

Title: Joseph's Life, Christ the Life

Text: Genesis 49: 22-24

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Let's turn in our bibles to Genesis 49. Jacob was dying, he spoke to each of his twelve sons. Then he came to Joseph. These were his words for his beloved son, verse 22, **“Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall.”**

Jacob never thought he would see Joseph again. As far as Jacob knew, Joseph had been killed by wild animals. He had no idea his brothers sold him into slavery and that he had ended up in Egypt. Then after many years, the Lord led him to Joseph. So you can imagine his love for Joseph.

Joseph is a type of Christ. Christ *is* a fruitful bough, *even* a fruitful bough by a well; *whose* branches run over the wall. Christ is the fruitful Bough—the Vine. His branches run over the wall—Christ is the Vine, his people are the Branches. (Jn 15: 5) Christ shall lose none. (Jn 6: 39) He is loaded with fruit like a vine full of fruit. Christ is the Well of which a sinner drinks and never thirsts again. (Jn 4: 13-14)

Proposition: Joseph's story is the story of many sitting here today—the story of the believer. And his story is a picture of our blessed God and Savior.

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Divisions: I. JOSEPH'S TRIALS PICTURE CHRIST'S TRIALS—**V23: The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him;** II. JOSEPH'S FAITHFULNESS PICTURES CHRIST'S FAITHFULNESS—**V24: But his bow abode in strength.** III. JOSEPH'S STRENGTH PICTURES CHRIST'S STRENGTH—**V24: and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; 24: (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel.)**

I. JOSEPH'S TRIALS PICTURE CHRIST'S TRIALS—V23: The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him;

Joseph was not shot at by literal archers. But those who opposed him were indeed “masters of arrows”—arrows more piercing, arrows of hatred which sorely grieved him. Those are the worst arrows.

The Archers

The archers who shot at Joseph were his own brethren in his own house. From the youngest age, Joseph was the dearly beloved son of his father.

Genesis 37: 3: Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age:...

Joseph was the firstborn son of his wife Rachel. “The son of his old age” means more than that Joseph was born to Jacob when he was old. It means Joseph was the son who had the wisdom of an aged man--“the son of wisdom.”

In this we see a type of Christ. Christ is the Son of God's love like Jacob loved Joseph more than all his sons, so God the Father said of Christ,

Matthew 3:17: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Christ is the Firstborn among many brethren—Christ was not born first in time, like Joseph was not, but he was the firstborn of the Father. Christ is the Wisdom of God like as Joseph was the “son of old age.”

In Joseph dwelt the Spirit of the living God, who made Joseph holy inwardly and of a good character. His thoughts were honorable toward God, toward his earthly father, and toward his brethren. He was beloved of God the Father and beloved of his earthly father. Jacob so loved him that Jacob made Joseph “a coat of many colors”. It pictured the “raiment of needlework”, the righteousness of Christ placed upon Joseph by the grace of God. (Gen 37: 4; Ps 45: 14)

Likewise, Christ Jesus was formed in the womb of the virgin by the Holy Ghost. Christ is that holy thing formed in the womb of the virgin. (Lk 1: 35) The Spirit of God abode on him without measure. Notice verse 26, Jacob said to Joseph, “The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and ON THE CROWN OF THE HEAD OF HIM THAT WAS SEPARATE FROM HIS BRETHREN.” Christ is that one who was separate from his brethren that he might sanctify those given him of the Father.

Hebrews 7: 26: For such a high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.

John 17:19: And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Christ was Joseph’s coat of righteousness and Christ himself is the Righteousness of his people—all spiritual blessings upon the head of Joseph were the blessings given him from Christ’s abundance. So it is with us, brethren, who are born of his Spirit and made the righteousness of God through faith in Christ.

Hated by Brethren

Therefore, for all this, Joseph’s brethren hated Joseph.

Genesis 37: 4: And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

Joseph’s brethren saw nothing in Joseph that made them love him. Anytime, his brethren thought their father was not looking, they sought to secretly do harm to Joseph.

More so, it was true of Christ Jesus who Joseph typified. And when his brethren saw that their father loved Christ more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. (Genesis 37: 4) Christ’s brethren, after the flesh, the children of Israel saw nothing in Christ that made them love him.

John 1: 11: [Christ] came unto his own, and his own received him not.

Isaiah 53: 3: He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

His brethren thought God the Father was not looking, so they sought to secretly to harm Christ. Why? We see it typified in Joseph.

Joseph came telling his brethren of a dream he had. It pictures the gospel which Christ came declaring. The reception Joseph received pictures the reception Christ received of his brethren.

Genesis 37: 5: And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told *it* his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. 6: And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: 7: For, behold, we *were* binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.

Years later, this prophecy came true. Joseph's brothers suffered a famine of bread so that they were about to die. Joseph's brethren came down to Joseph where he reigned over all Egypt but by then they did not recognize Joseph. But finally Joseph revealed himself to them. God brings all his elect down revealing our sin and revealing Christ in our hearts. Joseph's brethren bowed to him, asked forgiveness for their sins against Joseph and for mercy because Joseph was the one with all power over the storehouses, the only who could save them. It pictures Christ in his glory reigning over this whole world, to whom God has "given all power over all flesh that he might give eternal life to as many as the Father has given him."

