

09/03/2023

“Holding Keys in the Wilderness Part V”

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Opening: Today we will continue to investigate the life of Joseph as he exits the wilderness season. What is cloudy to us when we are traveling through the wilderness becomes clearer once we pass through it. A good saying is that the rearview mirror is usually 20/20 vision. That means we see more clearly after the battle why we had to endure it in the first place. Today we will see how God used Joseph’s life to set up his plan for the salvation of all humanity through the nation of Israel and how that understanding helped Joseph to heal.

Key Scriptures:

Genesis 41:50-52 50Before the years of famine arrived, two sons were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphara, priest of On. 51Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh saying, “God has **made me forget all my hardship and all my father’s household.**” 52And the second son he named Ephraim saying, “God has **made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.**”

1. The Famine from God: God sends famine according to the dream: The famine came upon the whole earth so that all the peoples had to come to Egypt to receive grain to live. This is God setting up the fulfillment of His promise to Abraham that his descendants would be slaves in the land of Egypt. Who sent the famine? God did.

2. The names of Joseph’s Son’s:

a. We can see that Joseph has entered rest and a blessed life; it is important to note he said **forgot his Father’s house.** God’s covenant is with his Father’s house: Abraham, Isaac and Israel.

b. We can also see that he understands the pain and affliction of his wilderness season was for a purpose.

c. “Joseph has forgotten His Father’s household” Joseph may have suppressed the emotions of his family in the goodness of his days but just like all humans the root of the hurt is still present even though it is not expressed.

d. Consider your own past, and the difficulties brought upon you or by you to your siblings or family members. These wounds are usually much deeper and can affect the human soul throughout a person’s entire life.

e. Life Lesson: When God fulfills his will in your life, he intends to heal your heart and not just your land. What God is after is a healthy heart and not just a blessed life. Outwardly and inwardly God wants to work in you.

3. Joseph treats His brothers harshly

a. Genesis 42:7-11 7And when Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he treated them as strangers and spoke harshly to them. “Where have you come from?” he asked. “From the land of Canaan,” they replied. “We are here to buy food.”⁸Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him. **9Joseph remembered his dreams about them** and said, “You are spies! You have come to see if our land is vulnerable.” ¹⁰“Not so, my lord,” they replied. “Your servants have come to buy food. ¹¹We are all sons of one man. Your servants are honest men, not spies.”

b. Why does Joseph treat His brothers harshly? The memory of the past hurt still lingers. Out of the wound He takes vengeance. Have you ever forgotten but never received healing? The journey of healing matters to God.

c. Joseph repents and deals with them differently Genesis 42:17
¹⁷So Joseph imprisoned them for three days, ¹⁸and on the third day he said to them, “I fear God”. Joseph is recognizing **God’s sovereign will is being done.**

d. Life Lesson: When we take vengeance into our own hands, we are no better than those who wounded us. God calls us to let him bring justice to pass. ** God is merciful and gracious; we are often too quick to judge, or we are too quick to forget about God's restoring ability. Instead of bringing vengeance in your own strength leave room for God to work. There is no wrong that will not be made right. Some wrongs are not wrong at all.

4. God convicts the sons of Israel for the evil they brought on Joseph Genesis 42:21 21Then they said to one another, "Surely, we are being punished because of our brother. We saw his anguish when he pleaded with us, but we would not listen. That is why this distress has come upon us." ** God desires to save people from their sins not to judge them for their sins.

5. Joseph's raw emotions: Genesis 42:23-24 23They did not realize that Joseph understood them, since there was an interpreter between them. 24And he turned away from them and wept. When he turned back and spoke to them, he took Simeon from them and had him bound before their eyes. ** God allows Joseph to hear and understand his brother's confession because sometimes facing your accusers, abusers and enemies is the only way to begin the healing process.

a. Joseph is convicted and repents of treating his brothers harshly. God gives Joseph grace to see how he can restore his family back together after so many years. During our wilderness journeys we often have many ideas of what it will be like once we pass through the testing time. Often, we believe God is done using our wilderness season once the hardship is over. We must remember that until we are completely healed, we are not completely transformed. God will not stop until we are no longer wounded in our hearts by our past.

6. Joseph returns his brothers back home with a plan to have them return. He blesses them on their journey intentionally.

a. Question? Have you ever found it hard to do good to those who have done evil towards you? When forgiveness takes root in our heart, a great way to turn a moment of pain into future Joy is to bless those who have cursed you and to do good to those who have used you.

7. Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers and reveals God's plan through his suffering. Genesis 45:4-8 "I am Joseph, your brother," he said, "the one you sold into Egypt! 5And now, do not be distressed or angry with yourselves that you sold me into this place, **because it was to save lives that God sent me before you.** 6For the famine has covered the land these two years, and there will be five more years without plowing or harvesting. 7God sent me before you to preserve you as a remnant on the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. 8Therefore it was not you who sent me here, **but God, who has made me a father to Pharaoh**—lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

a. God really changed Joseph's heart Joseph reveals the grace of God that has been at work in His heart. Instead of blaming His brothers He now confesses that God used the evil they did for His good and for their good!

b. God delights in restoration of broken relationships Genesis 45:14-15 14Then Joseph threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin wept as they embraced. 15Joseph kissed each of his brothers as he wept over them. And afterward his brothers talked with him. This is a picture of God's salvation. We are all like the brothers of Joseph and we must have restored relationship with our older brother Jesus if we are to dwell in the land.

8. God restores Joseph back to Israel, his father: Genesis 46:28-29 28Now Jacob had sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph to get directions to Goshen. When Jacob's family arrived in the land of Goshen, 29Joseph prepared his chariot and went there to meet his father, Israel. Joseph presented himself to him, embraced him, **and wept profusely.**

a. God is not done until every wrong has been made right. You may have to admit that the band-aid you have applied to the issues in your life is not God's work but your attempt at working it out in your own strength.

b. God wants to restore broken relationships in your life. If you are willing, God will give your heart the courage and strength necessary to mend broken relationships and re-build torn bridges with people that you should have relationships with.

c. Romans 12:18 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ** You can do it through the power of Christ at work in your life. Do not make excuses any longer. Let Joseph's life speak to God's ability to heal your wounds.

Conclusion: We do not need to become hopeless or faithless in our wilderness moment but as we have learned God never abandons us on our journey. God's desire is to prepare and heal you for all his purposes.

Altar: Restoration of broken relationships, healing from deep wounds of the heart, May God cause your heart to overcome hardships, and may he produce in you the fruitfulness he has called you to.