

NOON BIBLE STUDY: GENESIS 42 & 43

WHERE WE LAST READ IN GENESIS, JOSEPH HAS BEEN ELEVATED TO THE LEADER OF EGYPT. WE KNOW THAT IT IS GOD THAT HAS PLACED HIM THERE. FROM PHARAOH'S PERSPECTIVE, JOSEPH HAS THE ABILITY TO INTERPRET DREAMS, WHICH HE DID FOR PHARAOH HIMSELF. UNDER JOSEPH'S LEADERSHIP AND DIRECTION, EGYPT HAS TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THE 7 YEARS OF ABUNDANCE AND FILLED IT'S STOREHOUSES TO THE BRIM. AND NOW WE FIND OURSELVES SOMEWHERE IN THE 7 YEARS OF THE EXTREME FAMINE FACING THE REGION. HERE'S THE SITUATION:

GENESIS 41:53-57 (NLT) - AT LAST THE SEVEN YEARS OF BUMPER CROPS THROUGHOUT THE LAND OF EGYPT CAME TO AN END. 54 THEN THE SEVEN YEARS OF FAMINE BEGAN, JUST AS JOSEPH HAD PREDICTED. THE FAMINE ALSO STRUCK ALL THE SURROUNDING COUNTRIES, BUT THROUGHOUT EGYPT THERE WAS PLENTY OF FOOD. 55 EVENTUALLY, HOWEVER, THE FAMINE SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE LAND OF EGYPT AS WELL. AND WHEN THE PEOPLE CRIED OUT TO PHARAOH FOR FOOD, HE TOLD THEM, "GO TO JOSEPH, AND DO WHATEVER HE TELLS YOU." 56 SO WITH SEVERE FAMINE EVERYWHERE, JOSEPH OPENED UP THE STOREHOUSES AND DISTRIBUTED GRAIN TO THE EGYPTIANS, FOR THE FAMINE WAS SEVERE THROUGHOUT THE LAND OF EGYPT. 57 AND PEOPLE FROM ALL AROUND CAME TO EGYPT TO BUY GRAIN FROM JOSEPH BECAUSE THE FAMINE WAS SEVERE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

GENESIS 42:1-5 - MEANWHILE IN CANAAN...

AS WE KNOW THE FAMINE REACHES CANAAN. JACOB HEARS THERE IS GRAIN IN EGYPT AND GETS HIS BOYS STIRRED TO MAKE THE TRIP TO SAVE THEIR FAMILY. THIS IS SUCH A "DAD MOMENT" WHEN JACOB SAYS, "WHY ARE YOU STARING AT ONE ANOTHER..." (V. 1)

JACOB SENDS 10 OF JOSEPH'S BROTHERS TO EGYPT BUT HE KEEPS HIS YOUNGEST SON, BENJAMIN HOME. BENJAMIN IS JOSEPH'S FULL BROTHER, THROUGH JACOB'S FAVORITE WIFE, RACHEL. BENJAMIN WAS SPECIAL TO JACOB FOR A FEW REASONS: HE'S RACHEL'S SON, HE'S THE YOUNGEST, AND HE'S JOSEPH'S BROTHER, WHO WAS JACOB'S FAVORITE SON. REMEMBER THAT JACOB BELIEVES JOSEPH IS DEAD. BENJAMIN REPRESENTS TO JACOB SO MUCH OF WHAT THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE HE HAS TRAGICALLY LOST.

WE'VE BEEN WALKING WITH JOSEPH THE LAST FEW CHAPTERS AND HAVE ARRIVED AT THE PLACE OF HIS GREAT SUCCESS, PERHAPS WE HAVE FORGOTTEN HOW THINGS WERE GOING BACK IN THE PROMISED LAND.

