

**“A Great Deliverance”**  
**Genesis 45:1-28**  
July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017

The need to mend fences with others can lead some people to do some pretty amazing things.

Consider then 73-year old Alvin Straight, of Laurens, in northwestern Iowa. In 1994, Alvin hadn't seen or spoken with older brother Henry for more than 10 years. But, when word got to Alvin that his estranged brother had had a stroke, Alvin determined to find a way to visit Henry and make things right. And, that would be a challenge because Alvin no longer had a driver's license due to failing eyesight.

His solution was to hitch a makeshift trailer to his 1966 John Deere riding lawn mower and set out on a 500-mile trip that would take him in excess of six weeks. Camping out in fields and backyards made available by hospitable people he met along the way, Alvin slowly but surely made his way toward his destination.

After crossing the Mississippi River and entering Wisconsin, Alvin camped in a church cemetery. The pastor of the adjoining church saw Alvin, and brought him a plate of hot meatloaf and mashed potatoes.

"Neither one of us has had a brother for quite some time," Alvin said to the pastor. "Henry and I grew up as close as brothers could be. We used to sleep out in the yard most every summer night. We talked to each other till we went to sleep. It made our trials seem smaller."

When the pastor asked what happened, Alvin explained, "Anger. Vanity. Mix that together with liquor, and you've got two brothers who haven't spoken in ten years." Alvin concluded, "Whatever it was that made me and Henry so mad, it doesn't matter anymore. I want to make peace and sit with him and look up at the stars like we used to."

In like manner, Joseph longs to reconcile with his 10 brothers. Finally accepting responsibility for their sin against Joseph, the brothers will learn something they never could have expected of what they thought was their long lost, even dead, brother. Today, we explore the 45<sup>th</sup> chapter of Genesis. We're in a continuing sermon series exploring the Bible's opening book, *The Book of Beginnings: God's Grace in Genesis*.

**Genesis 45:1-28:**

"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. <sup>2</sup> And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard *it*.

<sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. <sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> "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. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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.”

<sup>12</sup> “And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that *it is* my mouth that speaks to you. <sup>13</sup> 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.”

<sup>14</sup> Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. <sup>15</sup> Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him.

<sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt *is* yours.”

<sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> So he sent his brothers away, and they departed; and he said to them, “See that you do not become troubled along the way.”

<sup>25</sup> Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> Then Israel said, “*It is* enough. Joseph my son *is* still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”

**MP 1 – Joseph Revealed (v. 1-8);**

**MP 2 – Family Reunited (v. 9-24)**

**MP 3 – Jacob Revived (v. 25-28)**

Sending his servants and guests out of his presence, so that Joseph was alone with his 10 brothers, he began to wail in their presence. They were stunned. Then **Joseph revealed His identity** to them. His words again from verse 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.”

Noting this, Joseph summoned them to come closer. He continued (vs 4) “I *am* Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.” We can only imagine the kick in the gut those words were – after all, if they were afraid of Joseph before, they had proof he knew their sin – *after all, who could know such information (his name & circumstances) unless it were Joseph himself?*

Notice in the next four verses that Joseph emphasizes God's purpose in their being in Egypt:

\* Verse 5 – “do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.”

\* Verse 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.”

\* Verse 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. (Repeated in vs. 9)

In revealing himself to his brothers, “Joseph doesn’t relieve the brothers of responsibility for their sinful activity. They are guilty, yet he has compassion on them and comforts them. Even after all he has been through, Joseph forgives his brothers. He is able to do so because he understands that God’s hand is behind it all. God’s providence has directed everything, even the misdeeds of the brothers. (This) underscores the true purpose of the entire account of Joseph: God is the subject of the story, and he is moving all things to the end and goal that he has decreed.” (Currid, 324)

Fast forward to the New Testament. In **Matthew 18:21-22**, Peter comes to Jesus, asking Him, ““Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.”

