

GENESIS 43-45

REVIEW...

- **CHAPTERS 42 – FAMINE IN THE LAND...**

- The famine was in the whole world – Jacob sent his 10 sons to Egypt (not Benjamin) ...
 - The brothers bowed before Joseph – 2nd in command of Egypt – did not recognize him...
 - Joseph accused them of being spies – testing their heart...
 - They confessed they were all brothers – one father – with one brother still at home...
 - Joseph tested their word – they had to bring their little brother – prove their word...
 - Kept Simeon there as collateral till they returned!
- A guilty conscience...
 - The brothers believed their suffering was a consequence of what they did to Joseph...
 - Joseph had grace on them – gave them food – their money back – sent them home...
 - Buy when Jacob heard all that had happened – he was overwhelmed!

FORGIVENESS...

- **1ST – HOW WE FACE PROBLEMS... vs. 1-14**

- 1st – There was a SEVERE famine in the Land... vs. 1
 - Imagine all the sugar cane crops failing – it would mean a bad year – no money / no food...
 - Now imagine – it happened the next year as well – then again - the year after that...
 - A drought – no rain – a famine that lasted for 7 years!
 - Each year would become more desperate than the one before...
 - Any reserves would quickly be used up – nothing to fall back on
 - And there would be no one to go to for help – everyone lost everything!
 - This was a desperate time - but it did not have to be - God could have sent rain...
 - God will let times in our life get hard – the question we are left to ask is why...
 - God is sovereign – in control of everything – so why the hard times – why the problems...
 - To answer why – first we must look at how we respond to problems in our life!
- 2nd – Pretend they do not exist... vs. 2-5
 - All the food Jacob and his family got from the first trip to Egypt was gone...
 - In order to go back and get more food (*and Simeon who was in prison*) ...
 - They had to take Benjamin – a thought that terrified Jacob – afraid he would lose him...
 - They had made no attempt to go back for more food – trying to avoid the decision...
 - But once all the food was gone (*piel*) – in desperation – Jacob decided to send them back...
 - Go and get (*imperative*) a little more food (*they needed a LOT more food*)!
 - Often the way we try and deal with problems – is to PRETEND they do not exist...
 - If I ignore the problem – maybe it will go away – I just PRETEND everything is great...
 - If I ignore the person who upset me or who I upset – everything will work out...
 - But problems that we ignore – just become much bigger problems!
 - Judah stood up to remind Jacob...
 - The ruler – Joseph – said we would not see his face without Benjamin...
 - The only way they would be able to get more food – is if Jacob let Benjamin go along!
 - The reason why we avoid problems – is because we are afraid of what might happen...
 - But the only way to make a problem go away – is to face it head on...
 - Like having no money / no work / no food – and ignoring the problem (*like Jacob*) ...
 - Nothing changes – you cannot run from problems – they wait for you!

- o 3rd – Blaming the past... vs. 6-10
 - Israel – looking to the PAST - asked why they had to tell the ruler about Benjamin...
 - He was still trying to avoid the problem – by looking at what could have been!
 - There is a great danger in dwelling on the PAST – what could have been...
 - We cannot change the past – we have no control over what has already been done...
 - If we are looking to the PAST – then we are not looking at the solution...
 - The only thing we can do with the past – is let it go – and press on towards Jesus!
 - **Philippians 3:13-14** – “One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”
 - Judah offered to be surety for Benjamin – require him of my hand...
 - If Judah did not return Benjamin to Israel – he would bare the blame forever!
 - Besides if they did not go – then they would ALL die anyways from starvation...
 - Judah added - if we had not hesitated – we could have already gone and been back!
- o 4th - Coming to the End of ourselves... vs. 11-14
 - Israel said to them – if it must be so -then do it...
 - Seeing there was no other option – no way to get out – Israel saw he HAD to trust God...
 - The Lord does not lack in resources – He can provide our every need...
 - But He can also make sure we have nothing that we need – and no options...
 - If we think we can depend on ourselves – He can extend the famine one more year...
 - Still think we can take care of it – another year of famine – till we finally realize...
 - We have no choice but to trust in the Lord – which was the point all along!
 - It is not about providing for our needs – God is looking to teach us to trust in Him!
 - Giving it up to God...
 - Israel sent gifts to help appease the ruler of Egypt – honey / spices / nuts...
 - Also they brought double the money – the money (pay their debt from first trip) ...
 - Last of all they brought Benjamin – his favorite son - beloved son of Rachel...
 - If I am bereaved (*literally – my child is taken*) – then I am bereaved...
 - May GOD ALMIGHTY – [וְיָיָהּ] – give you mercy – first time Israel mentions God here!
 - By accepting he was not in control – Israel was able to trust GOD ALMIGHTY was!
 - We struggle in life because we think we are in control – can take care of our problems...
 - We struggle because we are trusting in ourselves rather than in the Lord...
 - When we recognize we are not in control – that is when we can trust in the Lord...
 - When we come to the end of ourselves – that is when God begins to do a work!
 - **II Corinthians 12:9** – “He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”
- 2ND - BACK TO EGYPT... vs. 15-34
 - o 1st – Throwing a feast... vs. 15-17
 - When Joseph saw Benjamin – he ordered a feast at his house at noon...
 - He ordered his servant to kill the fatted calf – it was time for a celebration
 - Like the Prodigal - his brothers had come home – and Benjamin with them!
 - **Luke 15:20-24** - “When he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him... ‘bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”
 - God runs (*only time in the Bible*) out to embrace us – because we are Home...
 - When we stop running from our problems – and put our trust in the Lord...

