**“Living in the Father’s Love”**

Understanding Your Spiritual Journey – Part 2

Through the Life of Joseph

April 18, 2021

Genesis 37:3

* **Last week we began with; “Getting off to the Right Start.”**
* **After we fully, “Cross Over,” we must then choose to live each day in, “The Father’s Love.**

**Introduction**

* I love the story of Joseph. The thing I admire most about Joseph is the fact that **in the** **most difficult of circumstances**, Joseph always made the godly choice, he did the right thing.
* I have often wondered what it would have been like to walk in Josephs shoes.
* **Would I have made the same choices as Joseph did?**
* Well, in this series we are going to **examine** **our own spiritual journey** through the life of Joseph.
* **We are going to follow Joseph as his journey takes him through:**
	+ ***Family Conflict***
	+ ***Cruel treatment*** and even ***betrayal*** from his own brothers
	+ ***False accusations***
	+ ***Imprisonment***, and even ….
	+ Opportunities to seek ***revenge***
* **And we will remind ourselves of our own:**
	+ ***Personal conflicts*** (family and others)
	+ When we’ve been ***treated badly***, or treated others badly
	+ Been ***falsely accused***, or possibly accused others
	+ Have been ***excluded***, or maybe excluded others
	+ Thought of ***revenge***, or just ***failed to forgive***

But we will find that Joseph reminds us “**how God wants us to live**, **mature** and **forgive”** just as God has forgiven us.

* **“Why” did Joseph make godly choices?**
* **What was the “secret” to Joseph’s *godly nature* and *righteous character* even though his family seemed to be so dysfunctional?**
* We will attempt to answer these questions as we examine **our own spiritual journey through; “The life of Joseph.”**

**So join me in the book of Genesis 37:3**

Now **Israel** **loved** **Joseph** more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age;

The main influence in Joseph’s life was …..

1. **His Father’s Love**
* Israel **loved** Joseph. Joseph was the son born to ***Israel’s favorite wife*** and born to him in his ***old age***.
* I believe, Joseph, **knowing** **His father’s love**, helped him develop the ***heart*** and ***character*** he displayed throughout his difficult journey.
* **So, let’s compare Israel’s love for Joseph, to God’s love for you and me.**
1. **Do you know God loves you?**
* I mean, do you **really know**?
* Paul tells us that …..

**Romans 8:37-39**

**37** No, in all these things we are ***more*** than ***conquerors*** **through -- him who loved us**. **38** For **I am convinced** that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, **39** neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, **will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

* Paul says; “**Believers** are **more than** **conquerors** through **WHO**? ***Our Father who loves us!***
* **Joseph did *conquer* and *overcome***.
* As Joseph went through these difficulties, ***his father’s love went with him******and so it is for******believers****.*
* ***Through our own*** trials, our Father’s love is there **with us**, to help **sustain us** (no matter what comes our way).
* **Joseph KNEW his father’s love; DO YOU?**

In that same passage in Romans 8, Paul **asks five questions** and then **answers his own questions, saying….** .

* ***Emphatically*** that … “**Nothing” can separate God’s children from His great love**.
* While ***God does not shelter us*** from difficulties, ***God does walk with us*** to **use** those trials for **our good** and **His glory**.

**If you personally know God’s love**, you can ***rest*** in the fact that even in the darkest days, **God is** **working *for you*** and not against you; **for *your* good and for *His* glory**. Joseph discovered that and so will you.

* ***The sad reality is that many have never known God’s love in this way.***
* If that is true for you, please read ***God’s Word*** so you can discover that ***God’s love for you,*** is a totally different kind of love.
* While our ***earthly fathers*** are not perfect, our ***Heavenly Father*** is perfect and God has always ***demonstrated*** a perfect love for you.
* **Story**: Many times as a Dad, I’ve acted or reacted ***badly***. Many times I’ve had to ***apologize*** for my words or my actions. Our parents weren’t perfect and neither are we. Sometimes we have to ***forgive*** and sometimes we have to ask for ***forgiveness***.
* **NOT SO WITH GOD**! **His love is a perfect love**!

But what is ***equally important*** **is** …..

1. **Joseph loved his father.**

The text doesn’t tell us this, but I think the passage in **Genesis 46:28-29** speaks volumes to this point…

**28** Now Jacob sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph to get directions to Goshen. When they arrived in the region of Goshen, **29** Joseph had his chariot made ready and went to Goshen to meet his father Israel. **As soon as Joseph appeared before him, he threw his arms around his father and wept for a long time.**

* **Did you see it**? ***Joseph wept* for a long time.**
* **How much do you think it meant to Joseph to finally see and embrace his father after more than 20 years?**
* While it is vital for us to ask the question; **“Do you know God’s great love for you?”**
* ***It’s just as important*** to ask the question; “**Do *YOU* really, truly love God?”**

I can just imagine ***some*** would have **blamed their father** for sending them to check on the welfare of their brothers in Dothan; saying, **if you hadn’t sent me, I would have never been sold into slavery.** (The classic blame game).

* **Not so with Joseph.**
* **Knowing** **His father’s love** and **LOVING** **his father**; “**kept Joseph from saying such things.”**

The true reality is this; “Many ***want*** God’s unconditional love, but in turn; ***their love* for God is VERY *conditional*** – which - **ISN’T REAL** **LOVE AT ALL!**

**If we truly practice … Matthew 22:37**

**“‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart ….’**

**Then we *willingly*… Will Obey his teaching as John 14:23 says.**

**“And real, genuine love *doesn’t blame*; a real genuine love, *loves - unconditionally!”***

* **Joseph obeyed.**
* **He obeyed and went to Dothan to check on his brothers *because he loved his Father.***
* Throughout Joseph’s ordeal, the thought of blaming his father is ***never recorded*** anywhere in scripture.