GENESIS 42:6-17 - THE BROTHERS BOW BEFORE JOSEPH

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS ARRIVE IN EGYPT AND MUST APPEAL TO HIM PERSONALLY FOR GRAIN FOR THEIR FAMILY'S SURVIVAL. THEY BOW BEFORE WHAT THEY BELIEVE IS THE RULER OF EGYPT ONLY UNDER PHARAOH. THE BROTHERS HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IS GOING ON - THEY ARE STANDING BEFORE "ZAPHENATH-PANEAH" (GEN. 41:45), TO WHOM THE WORLD IS COMING TO BUY GRAIN. THEY BOW IN HOMAGE TO THEIR SUPERIOR, AND THE ONE WHOSE HANDS HOLD THEIR FATE.

AND YET JOSEPH "RECOGNIZE(D) THEM". CAN YOU EVEN IMAGINE. ON THE FLY JOSEPH BEGINS TO TREAT THEM HARSHLY AND ACCUSES THEM OF BEING SPIES. HE BEINGS GRILLING THEM AS ONE WOULD ALLEGED SPIES, BUT FOR JOSEPH, THESE QUESTIONS REVEAL TO HIM THE FATE OF HIS FATHER AND BROTHER. REMEMBER, THERE'S NO FACEBOOK THAT JOSEPH CAN USE TO CREEP ON HIS FAMILY BACK HOME. HE HAS NO IDEA IF HIS FATHER IS DEAD, WHAT HAS BECOME OF HIS FAMILY. IT HAS BEEN *AT LEAST* 20 YEARS SINCE WAS HOME. AND THEY EVEN CONFESS "ONE OF (THEIR BROTHERS) IS NO LONGER ALIVE (42:13)."

AND IN THIS DRAMATIC MOMENT JOSEPH "REMEMBERED THE DREAMS WHICH HE HAD ABOUT THEM" (42:9)

WHAT. A. MOMENT.

JOSEPH CONTINUES TO ACCUSE THEM OF BEING SPIES AND DEMANDS THAT THEY PROVE WHETHER OR NOT THEIR STORY IS TRUE BY SENDING ONE BROTHER BACK TO GET THEIR YOUNGEST BROTHER! THEN HE THROWS THEM ALL IN PRISON FOR 3 DAYS.

GENESIS 42:18-25 - JOSEPH SENDS 9 BROTHERS HOME

AFTER 3 DAYS JOSEPH RELEASES HIS BROTHERS. HE PROPOSES A NEW ARRANGEMENT, INSTEAD OF ALL OF THEM BUT ONE BUT ONE STAYING IN JAIL, HE SAYS ALL BUT ONE CAN GO HOME TO GET THEIR YOUNGEST BROTHER AND BRING HIM BACK. HIS APPARENT CHANGE OF HEART COMES BECAUSE HE SAYS "I FEAR GOD" (42:18). JOSEPH DETAINS SIMEON (PUTTING HIM IN SHACKLES RIGHT IN FRONT OF THEM) AND SENDS THEM BACK. HE GIVES THEM THE GRAIN THEY PURCHASED, BUT ALSO RETURNS THE MONEY THAT THEY PAID FOR THE GRAIN, SECRETLY, INTO THEIR SACKS AS WELL.

BUT THOSE DETAILS OF THE STORY ARE NOT WHAT GRABS OUR ATTENTION AND PRICKS OUR HEARTS. IN THIS MOMENT OF CHAOS, THE BROTHERS BEGIN TO SPILL OUT WHAT IS IN THEIR SOULS. THEY ARE INTERPRETING THE TROUBLE THAT THEY ARE HAVING (SIMEON BEING SENT TO JAIL, THE SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE ODDS THAT THEY ARE GOING TO LET JACOB SEND BACK PRECIOUS BENJAMIN, AND THE FEAR THEY HAVE BEFORE THE PRINCE OF EGYPT) - AS PUNISHMENT FOR THEIR SIN OF SELLING OFF JOSEPH. NOTICE THE LANGUAGE OF THE TEXT:

"THEN THEY SAID TO ONE ANOTHER, "TRULY WE ARE GUILTY CONCERNING OUR BROTHER, BECAUSE WE SAW THE DISTRESS OF HIS SOUL WHEN HE PLEADED WITH US, YET WE WOULD NOT LISTEN: THEREFORE THIS DISTRESS HAS COME UPON US." (GENESIS 42:21)

