

God Wants to be Near You

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn again to the chapter that we read in Genesis chapter 45, Genesis chapter 45. And if we could read again at verse 10.

You shall dwell in the land of Goshen and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children and your flocks, your herds and all that you have.

There I will provide for you. For there are yet five years of famine to come. As we know, Joseph stands before us as one of the great men of God and a man whose submission before God is really quite extraordinary.

And whenever you look at the life of Joseph, you see there a man who is being brought lower and lower and lower and lower. And sometimes in life, some of God's people go through periods like that where they seem to be going down and then they go down more and then they go down even more.

And they think that they can't go down anymore, but yet they have to go down even more. It happens. Sometimes we see it happen. Sometimes the going down can, yes, it can be going down in providence, but it can also be going down in ways sometimes that other people don't sometimes realize.

[1 : 4 0] It can be sometimes the going down can be very spiritual where God is dealing in a very personal way through leaving us open to temptation of hiding his face from us, where we're struggling with a sense or lack of assurance, where we're maybe in period of darkness and doubt and fears and where all sorts of things.

So there's a host of different ways in which we can be brought down. But Joseph, as you remember, was a man who was, when as a young man, he was given promises.

Psalms 105 brings that out very clearly about how until the time that his word came, that's God's word, the word of the Lord tried him. And Joseph, you remember, had these dreams which were given to him by God and where he was brought to see or understand that his father and his brothers were going to be bowing down before him.

And remember how he told that dream to his brothers who didn't particularly like it in any shape or form. And yet God's way of taking Joseph to the fulfillment of that couldn't have been more different than what Joseph had imagined.

And that's often true when God gives us a promise. Not always, but most often. He will test us and try us in these very things.

[3 : 1 2] And quite often it'll look like the fulfillment of that promise is impossible. God never works against himself. But from our viewing, it often appears that he is working against himself.

And that seemed to be very much the case in the life of Joseph. And Joseph, as we know, he went from the pit and he was then sold as a slave.

And because of lies, he ended up in the dungeon and the prison in Egypt and into forgottenness and into abandonment. And there must have been periods in Joseph's life where he really felt like the forgotten man.

And Joseph, there would have been periods of bleakness and darkness. And yet we find that he was faithful even in prison. But, you know, God was working not only for Joseph's good.

He was working for Jacob's good. And he was working for Israel's good. And he was working for the future good of his church. And there were periods when Jacob didn't understand this at all.

[4 : 23] And when you look at Jacob's life, the young Jacob and the old Jacob were very, very different. Because although God was with Jacob from a young age, there were kind of unsavory aspects to his character.

And he was quite a devious kind of character. But, you know, he is one of these people that over the course of time, he developed and he matured.

And by the end, he became one of the great men of God. And it's wonderful to see that growing vibrancy within the person's life. And that was true in Jacob's life.

And yet, at this particular period, we find that Jacob, he actually was saying, all these things are against me.

That's how he looked out in his life, that everything was against him. God was over Jacob saying, no, they're not Jacob. And of course, we know the wonderful story of how Jacob came to discover that the son, Joseph, was still alive.

[5 : 32] Now, as we know, and we've done a study on, a Bible study with Mr. McKeever on the life of Joseph. But as we know, Joseph has been seen as a type of Christ.

And we see it, obviously, in his humiliation being taken down and down and down. And then his sudden, as it were, his sudden exaltation to the very top.

And we know that that's a great picture of what happened with Jesus, of how he was humbled all the way down to death. And of course, he was then raised up to the highest glory.

We see it, for instance, in the opening of the storehouses in Egypt. Again, that is often seen as a picture of Christ as well. But tonight, what I want us to see here again, is another picture of keeping in mind this of Joseph as a type of Christ.

But if we can set the scene here, and we're all familiar with it, remember how Joseph's brothers, that they had, they were so jealous of Joseph.

[6 : 47] And with that quote, that quote really got to them, because it was so obvious that Joseph was the father's favorite. Wrong thing to have favorites in a family. But that was on the back of the fact that, remember that although Jacob had four wives, his true love was Rachel.

Rachel was the one that he wanted to marry. And remember how Laban kind of twisted things on the night of the wedding, and he ended up marrying Leah instead of Rachel, and had to work another seven years together for Rachel.

And remember how Rachel died. She was the mother of both Joseph and Benjamin. And so there was this special bond in the heart of Jacob for his son, Joseph.

But the brothers couldn't stand Joseph. They were jealous of him, and particularly with all his dreams and his ideas in their mind of greatness, and being the father's favorite. And remember how, in fact, some of them had wanted to kill him, but it was Reuben that spared him.

But they, they took him, and they threw him into a pit, and some Ishmaelites were passing, and they sold him as a slave into Egypt. And of course, having done that, then they had to hatch up a plan to tell their father.