**So, How does real, genuine love act? With …..**

* ***Patience*** and ***kindness***.
* It does **not envy**, it does **not boast**, it is **not proud**.
* It does **not dishonor others**, it is **not self-seeking**,
* It is **not easily angered**, it keeps **no record of wrongs**.
* Love always **protects**, always **trusts**, always **hopes**, always **perseveres**. ***Love never fails***. (1 Corinthians 13)
* ***That was the relationship we see between Joseph and Israel.***

And the sad reality is many read these verses ***without any conviction***for their ***lack of real, genuine love*** for **God** & **others**.

* In 2021, does the ***world*** see a ***1 Corinthians 13*** kind of love in the **church and among believers**?
* When will the ***church*** stop making **heroes** out of ***worldly figures***, instead of **turning our eyes to Jesus** as our only hope?

**If Joseph had been *trusting in* *anything* *other than God***; **his faith would have crumbled at his first trial.**

**How about us?** **What does *love* look like in your life**?

1. **Joseph Experienced his Father’s love**

**37:3** - … **and he made an ornate (elaborate or decorative) robe for him.**

* Who gave Joseph the ornate robe? **His Father**.
* Israel even **hand-made** the robe for his son.
* The robe was a **sign** of Israel’s love for Joseph.
* Joseph wore the robe as a **reminder** of that love.
* **It symbolized the connection Joseph had with his father.**
1. **Have you experienced God’s Love in your life?**
* I **fear** there are those who know **John 3:16**;
	+ They can **recite** the verse,
	+ They **say** they **believe** the verse,
	+ Yet, while they claim the ***knowledge*** of God’s love, my fear is that they have **never truly *experienced* His love.**

**Galatians 3:26-27**

**26** **So** **in Christ Jesus** you are all children of God through ***faith***, **27** for all of you who were baptized into Christ **have clothed yourselves with Christ.**

This **baptism of the Spirit** ***identifies*** the **believer with Christ** in the same way that water baptism is an **outward picture** of the **inner working** of the Holy Spirit.

The phrase “**in Christ** or **put on Christ”** refers to a “**change of garments**.” The believer has **laid aside** the dirty garments of sin and, by faith, received **robes of righteousness**.

But to the ***Galatians***, this idea of “**changing clothes**” meant when the Roman child came of age, he took off the ***childhood garment*** and put on the garment of an ***adult citizen***.

The believer in Christ is ***not*** just a “**child of God**”; the believer is seen an “**adult child of God.”**

In other words, the **relationship** between ***God*** the Father and the ***believer*** is **so close**, that God gives believers the **rights** and **privileges** of ***adult children***!

* **Believers are *clothed* with Christ** as a constant ***reminder*** of our relationship with God our Father.
* ***Do you experience that kind of relationship with your heavenly Father?***
* **Nothing could come between Joseph and his father**.
* **Love conquers all**; and ***if you know God’s love***, and ***if you truly love God***, **God’s love for you and your love for God will *NEVER FAIL***!
1. **Joseph was Kept by his Father’s love**
* His father’s love kept Joseph in the **well** as he waited to find out his fate;
* His father’s love kept Joseph as he was **sold into slavery;**
* It kept him as he was **falsely accused** by Potiphar’s wife;
* It kept him in **prison** as he prayed and waited.

**When we hosted the VOM event on March 5th**, I listened as ***Andrew Brunson*** shared his testimony about ***not feeling God’s presence for two years while he waited in prison.*** I wondered how I would have responded to the feelings of ***loneliness*** and ***abandonment***. Brunson said that despite those feelings, **he just continued to thank God for his promises and continued to worship** **NO MATTER HOW HE FELT**; until the day he was finally set free.

* How we ***feel*** has ***NOTHING*** to do with **God’s Truth**. God is true to His Word, despite our **FEELINGS**!
1. **Understanding God’s love as the *truth of scripture* helps KEEP you in the Father’s love.**
* Right now I’m sure you are rehearsing times ***when you’ve doubted God’s presence in your trial***.
* Most believers want this to be heaven and it never will be.
* **However, what you can know is that God loves you and what you must ask yourself is; *do you really, truly LOVE GOD like He loves you!***

**Joseph is going to teach each of us to:**

* **Trust God** and ***rest*** in His love; even when we ***can’t see*** the end of our suffering.
* He’s going to teach us to **be patient in our trials.**
* Joseph will teach us **what unconditional love is**, and **how to be *kept* each day in the Father’s love.**
* Are you **living** **today** in the Father’s love?
* Have you **experienced** His love … and
* Are you **being kept** by His love?

If you’re thinking, **my life isn’t like that**; you may need to ***exchange*** ***the love you know*** ***now***, **for the *real deal*.**

**Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. God’s Love never fails. (1 Corinthians 13)**

**God loves you!**

**The question is: “*Do YOU* love God the way He loves you?”**

**Once we get off to the right start by “Crossing Over” to follow Jesus, our next step is to *live each day in the Father’s love.***

***Living in the Father’s love* will help you, *better Understand* *your spiritual journey*.**