THEY BEGIN HAVING THIS CONVERSATION *WITH EACH OTHER*. AS A GROUP THEY REMEMBER AND RECOUNT HOW THEIR YOUNG BROTHER, FROM THE BOTTOM OF A WELL, AGAIN AS THEY PULLED HIM OUT OF THE WELL AND FINALLY AS HE WAS GRABBED AND CARRIED OFF BY THE MIDIANITE TRADERS, WAS BEGGING THEM TO "*SHOW MERCY*" (WHICH IS WHAT THE HEBREW WORD TRANSLATED "PLEADED" REALLY MEANS"). THIS HEART WRENCHING.

REUBEN, THE OLDEST BROTHER, THE ONE BROTHER WHO, THOUGH IN A COWARDLY WAY, WANTED TO EVENTUALLY RESCUE JOSEPH. FLASHBACK TO JOSEPH'S BROTHERS TALKING ABOUT KILLING HIM:

GENESIS 37:21-22 - BUT REUBEN HEARD THIS AND RESCUED HIM OUT OF THEIR HANDS AND SAID, "LET US NOT TAKE HIS LIFE." 22 REUBEN FURTHER SAID TO THEM, "SHED NO BLOOD. THROW HIM INTO THIS PIT THAT IS IN THE WILDERNESS, BUT DO NOT LAY HANDS ON HIM

AND NOW WITH HIS BROTHERS BEFORE JOSEPH IN EGYPT REUBEN (PROBABLY ANGRILY) BLURTS OUT "I TOLD YOU GUYS NOT TO DO THIS, AND NOW WE HAVE TO PAY FOR IT!" (MY PARAPHRASE).

AND JOSEPH, STANDING IN THEIR PRESENCE, HEARS IT ALL. OVERWHELMED, HE RUSHES OUT TO WEEP ALONE.

IT'S GOOD FOR US TO PAUSE HERE FOR A MOMENT AND REFLECT. WE ARE WITNESSING THE REUNION OF JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS AFTER THEIR SHOCKING AND CRUEL SEPARATION. WHILE WE HAVE FOLLOWED WITH JOSEPH THESE LAST DECADES, WE ARE JUST NOW GETTING A PEEK AT WHAT HAS BEEN GOING ON BACK HOME IN CANAAN.

CAN YOU EVEN IMAGINE THE EMOTIONAL CLIMATE IN JACOB'S HOUSE THESE PAST YEARS. JACOB WAS HEART BROKEN. THE BROTHERS GUILT RIDDEN. WE SEE THE BROTHERS TALKING TOGETHER ABOUT WHAT THEY DID TO JOSEPH NOW, BUT PERHAPS THEY HAVE AVOIDED THE SUBJECT UP UNTIL NOW. HOW MANY NIGHTMARES DID THEY HAVE, HAUNTED BY JOSEPH'S SCREAMS. HOW MANY TIMES WERE THEY TEMPTED TO TELL JACOB THE TRUTH? HOW OFTEN DID THEY WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO JOSEPH? WAS HE ALIVE? WAS HE DEAD?

IN HIS MERCY GOD WILL OFTEN LAY HIS HAND UPON OUR SOULS WHILE WE HABITUALLY PRACTICE SIN OR LIVE IN DECEIT. I HAVE EXPERIENCED NIGHTS OF SLEEPLESSNESS THINKING ABOUT A LIE I TOLD OR A SIN I HAD COMMITTED. I HAVE HAD ANXIETY WEIGH DOWN MY HEART KNOWING I SHOULD REPENT,

KNOWING I SHOULD CONFESS. IN MY YOUNGER YEARS, I TUNED OUT THOSE CONVICTIONS FROM GOD. MANY PEOPLE COMMIT MORE SIN TO ESCAPE THEIR CONSCIENCES TROUBLING AND EVENTUALLY BECOME NUMB TO WRONGDOING. WHAT A FRIGHTENING PLACE TO END UP.