[8 : 08] And remember how they got a kid, killed it, and tore Jacob's coat, the coat of many colors, covered it in the blood of the, of the kid, the young goat, and, and took it back.

And there was, they showed it to their father, and they said, look, look at what we found. And we remember how Jacob was absolutely distraught. And I'm sure at that moment, the brothers must have thought, what have we done?

Because they saw that their father was absolutely brokenhearted, and he told them that he was going to go down to the grave because of this. So it must, it must have been a very difficult moment for the brothers, really, because they must have thought to themselves, we really have done wrong.

But you know, one day the truth was going to come out. And you know, that funny way the truth always comes out, might take a long, long time for the truth to come out, but eventually it does.

And so the years have gone on, and here is now Joseph, and he is governor of Egypt. And that moment of Joseph revealing himself to his brothers must be one of the greatest surprises in the scripture.

[9 : 18] You know, when you go through the Bible, it's a book that is full of surprises. Like when Jesus appears before the disciples, it tells us that they were amazed, they were surprised with joy, they were euphoric with joy.

The one who was dead was there before them. Now, that's probably the most extreme picture, but the Bible is full of these surprises. And this was one of them when the Joseph, who was second only to Pharaoh in the whole land of Egypt, reveals himself to his brothers.

And he tells him, you know what? I'm your brother, Joseph. Talk of, talk of a moment of being absolutely stunned. And the brothers must have, the brothers must have been quaking because they must have thought, we're dead men.

When we, when you think of what we did to our brother, and here he is, he has all the authority and power of Egypt. All he has to do is snap his fingers and we're dead. But you know, it's here that we see the wonder of, of Joseph.

Because there's no anger, there's no resentment, there's no sense of, you know, Joseph could have had her revenge and bucket loads, but he had no, revenge wasn't on his agenda.

[10 : 46] And it's here we see the marvelous grace that's in Joseph and the amazing faith, because he said to the brothers, you know, you meant it for wrong, but God meant it for good.

This, this was all God's doing. See what it says in verse five, do not be distressed or, or, or, or angry with yourselves because you sold me here for it was God who sent me before you to, to preserve life.

And you know, I, I think it's just wonderful. This attitude of, of, of Joseph here, because it would have been very easy, even although he was going to good, do good to the brothers of having a real go at them.

But there's not even an ounce of resentment. You know, that is something we need to pray about in life is against having bitterness and resentment in our lives.

Paul talks about it as a root of bitterness. And you know, when a root gets in, roots can be so hard to get rid of and it gets right in. And it talks about the, this, the root of bitterness.

[11 : 54] And it's like a cancer within a person. And it can be very easy sometimes through the things that happen where people maybe have wronged you or their circumstances in your life.

And it's, it's a very hard thing to deal with bitterness. And so the, it's, you'll find it quite often in the Bible to, to, to seek for the grace to avoid this root of bitterness.

Well, here's an example of a man who had none, no bitterness. And it would be very easy for him to say to his brothers, look at what you did to me. Okay.

I'm not going to deal with you as, as you deserve. Because I'm going to be nice to you, but do you not think, and he, he would have been quite right to have had a good old go at them, but he didn't.

He said, you know, it was God who sent you, sent me here. And he saw the hand of God in it all. And he was so gentle and he was so gracious in everything.

[12 : 55] And then of course, he says, right, I want you, I want you to go back home and I want you to tell my father, and I want you to bring dad down here.

And I, I, I often think about the brothers going home and talk of a bittersweet moment. They could see they're facing starvation and they see their future is safe with her brother.

And it's, it's the most wonderful provision is made, but how do they tell their father? Because the truth is going to come out. And that over all these years, they never came clean.

They allowed their father. They saw their father age. He probably prematurely aged. And he was going about broken hearted in grief day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year.

And they allowed it. How do you think they felt going back home and say, which one of you is going to tell dad? And then they would say, well, all of our, how are we, how are we going to do this?

[14 : 04] You can think of this as being an incredibly difficult moment for them. And of course, when they tell Jacob, Jacob, he faints. He can't believe it.

Then of course, when he sees the provision that is there, then he begins to believe it all. And so Joseph had told them that in, in verse, in verse 10, that the land of Goshen was going to be there.

And we're not a hundred percent sure really where that was, but it's reckoned it was in the East Nile, Delta, but it was, it was a very fertile, an excellent place for, for raising the herds and the, for the flocks.

And so this was the place that was to be given them. And that's what I want us just to, to, to see in here. When Joseph is saying this, you shall dwell in the land of Goshen and you shall be near me.

And here is Joseph. And as we say, as a type of Christ, and this is what Jesus Christ is doing for us. He's saying to us as well, says it tonight.

