

Genesis Chapter 45:v 1-28.**Title: Jesus Provides reconciliation.**

Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. ² And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard *it*. ³ Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I *am* Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. ⁴ And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I *am* Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵ But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶ For these two years the famine *has been* in the land, and *there are* still five years in which *there will be* neither plowing nor harvesting. ⁷ And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. ⁸ So now *it was* not you *who* sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. ⁹ "Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, "Thus says your son Joseph: "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry. ¹⁰ You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. ¹¹ There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for *there are* still five years of famine.'" ¹² "And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that *it is* my mouth that speaks to you. ¹³ So you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here." ¹⁴ Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. ¹⁵ Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him. ¹⁶ Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, "Joseph's brothers have come." So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well. ¹⁷ And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. ¹⁸ Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. ¹⁹ Now you are commanded—do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. ²⁰ Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt *is yours*.'" ²¹ Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them carts, according to the command of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey. ²² He gave to all of them, to each man, changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred *pieces* of silver and five changes of garments. ²³ And he sent to his father these *things*: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey. ²⁴ So he sent his brothers away, and they departed; and he said to them, "See that you do not become troubled along the way." ²⁵ Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. ²⁶ And they told him, saying, "Joseph *is* still alive, and he *is* governor over all the land of Egypt." And Jacob's heart stood still, because he did not believe them. ²⁷ But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. ²⁸ Then Israel said, "*It is* enough. Joseph my son *is* still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

Introduction

Before our Christmas series we had almost completed the life of Joseph. However, we still have about 6 more sermons to go until the death of Joseph in Genesis Chapter 50. Although we did cover v. 1-8 of Chapter 45 at the end of November, I have decided to go back to the beginning of chapter 45 and cover the whole chapter today.

I am going to divide Chapter 45 into four sections.

This will help us to understand the things that Moses wanted us to understand clearly.

Before we do this we need to be reminded about the story so far.

Joseph was the favoured son of his father Jacob.

He had a dream that one day in the future his **brothers and his Father would bow down and worship him.**

In the culture of that time, it would have been an **impossible thing even to imagine.**

Joseph's elder brothers were very jealous of him and decided to kill him.

Reuben came to the rescue and prevented his death, so it was decided to throw Joseph into a deep pit. Eventually Joseph's brother sold Joseph to a group of merchants who were on their way to Egypt.

When they got to Egypt, Joseph was sold as a slave and eventually became responsible for a large estate owned by Potiphar.

He was a captain of the King's guards.

Although Joseph was blessed by God in this position, he was an attractive young man, and Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him.

Joseph resisted the temptation to have sex with Potiphar's wife and ran away.

Nevertheless, Joseph was accused of rape and thrown into prison.

While he was in prison God blessed Joseph.

God enabled Joseph to interpret two prisoners' dreams, which eventually led to his release from prison in order to **interpret the King's dream.**

Nobody else could interpret the King's dreams except Joseph.

As a result of this the King appointed Joseph to control the whole land of Egypt.

The dream he had interpreted involved the country having 7 years of plenty and then 7 years of famine.

Joseph was in control of storing all the food in the first 7 years and then selling it in the 7 years of famine.

It was in the early stages of the famine that Joseph's brother came to Egypt to buy food.

Although Joseph recognised his brothers, **his brothers did not recognise Joseph.**

Joseph had changed and he was working through an interpreter.

Joseph came up with a plan to **challenge the hearts of his brothers.**

Although he desperately wanted to reveal his identity, **God was still working in the brothers' hearts to bring them to repentance.**

Joseph created situations to **test and hopefully transform the hearts of his brothers.**

We now come to the situation where **Joseph was satisfied that God had done a real work in the brothers' hearts, that had brought them to a place of repentance.**

Not only had the brothers admitted their guilt, they had affirmed their love for their father, mentioning him 15 times in their conversations.

The brothers had now proved their **integrity and family loyalty.**

Even Judah had stepped forward to take Benjamin's place, this was a foreshadow of what would happen, through Judah in the future.

One of His ancestors would be the Saviour of the world, taking our place, and the punishment of our sins.

At this point there was nothing to be gained by Joseph for holding back on his identity.

After Judah's emotional speech in Chapter 44: v. 18-34, Joseph could hold back no longer.

We now come to the first section in Chapter 45.

1. Joseph's revelation of his identity – v. 1-13.

The first thing that Joseph did was to clear his large room of all of his servants.

Joseph made sure that his revelation was going to be a private affair.

The first thing that Joseph did was to weep.

His crying was so loud that it could be heard in other parts of the house.

Joseph was completely overcome with emotion.

He had been holding back his emotions for several months since he first set eyes upon his brothers.

When Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, they were so shocked, that Joseph had to repeat his words and get very close to his brothers so they could see it really was Joseph.

The first thing that Joseph asked his brothers was **about his father.**

Joseph was concerned that his **father was still alive.**

The second thing Joseph did was to **forgive his brothers** for sinning against him and to encourage them by stating that **it was all part of God's plan.**

He explained to them that **God had to place Joseph in a position of power to preserve his family and eventually to grow the Jewish nation.**

Joseph **did not excuse their sin**, but he clearly understood his life under God's sovereign plan.