BUT THE SONS OF JACOB INFORM US THAT THEIR SINS ARE NOT TOO FAR BELOW THE SURFACE. YOU HAVE TO WONDER, AS THEY IMMEDIATELY CONNECT THEIR SIN AGAINST JOSEPH TO THEIR CURRENT TROUBLES IN EGYPT, HOW LONG HAD THEY BEEN LIVING IN FEAR AND ANXIETY FOR THE "OTHER SHOE TO DROP"? DID THEY INTERPRET EVERY BAD THING THAT HAD HAPPENED AS PUNISHMENT FROM GOD? EVERYTIME THEY GOT SICK, EVERY TIME THE CROPS DIDN'T GROW, EVERY TIME A LAMB GOT LOST OR STOLEN BY A WOLF WE HAVE LOOKED AS ABRAHAMIC FAMILY AS DYSFUNCTIONAL UP TO THIS POINT, BUT THE EMOTIONAL BROKENNESS AND ONGOING HEART-DEVASTATION THAT MUST HAVE EXISTED *SINCE* JOSEPH LEFT IS UNIMAGINABLE. AND NOW HERE IT IS ALL UNFOLDING IN THE EGYPTIAN THRONE ROOM, WITH JOSEPH HIMSELF THERE TO WITNESS.

GENESIS 42:26-28 - A SURPRISE IN THEIR SACKS

IN ONE SENSE, THERE IS NO OTHER WAY TO EXPLAIN JOSEPH'S ACTIONS HERE OTHER THAN THIS: HE IS MESSING WITH HIS BROTHERS. THE BROTHERS' HEARTS "SANK" AND AGAIN CONFESS THEY FEEL GOD IS PUNISHING THEM.

GENESIS 42:29-38 - THE BROTHERS RETURN HOME, REPORT TO JACOB

CAN YOU IMAGINE HAVING TO GIVE THIS REPORT TO JACOB? JACOB PROBABLY HAD AN INITIAL MOMENT OF JOY SEEING HIS SONS RETURNING FROM EGYPT WITH FOOD FOR THE FAMILY. AND THEN HE COUNTED ONLY 9 MEN RIDING HOME. THEY REPORTED HOW THINGS UNFOLDED WITH THE EGYPTIAN OFFICIAL (AKA JOSEPH) AND WHAT BECAME OF SIMEON.

JACOB RESPONDS ALMOST AS IF SIMEON IS NOW DEAD TOO. 42:36 QUOTES HIM AS SAYING "JOSEPH IS NO MORE AND SIMEON IS NO MORE." HEARING BENJAMIN MUST NOW LEAVE TO IS A NONSTARTER.

REUBEN TRIES TO APPEAL TO JACOB TO LET BENJAMIN COME TO EGYPT SO THAT SIMEON MIGHT BE FREE, EVEN OFFERING JACOB TO KILL HIS OWN SONS IF THEY DON'T RETURN SAFELY. BUT JACOB EMPHATICALLY DECLARES "MY SON SHALL NOT GO DOWN WITH YOU." IF SOMETHING HAPPENED TO BENJAMIN, IT WOULD KILL JACOB.

GENESIS 43:1-10 - THE FAMINE CONTINUES

THIS IS A DIFFICULT MOMENT. THE THING TRULY HANGING IN THE BALANCE OF THESE DECISIONS IS THEIR OWN LIVES. REMEMBER THIS FAMINE WAS PROPHESED TO BE TREMENDOUSLY SEVERE. HAD JOSEPH NOT PREPARED EGYPT, THEY WERE GOING TO PERISH (SEE GENESIS 41:36). CERTAINLY THE THREAT OF STARVATION AND DEATH WOULD BE TRUE OF THE REGIONS OUTSIDE OF EGYPT LIKE CANAAN.

THESE HAVE TO BE TREMENDOUSLY DIFFICULT DAYS. EACH MEAL THEY SHARE THEY ARE GRATEFUL FOR FOOD BUT ALSO KNOW THEIR SUPPLY IS RUNNING LOW. AND WITH EACH CHECK OF THEIR STOREHOUSE OR PANTRY, THEY KNOW THEIR HOPE OF GETTING MORE FOOD LIES IN EGYPT. AND IF EGYPT IS THEIR HOPE, BENJAMIN MUST BE BROUGHT.