- **We will find He was there waiting for us all along!**
- o 2nd - The brothers were terrified... vs. 18-25
 - They thought he would accuse them of stealing the money from the first trip...
 - Have them arrested – and made into slaves (*like Joseph had been*) ...
 - So as they came to the door of the house of Joseph – he talked (*piel*) with his steward...
 - They confessed everything that had happened with the money – they brought it back!
 - **Inevitable when we turn to the Lord – we think we are going to be rebuked...**
 - **We forget that God only chastens those whom He loves – Hebrews 12:5-6**
 - Peace be with you – do not let yourself be afraid (*jussive*) ...
 - Your God – God of your father – has gave you back your money...
 - The Steward had received (*perfect*) their money – God had blessed them!
 - And he brought them into the house – gave them water – washed their feet...
 - And the brothers prepared their gift for when Joseph would arrive for lunch!
 - **John 14:27** – “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid!”
 - **Most of us tend to spend a lot of time worrying / fearful – the opposite of peace...**
 - **The problem is worrying about problems does not help – it makes things worse...**
 - **Worry is the opposite of TRUST – we are worried because we are not trusting in God!**
 - **Instead of killing ourselves by worrying – run to Jesus and find PEACE!**
- o 2nd - Celebration... vs. 26-34
 - When Joseph arrived – the brothers bowed down – second time – **Genesis 42:6**
 - Two dreams – two times – the brothers had to come and bow before Joseph!
 - He asked about his father – is he alive / is he well...
 - When he saw Benjamin – he asked if this was their younger brother...
 - He had not seen him in over 13 years – he was likely only a child when Joseph left...
 - He became overwhelmed – his father was alive – his little brother was a grown man...
 - He yearned (*piel*) for his brother – and ran into his chamber to weep!
 - After he washed his face – he restrained his emotions – and ordered lunch served...
 - Joseph did not eat with them – Egyptians would not eat with Hebrews...
 - But Joseph set the brothers by age – from the oldest to the youngest (*he knew them*)
 - This baffled the brothers – how did he know – they were not labeled...
 - Then he gave them each a portion of food – but to Benjamin – 5x as much as the rest...
 - They did not know Joseph – but he knew all about them!
 - **Psalms 103:14** – “For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.”
 - **We do not a surprise to the Lord – He knows exactly who we are...**
 - **He knows we have a tendency to get distracted – we tend to wander...**
 - **He loves us so much – He makes sure to draw us back to Him...**
 - **He gives us problems in life – beyond our ability to handle – so we turn back to Him!**
- **3rd - TESTING THE HEART... vs. 1-15**
 - o 1st - Joseph commanded his steward... vs. 1-2
 - Fill the sacks of the eleven brothers with as much food as they could carry...
 - Also to put their money back in their sacks (*for the 2nd time the food was free*) ...
 - But Joseph also put his SILVER cup – specifically in Benjamin’s sack...
 - Joseph was looking to set his brothers up – for the 2nd time he was going to test them...
 - Joseph wanted to see what would happen if Benjamin was in trouble...
 - The brothers had left Joseph in Egypt – would they do the same to Benjamin!
 - **It is easy to say we will stand for Jesus / we have changed – when times are easy...**

