

THE BIBLICAL WILD

www.thebiblicawild.org

AMEN.

So we turn this week then to the next installment. We move from the Jacob narrative into the Joseph narrative. Joseph is one of the sons of Jacob one of his twelve sons and he is a favored son and his brothers are quite jealous of him. As a way to deal with their jealousy and to rid their lives of the presence of Joseph, they throw him into a pit and sell him to traders who come through.

Joseph who's been sold into slavery rises in prominence in Egypt as an interpreter of dreams to the Pharaoh. Particularly when Pharaoh is troubled by a dream. And so Joseph interprets the dream and eases the Pharaoh's mind saying the dream is saying that we are to build up our stores of grain and our resources over the next seven years because following that will be seven years of famine in the land.

Therefore Pharaoh decides to confer upon Joseph the honor of being the steward of his household. Rising from slavery to a point where he now has a position of prominence in Egypt. And thus the story unfolds that there is indeed a period of time of great resourcefulness. Stores are put up in Egypt for the years of famine and indeed the years of famine come.

The famine has been in the entire land even across the borders of Egypt. So Jacob hearing that there are stores of grain in Egypt sends his sons to Egypt in order to see if they might procure some grain to relieve the famine among his people.

It is when they arrive in the land of Egypt and go before the one who is to decide about their request that they encounter their brother, Joseph. Jacobs brothers come before their brother Joseph not knowing that it is indeed Joseph but Joseph knows that they are his brothers.

He is frustrated in the beginning - angry in fact - and puts them to the test. After many tests, Joseph acknowledges to his brothers that he is in fact Joseph, their brother, and begins a process of forgiveness and reconciliation.

WEEK III:

Genesis 34-50, Psalms 12-17

Let us pray using a portion of Psalm 17.

Oh God I call upon you because you will answer me. Incline your ear to me. Hear my words. Wondrously show your steadfast love, oh savior of those who seek refuge from their adversaries at your right hand. As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness. When I wake, I shall be satisfied beholding your likeness.

When I pause to enter the Joseph narrative for myself, I recognize that I have many covenants in my life. I have a covenant with my wife, a covenant with my children, a covenant with the church through my ordination, and most importantly I have the covenant that I made and that God made with me at my baptism. All of these are opportunities to make promises and those promises provide a framework for how we shape and live our lives. It's also a reminder that covenants can get broken and God provides us an opportunity to renew those.

At the heart of much of covenant renewal is recognition of the hurts we have received, the brokenness in our relationships, and a genuine desire to repair to heal those relationships to be reconciled to God and with one another. It's a powerful narrative and it's one that I find provides renewal in my life over and over and over again.

As you ponder the passages from the book of Genesis over this next week, I invite you to consider the following questions and answer them in your own heart or share them in the group in which you are studying these passages from holy scripture: What is the role of forgiveness in covenant renewal? In what covenant do you need to renew in your life? How might you forgive in order to renew yourself and renew your relationships?

God bless you and I look forward to seeing you next week.