JACOB DECIDES TO SEND THE BROTHERS BACK TO EGYPT. JUDAH REMINDS JACOB THAT BENJAMIN MUST GO IF THEY ARE TO BUY GRAIN AGAIN. IT'S UNLIKELY JACOB HAD FORGOTTEN THIS. JACOB (AKA ISRAEL) EXPRESSES FRUSTRATION THAT THE BROTHERS HAD EVEN LET THE EGYPTIAN RULER KNOW THEY HAD A BROTHER! BUT FRUSTRATION ASIDE, THEIR LIVES ARE ALL AT RISK. JUDAH DECLARE HE WILL GUARD BENJAMIN WITH HIS OWN LIFE.

ARE THEY PRAYING FOR GOD TO END THE FAMINE? ARE THEY WRESTLING WITH THEIR FAITH THINKING THAT GOD ISN'T BEING TRUE TO HIS COVENANT TO THEIR FATHER'S? THEIR FAITH IS BEING TESTED, FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS ARE SURELY STRAINED AND THEY ARE PROBABLY HUNGRY ALL THE WHILE. WHAT A PERFECT STORM FOR HOSTILITY, FRUSTRATION AND DESPAIR.

OH AND SIMEON IS STILL IN AN EGYPTIAN JAIL.

GENESIS 43:11-15 - JACOB SENDS THE BROTHERS BACK TO EGYPT

JACOB IS RESIGNED BUT HUMBLE. HE ALLOWS HIS SONS TO GO BACK TO EGYPT, TAKING BENJAMIN WITH THEM. AT THIS POINT THEY ARE ALL GOING TO DIE IF SOMETHING DOESN'T HAPPEN SO JACOB ALLOWS THEM TO RETURN. HE SENDS THEM WITH GIFTS, GESTURES OF KINDNESS AND A DOUBLE PORTION OF MONEY, HOPING THAT ALL OF THIS IS JUST A BIG MISUNDERSTANDING.

GENESIS 43:16-25 - BACK IN EGYPT

THE BROTHERS RETURN AND JOSEPH IMMEDIATELY SEES HIS BROTHER BENJAMIN. IT APPEARS THAT JOSEPH LEAVES THE ROOM AND ORDERS HIS SERVANTS TO PREPARE A MEAL FOR HIM AND HIS BROTHERS AT NOON, AND IN HIS OWN HOUSE. THIS *FREAKS* THE BROTHERS OUT. THEY HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IS GOING ON, WHILE JOSEPH CONTINUES HIS GAME WITH THEM.

THE BROTHERS ARE TRYING TO STAY "PROFESSIONAL" THOUGHT, AND CERTAINLY HAVE THEIR FATHER'S WORDS IN THEIR HEAD. THEY PULL JOSEPH'S STEWARD TO THE SIDE HOPING TO EXPLAIN WHAT HAD HAPPENED (REGARDING THE MONEY IN THEIR GRAIN SACKS) THE LAST TIME THEY WERE HERE. THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN A HARD CONVERSATION TO HAVE. HOW WOULD THE STEWARD RESPOND TO THIS QUASI-CONFESSION OF STEALING?!

"RELAX. DON'T BE AFRAID," THE HOUSEHOLD MANAGER TOLD THEM. "YOUR GOD, THE GOD OF YOUR FATHER, MUST HAVE PUT THIS TREASURE INTO YOUR SACKS. I KNOW I RECEIVED YOUR PAYMENT." THEN HE RELEASED SIMEON AND BROUGHT HIM OUT TO THEM." (GENESIS 43:23 NLT)

A MIX OF "WHEW" AND "WHAT THE HECK IS GOING ON" INSTANTLY FILLED THE BROTHER'S HEARTS. AND NOW THEY HEAD TO LUNCH, WITH SIMEON AT LAST RESTORED TO THEIR COMPANY.