- But what happens when we face hard choices – old temptations...
- Are we new creations in Jesus – or just have a new mask – underneath still the same...
- Do we fall back on our old ways / old habits – or do we stand for Jesus!
- o 2nd - In the morning Joseph sent his brothers home... vs. 3-6
 - He then had his steward chase after them – and to accuse them...
 - Why have you repaid evil for good (*fed them a nice lunch – yet they stole from him*) ...
 - Stolen the cup the Joseph used to practice (*piel*) fortune-telling (*piel*)!
 - Fortune-telling was a pagan practice used to foresee the truth – supposedly from god...
 - Joseph - being a pagan leader in a pagan nation – fakes a pagan practice...
 - It is unlikely – almost certain – Joseph did not actually practice fortune-telling!
 - Yet even playing or pretending is still VERY dangerous...
 - Horoscopes / faith healers / superstitions / palm reading - are all forbidden by the Lord!
 - They put our trust in men – circumstances – rather than in God...
 - As if the sun / moon / stars / black cats / or lines on our hand...
 - Are somehow more powerful than the God who created them all!
 - **Leviticus 19:26** – “Do not practice fortune-telling or witchcraft.”
- o 3rd - Their defense... vs. 7-10
 - The brothers had brought back the money – in their sacks – from their first trip...
 - Why would they now try to steal any silver of gold...
 - They had proved their honesty – if they wanted to steal they would have kept the money...
 - Their righteousness in this one issue – blinded them to their guilt in another...
 - They might not have taken the cup – but they had sold their brother into slavery!
 - We often only see what we are doing right – and overlook what we are doing wrong...
 - Because we did not steal – does not mean that it is alright when we lie...
 - We cannot pick and choose which of the commands of God we want to keep!
 - Let the guilty die – the rest be slaves...
 - The brothers were so sure of their innocence – the one who had the cup – death...
 - If any of them had the cup – all the rest of the brothers would become slaves...
 - They knew the price of sin – but convinced themselves of their innocence!
 - The servant said – let it be according to your words – but then changed the arrangement...
 - The person who had the cup would become a slave – the rest would be blameless!
- o 4th - The cup was found in the sack of Benjamin... vs. 11-15
 - All the brothers tore their clothes - then loaded up and headed back to Egypt...
 - When they arrived - they brothers fell to the ground - Joseph asked them...
 - Did you not know – such a man as I could practice divination (*see everything*)!
 - **Matthew 12:36** – “I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.”
 - We may try and hide our sin – do our best to keep others from knowing...
 - No matter who we think does or does not know – God always knows...
 - God knows every word – every thought – every action – of every moment in our life!
 - **Hebrews 4:13** – “All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”
- 4TH - ONLY THE GUILTY... vs. 16-34
 - o 1st - Judah answered – what shall we say / what can we answer (*piel*) ... vs. 16-17
 - How can we clear ourselves – because God has found out our sin...
 - Perhaps the brothers thought Benjamin was guilty – he DID have the cup...
 - More likely the sin Judah is referring to – is what they DID to Joseph...