The third thing that Joseph did was to tell his brothers to **“hurry up and go back and inform their father about everything.”**

In fact, Joseph told them to **hurry up twice.**

Joseph was desperate to see his father again.

The fourth thing that Joseph did was to **assure his brothers about their future prosperity.** He told them that they would be living in the land of Goshen, which was nearby, and that they would be well provided for, because there was still another **five years of famine.**

So what about some practical application from this section?

The providence of God in our lives is a very important theological encouragement for all of us today.

When you have a personal relationship with the creator of this world, you need to understand that He is working on a different level to us.

He knows everything that is going on in our lives. He has the power to do anything for us and through our circumstances.

He is also very patient, and works everything according to His time scale and plan.

We may not see the bigger picture of God’s plan for us until much later on in our lives, just like Joseph.

Therefore, we must **trust God**, when we go through **challenging situations.**

It is not easy to do this and it takes lots of trust, grace, and maturity of faith.

Let me give you an illustration from this story about a little boy who wanted to help a butterfly.

“Once a little boy was playing outdoors and found a fascinating caterpillar.

He carefully picked it up and took it home to show his mother.

He asked his mother if he could keep it, and she said he could if he would take good care of it.

The little boy got a large jar from his mother and put plants to eat, and a stick to climb on, in the jar.

Every day he watched the caterpillar and brought it new plants to eat.

One day the caterpillar climbed up the stick and started acting strangely.

The boy worriedly called his mother who came and understood that the caterpillar was creating a cocoon.

The mother explained to the boy how the caterpillar was going to go through a metamorphosis and become a butterfly.

The little boy was thrilled to hear about the changes his caterpillar would go through.

He watched every day, waiting for the butterfly to emerge.

One day it happened, a small hole appeared in the cocoon and the butterfly started to struggle to come out.

At first the boy was excited, but soon he became concerned.

The butterfly was struggling so hard to get out! It looked like it couldn’t break free! It looked desperate! It looked like it was making no progress!

The boy was so concerned he decided to help.

He ran to get scissors, and then walked back.

He snipped the cocoon to make the hole bigger and the butterfly quickly emerged!

As the butterfly came out the boy was surprised.

It had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings.

He continued to watch the butterfly expecting that, at any moment, the wings would dry out, enlarge and expand to support the swollen body.

He knew that in time the body would shrink and the butterfly’s wings would expand.

But neither happened!

The butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings.

It never was able to fly...

As the boy tried to figure out what had gone wrong his mother took him to talk to a scientist from a local college.

He learned that the butterfly was **SUPPOSED** to struggle.

In fact, **the butterfly's struggle to push its way through the tiny opening of the cocoon pushes the fluid out of its body and into its wings.**

Without the **struggle, the butterfly would never, ever fly.**

The boy's good intentions hurt the butterfly.

As we go through our lives, sometimes God allows us to go through experiences that seem difficult, but it is through those situations that we learn to trust God, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

If God was to take away those difficult situations in our lives, then we would be like the butterfly that the boy tried to help, **our lives would be weaker in Jesus and NOT stronger in Jesus.**

Looking back to the last 30 years of my Christian ministry, I can honestly say that I have **grown stronger through adversity, and not weaker.**

I hope that you will be able to trust God when you go through the challenging times in your life, and that you will remember the story about the little boy and the butterfly.

2. Joseph's Reconciliation with his brothers - v. 14-15.

In v. 14-15 we have an **emotional reconciliation** between Joseph and his brothers.

There was a lot of crying and a lot of talking.

Joseph had 20 years of catching up to do with all his brothers.

Although Moses only gives us two verses to record this emotional scene, it must have been an amazing time for all of them.

We don't need to dwell too much on the actual situation at that time, but we do need to consider the application to our own lives today.

Application

If you are a Christian, then you will have a story to tell about your own reconciliation.

There would have been a time in your life when you were **reconciled to God.**

The Bible teaches that we were originally created perfect, and had a perfect relationship with our creator owner, the God of the Bible.

Through the disobedience of our ancestors Adam and Eve, that relationship was broken.

We became separated from God.

One day we realised that our sin separated us from God and that there was no way to mend that broken relationship, by ourselves.

We would have learnt that God sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world to mend our broken relationship.

We would also have been taught that if we repented of our sin towards God and put our faith and trust in Jesus, then we could be restored in our relationship with God.

Perhaps during that process there were many tears in your life?

Being a Christian is about your personal relationship with your creator owner.

The relationship has to begin with a reconciliation between you and God.

Once that broken relationship is mended, there is definitely a lot of talking to do with God.

We call it prayer.

There is also a lot of catching up to do.

We may have been disobeying God for many years, now we want to follow and serve Him.

Q. How are you today in your relationship with your creator owner, the God of the Bible.

Q. Are you still separated from God and in rebellion, going your own way, and you don't want or need God in your life?

That is O.K. but I can assure you that you will never be really happy in your life until you are reconciled to God.

Your heart will always be empty of meaning and fulfilment.