GENESIS 43:26-34 - DINNER WITH JOSEPH

JOSEPH MEETS HIS BROTHERS IN HIS OWN PERSONAL DINING ROOM. INSTANTLY THE BROTHERS BOW AGAIN AND PRESENT THEIR GIFTS. JOSEPH ASKS ABOUT THEIR "OLD FATHER". THE BROTHERS REPLY THAT THEIR FATHER IS ALIVE AND WELL. AND THEN THEY BOW AGAIN. (CUE DREAM FLASHBACKS).

THEN JOSEPH'S EYES FIND BENJAMIN, HIS BROTHER AND SURELY AN EMBODIED REPRESENTATION OF THE MEMORY OF HIS MOTHER. AT THIS, JOSEPH RUSHES OUT OF THEIR PRESENCE TO WEEP PRIVATELY. I AM SURE THE BROTHERS HAVE NO CLUE WHAT IS GOING ON.

JOSEPH RETURNS COMPOSED AND TEAR-FREE AND BEGINS THE MEAL. THE NLT PAINTS THE PICTURE:

GENESIS 43:32-34 - THE WAITERS SERVED JOSEPH AT HIS OWN TABLE, AND HIS BROTHERS WERE SERVED AT A SEPARATE TABLE. THE EGYPTIANS WHO ATE WITH JOSEPH SAT AT THEIR OWN TABLE, BECAUSE EGYPTIANS DESPISE HEBREWS AND REFUSE TO EAT WITH THEM. 33 JOSEPH TOLD EACH OF HIS BROTHERS WHERE TO SIT, AND TO THEIR AMAZEMENT, HE SEATED THEM ACCORDING TO AGE, FROM OLDEST TO YOUNGEST. 34 AND JOSEPH FILLED THEIR PLATES WITH FOOD FROM HIS OWN TABLE, GIVING BENJAMIN FIVE TIMES AS MUCH AS HE GAVE THE OTHERS. SO THEY FEASTED AND DRANK FREELY WITH HIM.

JOSEPH IS SEATED A DIFFERENT TABLE WITH THE EGYPTIANS WHO HAVE A PRACTICE OF NOT EATING WITH FOREIGNERS. MEANWHILE THE 11 BROTHERS OF JOSEPH ARE SEATED IN BIRTH ORDER AND THE BROTHERS ARE ASTONISHED. WHAT. A. MOMENT.

AND WITH THAT, LET'S LEAVE OUR STORY AT THE TABLE FOR NOW.

A FINAL OBSERVATION: THE PRIMARY FOCUS OF THESE LAST TWO CHAPTERS IS ON JOSEPH'S BROTHERS AND HIS FATHER SORTING OUT THEIR FAMINE PREDICAMENT, NAVIGATING JOSEPH'S ANTICS AND OF COURSE PROCESSING THEIR EMOTIONS. HOWEVER, WE ACTUALLY LEARN A GREAT DEAL ABOUT JOSEPH IN THIS CHAPTER, PERHAPS WITHOUT INITIALLY REALIZING IT. WE HAVE COME TO KNOW JOSEPH AS A MAN WHO WAS DEVOTED TO GOD AND WHO, WITH HIS FOCUS ON GOD, FAITHFULLY ENDURE TRIALS. WITH MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES, JOSEPH IS HONORING GOD: WHEN PRESSED BY POTIPHAR'S WIFE, WHEN ASKED TO INTERPRET DREAMS FOR PHARAOH OR HIS SERVANTS - WE KNOW JOSEPH HAS A RELATIONSHIP WITH AND A LOVE FOR THE LORD.

BUT, WE REALLY DON'T SEE A BREAKDOWN OF HOW JOSEPH WAS ABLE TO HOLD ON TO HOPE UNTIL NOW. CONSIDER THIS:

GENESIS 42:6, 8-9A - "NOW JOSEPH WAS THE RULER OVER THE LAND; HE WAS THE ONE WHO SOLD TO ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND. AND JOSEPH'S BROTHERS CAME AND BOWED DOWN TO HIM WITH THEIR FACES TO THE GROUND. 8 BUT JOSEPH HAD RECOGNIZED HIS BROTHERS, ALTHOUGH THEY DID NOT RECOGNIZE HIM. 9 JOSEPH REMEMBERED THE DREAMS WHICH HE HAD ABOUT THEM..."

