

## *Love, Faithfulness, Righteousness, Peace*

*Genesis 45:1-28*

*...there is no greater example in the Bible of God's gracious watch and care over His own. A multiplicity of seemingly accidental and unrelated events – events which seemed to be ugly and difficult at the time – is gradually woven together by an unseen divine hand into a glorious tapestry in which every portion is ideally situated in its proper and unique place. To believers going through suffering and reverses, undeserved and unexplained, the story of Joseph has always given assurance of ultimate understanding, with the believer discovering a greater good and God receiving a greater glory than would ever have been possible without them. Henry Morris*

- I. Genesis 45 is one of the most moving chapters in all of Scripture. It speaks of a family healed from the sins of the past because of a brother's willingness to let loving kindness, faithfulness, truth and peace rule in his heart instead of unforgiveness, anger, bitterness, and revenge. Joseph's faith journey was not without its moments of despair and grief, yet his emotional response in seeing his brothers after 20 years shows a heart dominated by God's grace and love toward them. In other words, he didn't let his brother's sin against him keep him from making sure his attitude toward them was Christlike and honoring before the Lord. The Christian life is not easy. It challenges us to think and act God's way when sinned against, especially when we have been hurt deeply by it. It's a choice. How we respond does not change God's love for us, yet our response can in many ways determine the emotional and spiritual wellbeing of those affected by it. It's a responsibility that must not be taken lightly in the times we are living in.

Gen. 45:1-4

Psalm 103:2

2 Cor. 12:9-10

Zech. 12:10

Jn. 10:27-28

**Psalm 85:10** *Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other.*

- II. To be told that we must stay God centered in our thinking can at times border on nothing more than Christian ease, meaning that it can be taken simply as an exhortation without requiring much thought behind it. Joseph never believed that way. He took what it meant to stay God centered seriously as he thought through how to respond to the adversity God brought into his life. There is hardly a sentence out of Joseph's mouth that does not have the name of God in it. When enticed by Potiphar's wife he said, *"How could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God."* In prison he said, *"do not all interpretations belong to God?"* Before Pharaoh he said, *"God will give Pharaoh the answer, God has revealed to Pharaoh."* It is seen in the names he gave to his two sons. He named his first son Manasseh, which means *"God has made me forget"* and his second son Ephraim, meaning *"God has made me fruitful."* And now, before his brothers, he repeats the name of God four times to get it to sink into their hearts and minds that God sovereignly allowed and controlled everything that had happened to fulfill his covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. To stay God centered means that we trust, rely and depend on Him no matter what life throws our way. It is understanding the bigger picture of what it means for those of us who proclaim Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

Gen. 45:5-15

Ps. 103:8-14

Rom. 11:33-36

**Proverbs 20:24** *A man's steps are directed by the Lord. How then can anyone understand his own way?*

- III. The minute Jacob believed that his son Joseph was alive, he is called by his covenant name Israel. Boice writes, *"It is significant that the Bible refers to Jacob by his covenant name of Israel... Up to now the name has been Jacob. In fact, 'Jacob' has been used three times in this passage... But now suddenly 'Israel!'... This takes us back to the story in which Jacob wrestled with the angel (who was probably the Lord himself), was overcome by him, and as a result received the name 'Israel,' which... means 'God rules,' 'God commands,' or 'God overcomes.' When Jacob is in charge we get Jacob, a whining, self-pitying, complaining type of man. When God overcomes we get Israel, a true child of God. It is as Israel that this man draws himself together, rises to his full height, collects his numerous family, and sets out for Egypt to see his son Joseph before he dies. When you are racked by doubt and are feeling sorry for yourself, you think that one reason why you must not commit yourself to God is that you will be changed, and you want to keep your identity. There is truth in that. No one has ever surrendered himself or herself to God who has not been changed as a result. But what a change! What 'Israels' such captured ones become! Why not be changed? Why not believe? How can you be harmed, even though changed, by him who has always held your own best interests at heart."*

Gen. 45:16-28

**Hebrews 6:19-20** *We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf.*