This "New Year" for you will be a search for happiness, love and fulfilment, but you will never find it outside of a relationship with your creator.

If you are a Christian today, keep talking to God and reading His word, the Bible.

He will feed you spiritually and you will find fulfilment in Him, through Jesus, by the power of His Holy Spirit.

Remember the Prodigal Son in Luke Chapter 15.

He had lots of money, and had lots of fun, until the money ran out, and then he **realised the emptiness of his life without his earthly father.**

Only when he realised his sin, repented and sought reconciliation, did he find true life back in his family.

It is a bit like that with all of us. There is a family today, called the family of God.

You are either inside the family of God, or outside the family of God.

Only you know where you are.

However, God wants you to be in His family and He has provided a way for you to enter.

However, it is up to you to take a step of faith. Why not today?

The other side of this application is about forgiving people who have hurt you or abused you in the past.

Forgiveness is not an easy thing to do, especially in your own strength.

However, it must be done.

Matthew Chapter 6: v. 14-15.

¹⁴ "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Q. Is there anybody you need to forgive in your heart today?

Today is always a good day to mend broken relationships with other people.

The Bible teaches us that as Christians we are given a ministry of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5: v. 17-21.

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. ¹⁸ Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

We need to be in a good relationship with other believers if our ministry of reconciliation is going to have credibility!!!

3. Royal Provisions for Joseph's family - v. 16-24.

In v. 16-24 Moses records facts concerning the provisions for Joseph's whole family to move from Canaan to Egypt.

The King of Egypt offered to provide everything that was needed to move the whole family to Egypt.

The King also said that he would provide the **best place for them to live.**

In v. 18 we are told it was the **best of the land.**

Transportation wagons were provided so that the wives and the children could travel in relative comfort.

They could also bring all the needed goods to set up home again.

On top of all this provision, the brothers were given 300 pieces of silver, which was a lot of money.

Twenty shekels of silver could buy a slave, so the money was a reasonably large sum.

They were also given 5 changes of clothing.

They needed 20 donkeys in order to carry all the grain and goods on their return journey to Canaan.

The wonderful thing about all of this provision is that God provided it all through the hands of a King who did not worship the Hebrew God, Jehovah.

The application for us is very challenging and it may even change our mind-set about God's provision for us and our families.

There is no doubt about it, that where God guides, He definitely provides.

Normally God's provision comes through God's people, and I have found that it usually comes through praying people who are in close touch with God, through His Holy Spirit.

However, there are times when God wonderfully provides in other ways.

The jobs that we have are God's provision for us. We may not recognise God's provision in this way, but all that we have, is God's provision for us.

We need to be thankful for any way in which God provides for us.

I was very grateful that about 5 years before coming to Japan that through the death of a non-Christian relative, I experienced God's provision in a wonderful way.

At the time I didn't really see the significance of this provision, but I do now!!

When it happened I spoke to the executor of my Aunt's will.

He told me that although my Aunty was not a Christian, he admired and respected my faith.

I can now see clearly that this was God's provision, unexpected by definitely God's provision.

Without it, it would have been impossible for Wendy and myself to come to Japan 3 years ago.

4. The old man Jacob is "Revived" – v. 25-28.

We know from Genesis Chapter 47 v. 28 that Jacob was 147 years old when he died, and that he had lived in Egypt for 17 years.

This makes Jacob **130 years old** when his sons arrived to tell him that Joseph was still alive and that he was the ruler over all the land of Egypt.

It was no wonder that Jacob did not believe the story of his sons.

They didn't have a good record of being honest in the past.

However, the brothers convinced their father that Joseph was still alive, through the evidence of their carts and goods that were provided from Egypt.

There was an abundant supply.

Jacob was also convinced by the **words that Joseph had passed on through his brothers.**

It is likely that at this point Jacob might have remembered Joseph's dreams of 20 years before.

Also I am sure that his brothers would have repeated his words from chapter 45: v. 5-8.

⁵ But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶ For these two years the famine *has been* in the land, and *there are* still five years in which *there will be* neither plowing nor harvesting. ⁷ And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

⁸ So now *it was* not you *who* sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

Application

When God does something wonderful in our lives or in the lives of other believers **there is always a stirring in our hearts.**

We are "**Revived**" to serve God again.

Jacob was 130 years old, he didn't really want to move house, never mind move countries!!!

However, God "**Revived him**" through the news that his son Joseph was NOT DEAD, but ALIVE AND WELL.

Not only that but that God was using him in a wonderful way in Egypt.

Perhaps today, you are a little bit low, even depressed.

Maybe you haven't seen God working in your life and circumstances lately.

Well I would like to pray for you now that God will "Revive" you by His Holy Spirit and do something real and encouraging for you this year.

Let us Pray:

Father in Heaven, we love you and we thank you for sending Jesus into this world to die for our sins.

We thank you that it is because of your Grace and Love that we are reconciled to you.

However, we live in a sin sick world with many disappointments, and things can get us down and make us depressed.

Please have mercy on those people today in this service and listening on the internet who need your help.

You know their hearts, you know their situation, please help them to know you better and to know you working in their lives.

In Jesus' Name we pray.

Amen.