



19- Heal a Family / Build a Nation

03/07/2010 - Jim Johnson – Gen. 49:29-50:14

When the patriarch or matriarch of the family dies, it is usually a tough time. What happens to the family afterwards determines whether it is a healthy family or not.

Gen. 50 is a case study of Jacob's family.

A. Jacob died and was _____ to Canaan. - 49:29-50:13

From his deathbed Jacob instructed his sons to carry him back to Canaan land and bury him there with his ancestors (29-32). He then died and his body was mummified in preparation for the long trip back to Canaan. (50:1-4) Joseph and brethren, and many Egyptians carried his father's body back to Canaan. They took a circuitous route and entered from the back door of the land. (7-13) The glue that held the family together was now gone.

B. The family returned to Egypt to endure its greatest _____ . – 14-15

The road between Canaan and Egypt evoked painful memories for the brothers. They knew they were wrong in how they had treated Joseph in the past. And even though they had come back into a surface relationship with him again, there was really no honest frank discussion that took place between the brothers and Joseph. There is no place in the record where the brothers actually sought his forgiveness. Even if there had been - there are just certain things a person will do and say in deference to a father to make him happy. The brothers worried that Joseph had been secretly bearing a grudge, and was now ready to use his unassailable power as viceroy of Egypt to seek revenge. (14-15)

C. The family survived and _____.- 16-21

The brothers sent a message (via a messenger) to Joseph, allegedly from Jacob. The message was, "Please forgive them, for they did you wrong." The bad news was that they lied again. Jacob had nothing to do with this.

The good news was that they confessed their sin to Joseph. They called their former deed sin. They even added the idea that the sin had been personally directed against him. They were also thinking and speaking spiritually. They identified themselves as servants of God. (16-17)

Joseph was just as uneasy about dad's death as they were. The famine was over and if they wished, they could easily leave him alone in Egypt and relocate back to Canaan land. But what he heard them say was "Joseph we love you, and we care about the way you feel." They may have lied about the words coming from Jacob, but they demonstrated without a doubt that they sincerely meant them. In fact, at that point, they came in person and they bowed before him and in humility and told Joseph, "We are your servants."

The brothers had truly changed - but what about Joseph? He responded by saying that he was not in God's place. He was not charged with being jury and judge over his brothers. (19) He also countered, saying that though they meant evil against him, God meant it for good (20) He reminded them

that God is sovereign, that He superintends everything that happens in life. The ambush and betrayal was just a part of God's plan. God intended to use it for good to heal and unify the family of Jacob and to preserve the family and the Egyptian nation from starvation.

He went on to pledge his good will toward them. (21) He allayed their fears and promised to treat them exactly as he treated them while dad was around - because he wanted to.

Joseph had also changed. The boy who dreamed the dream that precipitated all the conflict, never brought the dream up again. Though his brothers did bow at his feet on numerous occasions – never did he say, “I told you so.”

D. When they returned to Canaan, they did it _____ . – 22-26

Joseph remained in Egypt along with all his brothers and their families. (22-23) At some point Joseph requested that on the day that he die, that his body be retained in Egypt until the day that God made good on His promise. He wanted his bones to be carried back to Canaan on that day when all the tribes of Israel returned. When he actually died, they mummified his body and placed it into a coffin, placed it in a back room and stored it there for the next 400 years awaiting the Exodus.

Why didn't Joseph arrange to be carried up to Canaan immediately after his death – as they did for Jacob? Most likely because the sons of Jacob had finally become a family. Joseph wanted to remain with family. And on that that day when that family finally returned to the land, he wanted to be numbered among them.

What God set out to do – He did. His desire was to heal the fractured family of Jacob. He did and He made of them a great nation. This family spent 400 years in Egypt. During that time they multiplied from about 100 people or so, to roughly 2 million. They would face the difficulties of the next 400 years together. They would meet the challenges of the Exodus in unity – because God had brought healing to the family of Jacob.

The family that is truly healthy will _____ death.

Remember that Jacob never changed. He needed to– but he didn't. The same may be true in your family. Your mom and dad may contribute to the sickness of the family, but they may never be willing to change either. The great news in our story is that even though Jacob did not change – his children did. They became a healthy family.

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

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

1. What is the major problem present in your extended family these days?
2. What one thing could you do to begin to address this problem?
3. What are you doing to keep that extended family problem from taking root in you and your children?