

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you feel about trusting God during the random, unimportant moments of life? Do you realize He is still working?
2. Have you ever felt stuck or frozen because of fear? When is that good and when is that not so good? Can you think of any examples in Scripture of someone that was afraid to move forward? Reference Judges 6:11-13 for an example.
3. What are your thoughts about the 5 steps of practical faith? Which one connects with you? Is there one you already do? Or one that you never think about?
4. What do you think Joseph's brothers were thinking at first when the steward encourages them with peace and a reminder of God's presence? Why do we forget about God's presence?

Teaching Notes:

Jacob has sent his 10 sons to Egypt.
Joseph met them but told them they were spies.
He kept one brother and told them to bring back the youngest.
Jacob was not going to let them go back.

43:1 Now the famine *was* severe in the land. 2 And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, "Go back, buy us a little food." 3 But Judah spoke to him, saying, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother *is* with you.' 4 If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. 5 But if you will not send *him*, we will not go down; for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother *is* with you.'" 6 And Israel said, "Why did you deal so wrongfully with me as to tell the man whether you had still *another* brother?"

Jacob is still bitter that they spilled the beans about their brother.

There are times where things don't go according to plan...

...It looks like you made a mistake.

...But as a child of God, trust that God will use it.

He can take your random comment or seemingly meaningless...

...choice and use it for His purpose.

Sometimes we trust God when we are obeying...

...but do we trust God when we are just living?

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path.

Proverbs 16:9 A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.

We always think of this within a volitional context...

...but...**God is not limited to just your choices.**

Don't get worked up when people do what you think of as...

...the "wrong" thing if it is not morally wrong.

...See what the Lord might have.

7 But they said, "The man asked us pointedly about ourselves and our family, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Have you *another* brother?' And we told him according to these words. Could we possibly have known that he would say, 'Bring your brother down?'"

They could have just said, how could we have known?

But, they have their excuses.

And...this is not true according to Genesis 42.

Joseph didn't first ask if they had another brother.

But it was all part of the Sovereign Lord's plan.

We should be willing to ask...

..."Is the Lord doing something here that I don't see?"

8 Then Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you *and* also our little ones. **9** I myself will be surety for him; from my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him *back* to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. **10** For if we had not lingered, surely by now we would have returned this second time."

First it was Reuben who volunteered himself and offered to kill his own sons!

Now it is Judah stepping up.

Judah basically says, if we would have left, we would be back.

Sometimes we waste so much time because of our fears...

...and we just delay the inevitable...

...we could be done with it if we had just done it.

But they have also grown in maturity.

They are taking responsibility and willing to sacrifice themselves.

11 And their father Israel said to them, "If *it must be* so, then do this: Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry down a present for the man—a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. **12** Take

double money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight. **13** Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man. **14** And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved!"

V11 He is again called Israel as he takes practical steps of faith.

What does practical faith look like?

5 Steps:

First he takes practical steps:

Best fruits. Balm, honey, spices, nuts...and double the money.

Second he sees the possibility: Perhaps it was an oversight.

Third he surrenders his son is sent to go

Fourth he seeks the mercy of God hoping the brothers return.

Fifth he accepts whatever happens, even if it is the worst case.

15 So the men took that present and Benjamin, and they took double money in their hand, and arose and went down to Egypt; and they stood before Joseph. **16** When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Take *these* men to my home, and slaughter an animal and make ready; for *these* men will dine with me at noon." **17** Then the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.

This reminds me a bit of the prodigal son.

But this time...the guilty, sinful brothers return...

...and a feast is prepared for them.

It is not prepared by the father but by another brother.

The Prodigal Son parable is really about the older brother.

Jesus talking to the pharisees about their hard hearts.

Luke 15:1 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. **2** And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

It is about a hard hearted brother who thinks he is better than the other and misses out on the grace and joy of the family.

But Joseph is a brother with the Father's heart.

He sees them return, and he makes a feast for them even though they betrayed and sold him.

18 Now the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, "*It is because of the money, which was returned in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may make a case against us and seize us, to take us as slaves with our donkeys.*"

Worst case scenario is right where they go...

...But God has a best case scenario for them.

19 When they drew near to the steward of Joseph's house, they talked with him at the door of the house, **20** and said, "O sir, we indeed came down the first time to buy food; **21** but it happened, when we came to the encampment, that we opened our sacks, and there, *each man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it back in our hand. 22* And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks."

They used to be ones that hid the truth.

They have hidden a family secret for more than 20 years!

But now, they are confessing right off the bat to this steward.
They didn't have to say this, but they are in a state of humility.

The are going to confess before they are convicted.

This is actually a good practice.
Confess before you are convicted.

Bring it to the Lord, before He has to bring it to you.

Moses, be sure your sins will find you out.

If your brother or sister has something against you ... First go and be reconciled to them"
(Matthew 5:23-24).

God is willing to forgive as soon as we confess.
When we agree with God, He forgives us.

As for typology...if Joseph is a type of Christ.
The steward is a type of the Holy Spirit.
The Spirit exalts Christ and brings comfort and gives gifts.

23 But he said, "*Peace be with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money.*" Then he brought Simeon out to them.

An attribute of the fruit of the Spirit is peace.

It also reminds me of John 14:27

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Peace. Do not be afraid. Why? God is at work.

And...it is your God and the God of your father.

God is personal, historical, and communal.

24 So the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave *them* water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys feed. **25** Then they made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there.

Now this just keeps getting better.

They are given water to wash their feet and food for the donkeys.

This is also what the Spirit does for us too.

Jesus will return just as Joseph would return, but while we wait...

The Spirit cleanses us on the command and authority of Jesus.

Calvin said, "It is a frequent and common way of speaking in Scripture, when the Spirit is mentioned, to add the word Water or Fire, expressing his power."

John 3:55 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

The Holy Spirit gives us gifts to serve and provides for our needs.

26 And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed down before him to the earth. **27** Then he asked them about *their* well-being, and said, "*Is* your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? *Is* he still alive?"

28 And they answered, "Your servant our father *is* in good health; he *is* still alive." And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves.

29 Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "*Is* this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son." **30** Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought *somewhere* to weep. And he went into *his* chamber and wept there.

It has become more than he can emotionally handle and he breaks down as he sees his true brother.

And though he would soon show that he was alive, he wept.

He would "raise himself from their own perception that he was dead", yet he still wept just as Jesus wept for Lazarus that would be raised from the dead in John 11.

31 Then he washed his face and came out; and he restrained himself, and said, "Serve the bread."

32 So they set him a place by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat food with

the Hebrews, for that *is* an abomination to the Egyptians. **33** And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in astonishment at one another.

He is breaking bread as Jesus did many times.
He also knows their birth order and has arranged them that way.

Jesus knows us and has put us where He wants us according to His order for what we have been created for.

He knows your place, and He has put you there.

Joseph knew details about them they couldn't understand.
And Jesus knows details about us we can't understand either.

34 Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

Here they are in the presence of their brother...

... but they don't know it.

They can't figure it out, but it is crazy.
They are feasting in the famine.
They are blessed during the barrenness.

And the youngest has the most.
The first shall be last and the last first.
This is grace upon grace, and they can't even understand it yet.