YOU KNOW WHAT JOSEPH HAD IN HIS HEART THIS WHOLE TIME? HIS DREAMS. AND MAYBE NOT EVEN SO MUCH THE *CONTENT* OF HIS DREAMS (THAT HIS BROTHERS AND PARENTS WOULD BOW TO HIM) - BUT THE FACT THAT GOD HAD SPOKEN TO HIM THAT THERE WAS A PLAN OF SOME SORT FOR HIS LIFE. **IT WAS GOD'S WORD THAT GAVE JOSEPH HOPE.**

JOSEPH IS IN A HOLE IN THE GROUND. GOD'S WORD GAVE HIM HOPE. JOSEPH IS A SLAVE. GOD'S WORD GAVE HIM HOPE. JOSEPH IS IN PRISON. GOD'S WORD GAVE HIM HOPE. JOSEPH IS BEFORE PHARAOH. GOD'S WORD GAVE HIM HOPE. JOSEPH IS RULING EGYPT. GOD'S WORD GAVE HIM HOPE. JOSEPH IS TOLD THERE WILL BE 7 GOOD YEARS AND 7 DEVASTATING YEARS. GOD'S WORD GAVE HIM HOPE.

AND NOW, 20+ YEARS LATER, JOSEPH'S FAITH IN GOD'S WORD BECOMES SIGHT AS HIS BROTHERS BOW BEFORE HIS THRONE.

WHEN THINGS WERE LOOKING BAD, JOSEPH STAYED FAITHFUL BECAUSE HE WAS TRUSTING IN GOD'S PROMISE. WHEN THINGS WERE LOOKING GOOD, HE PRACTICED THE SAME. JOSEPH WASN'T JUST A GOOD GUY WHO WAS ABLE TO PUT UP WITH A LOT OF STUFF...HE WAS A CHILD OF GOD WHO TRUSTED IN GOD'S WORD, BY FAITH.

HEBREWS 11:1-2 (CSB) - NOW FAITH IS THE REALITY OF WHAT IS HOPED FOR, THE PROOF OF WHAT IS NOT SEEN. 2 FOR OUR ANCESTORS WON GOD'S APPROVAL BY IT.

YEAH, AMEN TO THAT.

I'M SURE JOSEPH WAS BLOWN AWAY WHEN HE SAW HIS BROTHERS BEFORE HIM. I'M SURE JOSEPH'S HEART WAS HEALED WHEN HE HEARD HIS FATHER WAS ALIVE. I'M SURE JOSEPH WAS IMPACTED WHEN HE SAW BENJAMIN. BUT I AM ALSO SURE THAT JOSEPH'S NEED TO WEEP WAS NOT JUST BECAUSE HIS FAMILY WAS TOGETHER AGAIN - IT WAS BECAUSE, IN REAL TIME, HE WAS SEEING THE FULFILLMENT OF WHAT HIS GOD HAD PROMISED HIM.

HOLD FAST TO GOD'S WORD, DEAR SAINT. THERE WILL BE TIMES IN YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU ARE ALONE. HOLD FAST TO HIS WORD. THERE WILL BE TIMES IN YOUR LIFE WHEN NOTHING IS GOING RIGHT. HOLD FAST TO HIS WORD. THERE WILL BE TIMES WHEN IT SEEMS LIKE THINGS ARE GETTING WORSE, NOT BETTER. HOLD FAST TO HIS WORD. THERE WILL BE TIMES WHEN YOUR PLANS WILL FALL APART. HOLD FAST TO HIS WORD.

IT MAY SEEM LIKE WHAT GOD HAS PROMISED US IS A LONG WAY OFF, BUT FEAR NOT, HIS WORD WILL COME TO PASS. HOLD FAST TO HIS WORD.