- It hit them hard – they were guilty not of taking the cup – but Joseph!
- We repeatedly see Judah taking the lead here among the brothers...
 - Reuben was the first born – but was unstable – affair with Bilhah - **Genesis 35:22**
 - Simeon and Levi – murdered all of the men of Shechem - **Genesis 34**
 - Which left Judah – the fourth son – to take the lead in the family!
 - Not that Judah was perfect - led the brothers to sell Joseph - **Genesis 37:26** / Tamar
 - But he was the only one to take accountability for his actions!
- We are your slaves – and Benjamin who had the cup...
 - But Joseph said only Benjamin needed to pay the price – the rest were innocent...
 - Benjamin would be his slave – the rest could go home in peace!
 - **Ezekiel 18:20** – “The one who sins is the one who dies. The child will not be punished for the parent’s sins, and the parent will not be punished for the child’s sins. Righteous people will be rewarded for their own goodness, and wicked people will be punished for their own wickedness.”
 - We are not responsible for the sins of others – nor are they responsible for ours...
 - If a father sins – the children are affected by his example – but not responsible...
 - If a child sins – the parents are affected – but are not responsible...
 - Everyone will stand before God one day – accountable for their own actions...
 - We cannot blame others for what we have done – others cannot blame us!
- 2nd - The choice... vs. 18-29
 - Judah and all nine of his brothers had conspired against Joseph...
 - Benjamin was the only one who was innocent – the only one who did nothing...
 - Now the innocent was going to be accused – and the guilty would go free...
 - This was the real test – would they confess – or let Benjamin take the fall!
 - Judah respectfully retold their story to Joseph...
 - My lord – please let your servant speak (*jussive / piel*) a word...
 - Do not be angry (*jussive*) – for you are like Pharaoh (*all powerful*)!
 - He reminded him of their first meeting – telling him about their Father and brother...
 - Benjamin – only surviving son of Jacob and Rachel (*they all thought Joseph was dead*) ...
 - Joseph demanded to see Benjamin – to see if their story was true (*not spies*) ...
 - They argued he could not leave his father – if he did Jacob would die!
 - When the famine got worse – Jacob wanted to send his boys back to Egypt for food...
 - But they would not go without Benjamin – will not see the face of Joseph without him...
 - Jacob reminded them Rachel only gave him two sons...
 - Joseph was dead – assumed torn to pieces by a wild animal...
 - If anything happened to Benjamin – he would go with sorrow to the grave (*kill him*)!
 - In the retelling of the story – Judah realized what he had to do!
- 3rd – Trading places - Now therefore (*sequential imperfect*) ... vs. 30-34
 - If Judah showed up with Benjamin – Jacob would die on the spot...
 - Judah had promised to bring Benjamin back safely – if not – he would bear all blame...
 - So Judah offered to take his place – become a slave instead of Benjamin!
 - It was the right choice – rather than looking out for himself – he loved others first...
 - He was willing to pay the price for Benjamin – so that he could go free...
 - He was willing to show the Love of Jesus!
- 5TH – FORGIVENESS... vs. 1-15
 - 1st – A change of heart - Judah was not the nicest guy – he certainly had his flaws... vs. 1-2

- Yet his self-sacrificial offer to take the place of Benjamin was too much...
- It broke the heart of Joseph – it showed there was a true change in his brothers...
- He could no longer restrain himself – he commanded everyone leave (*except his brothers*) ...
- And he wept – so loud that even outside the Egyptians could hear it...
- It was time to tell his brothers the truth about who he was!
- **We will all make mistakes in life – we may even have a very colorful past...**
- **But what opens the heart of God – what He will never turn away from – is a broken heart...**
- **When we come humbly to the Lord – He will always answer by giving us His grace!**
- **Psalms 51:17** – “A broken and repentant heart, O God, you will not despise.”
- o 2nd - Joseph turned to his brothers and said - I am Joseph... vs. 3-4
 - These are the very LAST words these brothers EVER expected to hear...
 - He asked if his father was still alive – but they COULD NOT answer him...
 - They were too dismayed – literally TERRIFIED (*niphal*) by his revelation!
 - Joseph had to ask them – PLEASE come near – and repeat himself to get it to sink in...
 - Before them stood the most powerful man of the most powerful nation on earth...
 - Who was also the man they tried to kill – then sold into slavery – and left for dead...
 - He now had all the power in the world to exact ANY kind of vengeance he chose!
 - They were quite simply at his mercy – and they knew it!
 - Have you ever had anyone hurt you – betray you... even wanted revenge...
 - Can you imagine what you would do if you had all power – all control – over them...
 - The temptation was likely very real – let me count the ways I will make you pay!
 - **Romans 12:19** – “Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.”
 - **God is very clear – are part is to simply forgive – vengeance is His alone...**
 - **We are called to forgive – because we have been forgiven...**
 - **You might think – but you do not know WHAT they have done to me!**
 - **Matthew 18:33** - “Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?”
 - **When we consider all that Jesus has forgiven us – EVERYTHING!**
 - **How could we not forgive our brother what little debt he may owe us**
 - **You might think – but you do not know HOW many times they have do it to me!**
 - **Matthew 18:22** - “I do not say... seven times, but up to seventy times seven.”
 - **How often are we to forgive someone who sins against us – EVERY time!**
 - **What if they keep committing the same sin – then we keep forgiving!**
 - **Is there any reason not to forgive – no!**
- o 3rd – Seeing the plan of God - Joseph was not mad at them... vs. 5/8
 - But NOW – do not let yourself be GREIVED (*jussive / niphal*) – or ANGRY (*jussive*) ...
 - It was not his BROTHERS who sent him – God did and made him a FATHER to Pharaoh!
 - From their betrayal – and selling Joseph into slavery...
 - Being falsely accused by the wife of Potiphar – forgotten by the chief butler...
 - Every step along the way – God was orchestrating His master plan!
 - Many years ago I had the chance to visit the city of Petra in Jordan...
 - There is a set up steps there that lead to the overlook of the Jordan rift valley...
 - I asked how many steps – not many – I learned to hate those more than 1000 steps!
 - **Psalms 37:23** – “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD...”
 - **We may not like some of the STEPS God takes us up as we follow Him...**
 - **There can certainly be hardships – betrayal / false accusations / people forget us...**

