

## FAMILY IN A FAR COUNTRY

**Text:** Genesis 42:29-36

To give a little history so that we have context to the verses we just read, we are reading about Jacob and his family. Jacob had 2 wives that were sisters, 2 handmaidens that became his wives as well and twelve sons. The wife he cherished above all was Rachel and the son he had by her, Joseph, was the apple of his eye. Joseph was honest, upright and of good character. Jacob's other sons were deeply flawed with deep-seated jealousy and deceitfulness. They were morally unstable and had violent tendencies. They despised Joseph because of Jacob's love for him. Jacob gifted Joseph with a multi-colored coat that his brothers stripped off him before throwing him in a pit. They eventually sold him into slavery while deceiving their father into believing that Joseph had been destroyed by a wild beast.

Jacob's heart is broken and he becomes skeptical and cynical over the next 22 years that he believes Joseph to be dead. During that time Joseph is carried into Egypt and sold to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard. He becomes the overseer of all his house until Potiphar's wife accuses him of sexual assault. A crime he did not do. He then goes into prison for years until he encounters Pharaoh's chief baker and butler in prison. They both have disturbing dreams and Joseph interprets them. He tells the butler that in three days Pharaoh will restore him to his position and asks him not to forget him when he does, but he did. For two full years he forgets Joseph until Pharaoh has a pair of dreams that completely unnerve him. The butler remembers that Joseph can interpret dreams, so he tells Pharaoh about him. Joseph is called before Pharaoh and God gives Joseph the interpretation of those dreams. God was warning Pharaoh in the dreams that Egypt would experience 7 years of plenty and abundance but be followed by 7 years of devastating famine. Joseph then tells Pharaoh what he should do to survive the famine. Pharaoh is so relieved and impressed that he makes Joseph second in command over all of Egypt and turns everything over to him. In one day, Joseph stepped from the bottom to the top!

Back in Canaan, Joseph's father and his brothers haven't seen his face in 22 years. For all that time Jacob believes his beloved son is dead. The famine hits Canaan and Jacob's family is running out of food. Jacob has heard that there is corn for sale in Egypt, so he sends 10 of the remaining 11 brothers down to Egypt to buy food. He refuses to let Benjamin (Joseph's younger brother) go because he has become over-protective since he lost Joseph. Joseph's 10 brothers show up in Egypt, and he recognizes them, but they don't recognize him. They bow before him just like he dreamed that they would. Joseph plays a

cat and mouse game with them accusing them of being spies and speaking roughly with them. He asks about their remaining family in Canaan, and they tell him that their father is still alive and that they have a younger brother. Joseph takes Simeon into custody and tells them that if they come back to buy food, they must bring their younger brother. They go back and bring the food that they bought to Jacob.

Here in this chapter we read from, they have nearly gone through the food that they bought, and Jacob wants them to go back and buy more food. The brothers tell Jacob that they must bring Benjamin with them if they want to get Simeon out of custody and buy more food. Jacob looks at his circumstances with fear and says, “all these things are against me”. Rachel is dead, to him..Joseph is dead, Simeon is held captive in Egypt, there’s a great famine on and they are running out of food. Now they want to take Benjamin away and he is terrified of losing him. At that time in his country, it does look like everything is against him.

But what he does not know is that Joseph is not only alive, but in charge of everything in a far country. In Jacob’s country, there is famine and scarcity but, in the country where Joseph is in charge there are storehouses of resources. Joseph is an Old Testament picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was his father’s beloved. His brothers were envious of him and rejected him. He was betrayed by those closest to him. He was sold for twenty pieces of silver. He was falsely accused of a crime he did not commit. He was forsaken and forgotten. But after all of his suffering, he entered his glory in a far country. He was exalted above everyone and seated next to the highest power in all the land. Pharaoh placed everything in his hands. Jesus Christ is the only begotten of the Father in heaven. He was rejected and envied by his own people. He was betrayed by a friend and sold for thirty pieces of silver. He was falsely accused of crimes he did not commit. He suffered and died on a cross but in three days he arose from the grave and forty days after that he ascended back to heaven. His is today in a far country but because of his sufferings and obedience in this country, he has been given a name that is above every name. He is seated at the right hand of the Father, and everything has been given into his hands.

When we come to the text we read this morning, Jacob is at his lowest point in his life, but what he doesn’t know is he has connections in high places. He has powerful family in a far country. While things are drying up in his land, he has a relative in another country that can supply all of his needs and then some. Jacob and his sons find out that everything that they need is available to them because of family in a far country.

**Forgiveness** – Joseph’s brothers had to live with the guilt of selling him into slavery, deceiving their father into believing he was dead, and seeing him grieve because of that all those years. The second time his brothers come into the country to buy food, he plays a game with them to keep Benjamin in Egypt. His brothers explain how that would destroy

their father and in the process, show remorse for what they did to Joseph. Joseph cannot contain himself and breaks down in tears before them and reveals that he is their brother. **Genesis 45:4-7** And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I *am* Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years *hath* the famine *been* in the land: and yet *there are* five years, in the which *there shall* neither *be* earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

**Grace - Genesis 45:8-11** So now *it was* not you *that* sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not: And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast: And there will I nourish thee; for yet *there are* five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.

**Provision - Genesis 45:17-28** And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan; And take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land. Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt *is* yours. And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way. To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred *pieces* of silver, and five changes of raiment. And to his father he sent after this *manner*; ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way. So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way. And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father, And told him, saying, Joseph *is* yet alive, and he *is* governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not. And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived: And Israel said, *It is* enough; Joseph my son *is* yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.