Application: We must come to Christ confessing our sin, asking mercy. In the great day of harvest, like the sheaves bowed to Joseph's sheaves, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Christ is Lord to the glory of God.

When Christ preached this gospel to his brethren, the reception Christ received was like what Joseph received from his brothers.

Genesis 37: 8: And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

Remember the parable Christ gave of himself and the children of Israel?—Luke 19:14: But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us.

A Picture of Crucifixion

Then one day, his brethren had all of Joseph that they could stand. His father sent Joseph to his brethren in the field, where they were supposed to be tending their father's sheep. God sent Christ into Israel where they were supposed to be tending God the Father's sheep. When Joseph came from his home to where they were in the field, his brethren decided to kill him. Reuben, talked them into throwing him into a pit, instead. They stripped him of his coat and threw in the pit. Then they sat down to eat and behold there came a company of Ishmaelites passing that way. Judah suggested they sell Joseph. So they "sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and [the slavemaster's] brought Joseph into Egypt." (Gen 37: 28) Then his brother's came to their father, lying, and saying a wild animal had killed Joseph. So Joseph endured the agony of being separated from the father he loved and who loved him—all for the sake of his brethren who despised him. "The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him."

So it was when the time was come, Christ delivered himself into the hands of his brethren after the flesh, who desired to kill him. In Christ's parable he said,

Luke 20:14: But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. 15 So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him...

Judas betrayed Christ for 30 pieces of silver. Christ willingly gave himself to be stripped at the hands of his brethren. Christ gave himself to be thrown into the pit, like as Joseph was thrown in the pit.

2 Corinthians 5: 21: He hath made him sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

And Christ endured the agonies of being separated from the father he loved and who loved him—all at the hands of his brethren who despised him. “The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him.”

Application: Believer, just as Joseph endured these sufferings for the sake of Christ, our Savior has told all his children to expect such bitter arrows.

Psalm 37:14: The wicked...have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, *and* to slay such as be of upright conversation.

1 Peter 4:12: Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13 **BUT REJOICE**, inasmuch as **YE ARE PARTAKERS OF CHRIST’S SUFFERINGS**; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

But Christ tells us, brethren, “he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” (Mk 13: 13) So now, let’s see how:

II. JOSEPH’S FAITHFULNESS PICTURES CHRIST FAITHFULNESS—Genesis 49: 24: But his bow abode in strength.

Faithful toward His Brethren

When reviled by his brethren for their bitter envy and hatred, Joseph continued trusting the Lord. We never read anything about Joseph fighting the evil deeds of his brethren or even saying one word against them for what they were doing to him. How much more, Christ Jesus,

Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

1 Pet 2: 23: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously:

Faithful to His Master

Potiphar was Joseph’s master, to whom Joseph belonged. Potiphar “made Joseph overseer in his house, and over all that he had.”

Genesis 39: 7: And it came to pass after these things, that his master’s wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. 8: But he refused, and said unto his master’s wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and **HE HATH COMMITTED ALL THAT HE HATH TO MY HAND**; 9: **THERE IS NONE GREATER IN THIS HOUSE THAN I**; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: **HOW THEN CAN I DO THIS GREAT WICKEDNESS, AND SIN AGAINST GOD?**

God the Father sent forth Christ into this earth to serve the Father for his people and God the Father committed all that he has into Christ's hand. There is none greater in the house than Christ. In the face of Satan's constant temptation, Christ said, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Application: Brethren, I pray Christ continually remind us of the great privilege he has entrusted into our hands to give us the riches of his gospel. In the face of every temptation, may he give us grace to say, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Faithful When Forgotten

Finally, Potiphar's wife falsely accused Joseph, likewise Christ. And Potiphar threw Joseph in prison, still Joseph remained faithful. Pharaoh threw two of his servants—a butler and a baker—into prison where Joseph was. Joseph interpreted their dreams for them. Joseph declared justice and mercy would be shown: the baker would die but Joseph revealed good news to the butler—the butler would go free. Both came to pass. (Genesis 40: 1-23) This was more than just dreams like we have—it was the Spirit of God declaring what God was about to do; Joseph interpreted the dreams because the Spirit of God was with him so he could reveal the truth to those men.

It pictures Christ interceding between us and God, revealing in our hearts the gospel by the Spirit of God. Christ our Mediator sends forth the Spirit of God and gives us the interpretation of the scriptures. He reveals in our hearts justice and mercy met together—like as they did in the butler and the baker—when Christ took the place of his people on the cross. Christ died under the justice of God in place of his people. So now his people shall be released from prison in great mercy. Christ reveals this good news in our hearts through the Spirit just as Joseph revealed the good news to the butler.

