



#10- Heal a Family/Build a Nation

11/15/2009 - Jim Johnson – Gen. 41:53-42:24

What is God doing with Joseph? The 7 years of plenty had come and were replaced with 7 years of famine just as Joseph predicted, but because Joseph had prepared, Egypt had food to share with the Middle-East. Joseph was in charge of distribution. (41:53-57). God used this unique set of circumstances to facilitate the healing process.

I. God arranged a _____.- 42:1-5

The story now moves back to Canaan land, where Jacob is excoriating his sons for not putting food on the table. He sent the 10 oldest brothers to Egypt to remedy that situation. (2:1-5)

Little had changed in the family. Jacob still treated his sons with disrespect and having lost Joseph, he had made Benjamin, his youngest brother, the favorite. He kept him back and sent the expendable brothers to Egypt. Change was needed. God made a promise to Father Abraham, to make of his descendents a great nation. (Gen. 12:1-3) But his children and grandchildren were selfish and divisive. God chose to step in and take a dysfunctional family and remake it. In chapter 42, we find that God in his impeccable wisdom has decided that it was time to bring the family together again. He providentially put Joseph in his position, and created a need in Canaan that brought Joseph and his traitorous brothers together. (42:6)

God _____ us back to broken family relationships.

While we try to avoid conflict, God just pushes us to it – especially family. He exhorts us to take care of it (Matt. 5:23-24) but if we choose to run He will push us toward it. It is necessary to our spiritual and emotional health and development. God wants more for His people than we want for ourselves – so He arranged a meeting between Joseph and his brothers.

II. For Joseph it was an _____.

A. His Awakening began with _____.- 6-9

It quickly became clear to Joseph that those who bowed before him were his brothers. He recognized them, but they did not recognize him. He recognized them and remembered their treachery and the years of his life that it had cost him. It was painful. (42:7-9)

B. The Awakening moved to _____.- 9b-15

Joseph exploded and accused them of espionage. In spite of their protests Joseph insisted they were spies and insinuated that they would die for their crime unless they could prove otherwise by producing the alleged younger brother. (42:12-15) He suspected that the brothers had harmed Benjamin as they had harmed Joseph. Joseph was surprised to see his brothers, unprepared. The emotions he had bottled up for 20 plus years came roaring forth in one massive tangled mess. His first response was to have them executed as spies. He was in a rage.

C. Joseph's Awakening turned to _____.- 16-17

He proposed that one person go get little brother while the others remain confined. He put them all in prison - probably the very same prison in which he had been jailed. In that tight prison cell they had to become judge and jury as they had done so many years before. They had 3 days to decide on the fate of each other. Joseph was determined to cause those boys to suffer just as he had suffered. He created a scenario that would have put their families in peril of starving to death, and by throwing them into prison, he was making sure that every one of them experienced what he had experienced.

D. His Awakening was interrupted by _____.- 18-20

Three days later Joseph summoned the brothers and said, *"Do this and live, for I fear God..."* His words were softer. His attitude was less harsh and he was in control this time. The ragged edge of his anger was lost. Over the last three days he began to think about God and what was right and wrong. He found himself submitted to His will. (18) This change of heart results in a change of plans. Instead of 1 going and 9 staying, 1 would stay and 9 would go and be loaded down with all the grain they needed. Three days of reflection resulted in a more compassionate man.

E. The Awakening enabled him to _____ again. -21-24

The brothers spoke to one another in Hebrew, but they had no idea that Joseph could understand. Joseph heard them say to each other that they had wronged Joseph. Joseph also learned that Reuben had tried to stop the whole thing. It was an amazing moment for Joseph. He heard things that he never ever expected to hear. He reacted by weeping. The part of Joseph that had died had now been awakened and it brought him to tears. He had just opened the door to his heart and allowed himself to feel for his brothers again. He had been awakened. In fact, he came back and chose which brother would stay, thus relieving his brothers of the dreadful task.

God pushes us back to broken family relationships. He wants us to _____ again.

When we have been hurt by someone we tend to build a defensive wall between ourselves and that person. Some of us are stuck in our spiritual and emotional development because we were hurt in the past, and we therefore are not willing to risk anything today. To open up and risk is not necessarily to forgive. It is more about the willingness to re-enter a relationship in hopes that forgiveness might someday come.

God may be orchestrating an awakening for you – even now. Perhaps you are in the middle of the cycle, but by God's grace you will arrive at the point where you will be able to go back to that relationship and risk again. He will not send you there alone. He will go with you, for the Lord is your Shepherd.

Who is that person in your life that you have worked so hard to avoid? "Are you willing to risk it?"

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Use this section in your personal or family devotions to better apply the truth.

1. Who is that person in your life that you have worked so hard to avoid?
2. What would you have to risk if you were to have an on going relationship with them again?