*Fellow Christian, who is there in your family or this church that you need to forgive, or from whom do you need to receive forgiveness? You may have more than one such person in your life. Forgive so Christ may be honored. After all, how can we not forgive others when Christ has forgiven us?*

With **Joseph being revealed**, we then witness a moving **family reunion**. Look again at verses 14 & 15 – “Then he fell on his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. <sup>15</sup> Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him.” This family was reunited by acceptance of sin on the part of the brothers, and the willingness of Joseph to forgive the hurt done to him by his siblings. As a result, some really incredible things were taking place:

- \* The brothers were to return to Canaan, get their father, and bring him to Egypt; (v. 9)
- \* They were all to settle in Goshen near Joseph; (v. 10)
- \* Joseph would then provide for their needs (there were yet 5 years of severe famine to come); (vs. 11)
- \* Pharaoh promised Jacob and his family “the best of the land of Egypt” (vs. 18)
- \* Pharaoh sent carts (wagons) with them to bring all their family and possessions to Egypt. (v. 19, 21)
- \* Pharaoh gave them changes of clothes, and to Benjamin 300 pieces of silver & 5 changes of clothes.
- \* They also received 20 donkeys loaded food and the good things of Egypt. (v. 22-23)

From Lord’s Day (Sunday) to Lord’s Day (Sunday), we are scattered to the business of living and serving God in our families, places of employment, and various communities. We may cross paths at times during a given week, but there are some, if not many, whom we may only see once a week on Sunday, and some even less often.

Yet, God, in His wise providence, calls His children (believers in Christ) to enjoy a **weekly** family reunion! He has commanded that we “Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.” (**Exodus 20:8**) A significant part of that Sabbath day remembrance is for Christians to gather together as the family of God in worship and fellowship!

In the New Testament, we see that it was Jesus’ habit to attend services of the synagogue on the Sabbath Day (**Luke 4:16**). Further, in **Hebrews 10:24-25**, we are commanded “And let us

consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another...*”

Much more could be said about the various reunions of loved ones with each other. The chapter concludes with the brothers arriving back in Canaan with the news that Joseph was alive and had sent them to retrieve their father Jacob. Even as they were **reunited with their father again**, we see **Jacob is also revived**.

The news in verse 26 that Joseph was still alive, and was the ruler in Egypt was almost too much for Jacob – His “heart stood still...” Jacob was stunned. He went numb; he couldn’t believe his ears! *Joseph alive? The ruler in Egypt? Further, Joseph wanted the whole family to move to Egypt so he could care for them? What’s a 130 year old man to do?*

It wasn’t until after the brothers explained to Jacob all that took place in their most recent trip to Egypt that he began to accept the news that seemed too good to be true. Not to mention, his sons had the carts Pharaoh sent with them. It all had to be true!

At long last, Jacob was experiencing the joy of the Lord. He couldn’t wait to get to Egypt and see his beloved Joseph!

How we may be like Jacob at times. We are often so wrapped up in ourselves, so disheartened by circumstances, that we cannot enjoy resting in the grace of God in Christ. Even Sunday loses its joy for us because life is often hard, and getting the family all on the same page and to church in one piece can be so crazy. We may even be tempted to disbelieve the good news. If this is true of you today, dear one, you must turn to the Scriptures. Read there that “God is faithful; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*.” (**I Corinthians 10:13**)

**Psalm 85:6** – “Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?”

**Psalm 138:7** – “Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me; You will stretch out Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and Your right hand will save me.”

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A Japanese soldier by the name of Shoichi Yokoi lived in a cave on the island of Guam to which he fled in 1944 when the tides of World War II began to change.

Fearing for his life, Yokoi stayed hidden for 28 years in the jungle cave, coming out only at night. During this long period of time, this self-imposed hermit lived on frogs, rats, snails, shrimp, nuts, and mangoes. He wore a pair of trousers and a jacket from a burlap like cloth made from tree bark.

Yokoi said that he knew the war was over because of leaflets that were scattered throughout the jungles of Guam. But he was afraid that if he came out of hiding, he would be executed.

Finally, two hunters came upon him and told him that he need not hide any longer. At last he was free, and with new clothes to wear and food to eat, he was taken by plane to his home.

**Isaiah 57:15** - “For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name *is* Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy *place*, with him *who* has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

May we make it our aim to be humble and contrite before others and our gracious God.