- Yet it would be foolish to get upset with the STEPS – God is the one in control!
- o 4th - 5 more years of famine... vs. 6-7
 - Only TWO years of the famine had passed – FIVE more remained...
 - There would be ABSOLUTELY [וְאֵין] no plowing or harvesting!
 - That is why God SENT Joseph to Egypt – to save their lives with a GREAT deliverance!
 - If God had not done a work – it would have been the end of Jacob and his family...
 - All their wealth – their prosperity – likely even their lives – would have been lost...
 - So God had sent Joseph ahead to prepare the way to provide for them all!
 - In the END it made perfect sense – obviously God had done a GREAT work...
 - The problem is it was not obvious along the way – slavery / prison...
 - If Joseph had focused on his circumstances – he might not have made it through
 - It was only by keeping his eyes on the Lord – God was able to do a GREAT work!
- o 5th - Sharing Forgiveness... vs. 8-15
 - Joseph told them - hurry and go tell my father what you have seen...
 - They would come dwell in the land of Goshen – Joseph would provide for them all...
 - Then he fell on wept with Benjamin and his brothers – THEN they all talked to him!
 - Joseph speaking Hebrew now (*no translator*) – made it very clear what they were to do...
 - The solution was there – forgiveness given – but their families still did not know...
 - They could have stayed there – been safe and blessed – and let their families perish...
 - But Joseph tells them – go – tell everyone else the good news!
 - **Romans 10:13-14** – “‘Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?”
 - We have been given the incredible message of the Gospel – the good news!
 - We are forgiven – we are saved – but what about others – family / friends...
 - Share it – tell others about it – do not keep it to yourself – spread the Good news!
- 6th - THE RICHES OF THE KINGDOM... vs. 16-24
 - o 1st - Pharaoh heard about the brothers... vs. 16-20
 - He would give Jacob and family the best land in Egypt...
 - They did not even need to bring anything with them – the best of everything was theirs...
 - Pharaoh loaded down their animals with food and provisions...
 - Pharaoh also commanded carts be taken (*for the wives and the kids*) ...
 - Not only had they brothers not received vengeance – not only were they forgiven...
 - God had given them more than they could ever have imagined!
 - God does not just want to take care of our needs – He wants to give us everything!
 - **Luke 12:31-32** - “Seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”
 - o 2nd - Joseph did all the Pharaoh had commanded... vs. 21-24
 - He gave food / provisions / and a set of clothing to each of his brothers...
 - And to Benjamin - his true brother he gave 300 pieces of silver – five sets of clothes...
 - Before they left he said to them – do NOT let yourselves become troubled along the way!
 - There would be a temptation to have doubts – perhaps this was a trap...
 - Maybe Joseph just wanted all their families there to make them all slaves...
 - There would be a temptation not to go back – to stay in Canaan!
 - There is always the temptation not to believe what the Bible says...
 - God gives us all these wonderful promises – but how do we know it is true...

- Maybe it is not true – maybe the world does have the answers...
 - Maybe we would be happier – better – if we stayed in the world – away from God...
 - But there is nothing in this world more valuable than what Jesus offers us!
 - **Matthew 16:25** – “For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.”
- o 3rd - The brothers came and told Jacob everything... vs. 25-28
- His heart stood still – a fancy way of saying he could not believe what he heard...
 - His son had been dead to him for some 15 years – now he was alive...
 - But when Jacob saw all the carts – all the provisions – he believed!
 - Jacob was not just asked to believe – he was given the proof!
 - When others see Jesus work in our lives – they will also believe...
 - Tell them about the grace and forgiveness of God – the Good News...
 - Tell them about the riches and works God wants to do in their lives...
 - Show them all the Lord has done in you!
 - **II Corinthians 3:3** – “Clearly, you are a letter from... written not with pen and ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. It is carved not on stone, but on human hearts.”