, and let the rest go and carry grain for the famine of your households, and bring your youngest brother to me. So your words will be verified, and you shall not die." And they did so. Then they said to one another, "In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he begged us and we did not listen. That is why this distress has come upon us." And Reuben answered them, "Did I not tell you not to sin against the boy? But you did not listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood." They did not know that Joseph understood them, for there was an interpreter between them. Then he turned away from them and wept. And he returned to them and spoke to them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes. And Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, and to replace every man's money in his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. This was done for them. Then they loaded their donkeys with their grain and departed.





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The reunion between Joseph and his brothers was visibly emotional. The brothers, not recognizing Joseph, were filled with fear that their earlier actions with Joseph were the cause of their tribulations. As Rueben calls it, “a reckoning for his blood.” Joseph wept when he heard their remorse. His betrayers stood in front of him. He had the perfect motive, opportunity, and authority to exact revenge upon his brothers. But Joseph chose a different path.

Have you ever been betrayed? Have you ever been dealt with unfairly? What was your reaction to the betrayal or wrongdoing? Was it anger or vengeance-filled determination? Or was there some other emotion? Did forgiveness ever cross your mind?

The Bible has some wisdom regarding vengeance and retribution. We see this in Leviticus 19:17-18, “You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.” We also see this warning in Deuteronomy 32:35, “Vengeance is mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly.” Joseph had changed from a prideful young man to a thoughtful and caring leader. Yet, he remained faithful to the Lord through all his ups and downs. He was companionate and forgiving. This is what we can see the Lord has done in the life of Joseph. The Lord had reforged him into a better man. He is ready to do the same for you and me. Let us see what the Lord can do in our lives.

Leaning on Jesus
Forest Holmes