[15 : 11] And he says it all the time. You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, which is the best. I've got the best for you. And you shall be near me. And you know, the land of Goshen was privileged all the time that Israel dwelt there.

Because years down the line, remember when, when the new Pharaohs came in to power and Joseph had become, Joseph was long gone.

And the persecution against the children of Israel had begun. And we take him into the time of Moses and the plagues. Do you remember the time of the plague of the flies?

It's very interesting. We read there of how, of Moses. And this is what Moses said to, to, to Pharaoh. I will sever in that day, the land of Goshen, where my people live.

No swarm of flies shall be there. And I will put a division between my people and your people. So that the land of Goshen in the midst of the plagues was preserved.

[16 : 14] And God was making a statement with regard to his people. And he was showing they're my people. These are my people. And you know, God continues to do that.

He puts a distinction between his people and those who aren't. And he makes that distinction very obvious, even in the times of pain and difficulties and even death.

And you know, that is why it's, it's amazing that quite a number of people who aren't Christians, they have the kind of the prayer of, well, maybe not a prayer, the statement of Balaam.

Remember Balaam, Balaam wasn't a lover of God. And he was, he was involved in cursing the people of God. But remember what he said. I want to die the death of the righteous.

And there's a lot of people like that. They want to live the life of the unrighteous. They don't want to live with Christ. They don't want anything of that. But they have seen God's hand upon God's people.

[17 : 18] And even when there's death and pain and suffering and all these things, they still know that God is with his people. They've seen it. They've seen it in so many, right throughout their life, that God's blessing, God's hand is upon his people, even when they're sick, even when they're suffering, even when they're facing death, when there's bereavements and so on, they can see it.

Something of the presence of God there. And they're saying to themselves, I want to die that kind of death, that God's presence will be in some way. But you know, you cannot, you're going to die the way you live.

Although we know that God has, in the very last years, he has saved people. But this is the point we're making, that there's a distinction often made in this life.

And the relationship that the Lord has with his people is a relationship that is built on love. God wants to be near his people. And you and I tonight sometimes don't grasp how near God wants to be with us.

You see, love wants to be with the object of love. When you love somebody, you want to be with that person. And God loves us so much. God the Father loves us so much, that he sent his son to die for us.

[18 : 39] Now we know that, and we say it, and we talk about it. But how often do we really take it to ourselves personally, that Jesus, the son of God, that the second person of the Godhead, took human nature, came into this world, and you're able to say, for me?

Remember I would say this in the Bible, he tasted death for everyone, for all of his own, for everyone, for every one of his own people. Individually, he took that, your death, upon himself.

He loved you so much. And he wants to live near you. And he wants to bless you, and enrich your life. And you know, he wants the very, very best for you.

And you know, sometimes he sees our heart, turning away from him. And we're being drawn aside, to other things. And you know, if we continue down that way, God will often allow things, into our life, to turn us back, to himself.

Because, we have to realize, that the, the most wonderful blessing, that we can have, is to be near him. And to be provided, for by him.

[19 : 55] And you'll notice, what it says here, in verse 11. He says, Joseph says, there I will provide for you, for there are yet, five years of famine to come.

So that you and your household, and all that you have, do not come to poverty. And you know, the Lord is saying the same, to you and to me tonight. We're living in a spiritual famine.

We're living in dark times. There's a spiritual blight, in our land. Remember how it says, in the, after the time of Joshua, there was a new generation, grew up.

And it tells us, that they didn't know the Lord. And we're living at a time, like this, where by and large, there's not only a generation, that doesn't know the Lord, but they don't want, to know the Lord.

And so there is an element, of spiritual famine. That's a spiritual climate. But God says, the Lord is saying to us, I'll still feed you. Yes, there's famine, but I will provide for you.

[20 : 53] And I will give you, all the nourishment, and all the spiritual nutrients, and all the spiritual food you need. And I will build you up, and I will make fat your bones, even in the fact, that there's drought, and famine.

And that's what the Lord does. And so, the nearer we are to him, the more that we will be nourished, and strengthened, and fed.

So may we be encouraged, by these words, so that the, the Joseph, the, the spiritual Joseph, will indeed, feed us, and that we will live, close to him.

Lord, we pray to bless us, and we give thanks again, for your word. Bless our time together. We pray that you will nourish us. We pray that you will provide for us. Provide for all, that we love, our homes, and our families.

And be near to us, we pray this night. Again, we remember all that, those that we have prayed for, and we cannot stop praying, for, for Ruth and Finley.

[21 : 58] Lord, we ask that, you will, be near to them, and that they will be conscious, aware, that you're near to them. Watch over us all, we pray, and do us good, and take away our sin, in Jesus name.

Amen.