Then Joseph charged the butler, to make mention of him to Pharaoh to bring Joseph out of the prison house. Joseph said, "For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon." (Gen 40: 15) "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him." (Gen 40: 23)

Still, Joseph remained faithful to the Lord and to the butler. For two more years, Joseph remained in prison. Then Pharaoh needed a dream interpreted. Finally, the butler remembered Joseph. He told Pharaoh about Joseph. So Pharaoh sent for Joseph who interpreted the dream for Pharaoh as the butler said Joseph could do. (Genesis 41: 1-32)

Application: Brethren, in spite of all the wrongs done toward Christ in this earth, Christ is faithful to his people to reveal the truth of God in our hearts through the Spirit of God. When he reveals the gospel to us, Christ charges us, like Joseph charged the butler, to go forth and speak of him in the ear of sinner's in this earth: to declare Christ is the holy one, to declare Christ's faithfulness, to declare Christ is the Righteousness of God, so that by the grace of God, Christ shall be called upon by needy sinners. Yet, we often do as the butler. Though we have received good news of our salvation from Christ, we go forth from our prison and forget the Lord Jesus who through the Spirit guided us into all truth.

Still, like Joseph was faithful to come forth when the butler remembered him, though we live as if we have forgotten Christ, though we fail to tell others about him, Christ remains faithful to Intercede on our behalf with the Father, to teach us in our hearts, to come forth in Spirit when we call for him to help us.

May he give us grace to remain faithful to him who is so faithful to us: to remember him always, to speak of him to others continually, to thank him for being so true to us who are so forgetful of his mercies to us.

III. JOSEPH'S STRENGTH IS A TYPE OF CHRIST'S STRENGTH—V24: But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty *God* of Jacob. (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

In all that Joseph endured, the mighty God of Jacob, made the arms of his hands strong.

Illustration: Holding back a longbow or a recurve bow? A father puts his hands on his sons hands and drawing the bow—so our mighty God holds our bow steady.

God Sent the Ishmaelites

It was the hand of God that sent the Ishmaelites that day so Joseph was sold, rather than remain in the pit. Likewise, it was the mighty God—the God in the Man Christ Jesus, as well as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit—who protected Christ while he walked this earth so that no man laid hands on him till his hour was come. It was the triune God who raised his body from tomb and set him at his own right hand in glory.

The LORD was with Joseph in Potiphar's House

Whenever Joseph was sold to Potiphar, we read this about Joseph's time in Potiphar's house:

Genesis 39: 2: And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. 3: And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. 4 And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.

The LORD was with Christ as he walked this earth—"The pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand." (Is 53: 10) Christ enters our house, our bodies, by his Spirit like Joseph entered Potiphar's house. But just the opposite, we find grace in God's sight. He makes us to see that God is with Christ, that Christ prospered when he served for us, accomplishing our redemption. The power of God brings his lost child to put all we have in Christ's hand. From that day forward, Christ becomes our Strength and Wisdom—"the overseer of all we have."

The LORD was with Joseph in Prison

When Joseph was thrown in prison, we read this:

Genesis 39: 21: But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 22: And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.

Likewise, even when Christ appeared bound—nailed to the cross—he prospered in calling one of his lost sheep—Christ was the doer of it. Christ the Word cannot be bound, he cannot be frustrated. His power makes us to commit all into his hands. Even when it comes to all our loved ones yet in the prison of death and sin, we trust Christ to call his own when he will for if they are called, Christ shall be the doer of it. Like "the keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under Joseph's hand" so we cease our worrying because all is in Christ's hand.

The LORD was with Joseph in Pharaoh's Kingdom

When Joseph was brought before Pharaoh and interpreted his dream. Joseph told Pharaoh seven years of plenty and seven years of famine were coming.

Genesis 41: 39: And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art:

There is none in the land is wise as Christ, in whom the Spirit of God is. God the Father was satisfied by Christ's finished work so God the Father exalted Christ, giving him all power over all things and said of Christ what Pharaoh said of Joseph,

Genesis 41: 40: Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled:... 41: And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. 42: And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;...44: [God swore by himself] without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. 45: And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah;

The name Zaphanathpaanea means "treasury of glorious rest"—that's Christ! When famine came all the land had corn in the storehouses, and all came to Joseph to open the storehouses to them. He sold to them from the abundance he had laid up for them. Christ is the Wisdom and Power of God. God has set him over the storehouse of grace. All his own shall know the famine within us by his grace revealing our sin and all his own shall be drawn to Christ to open the storehouse of grace unto us. But Christ does not sell anything to us. Christ says,

Isaiah 55: 1: Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

We buy without money because Christ is the Price—he paid it all. All who come to him believing Christ have the price. All grace is free to us in Christ.

But preacher, I am so sinful! Rememer, those very brethren who had been so evil toward Joseph?

Genesis 50: 18: And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we *be* thy servants. 19: And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for *am* I in the place of God? 20: But as for you, YE THOUGHT EVIL AGAINST ME; BUT GOD MEANT IT UNTO GOOD, TO BRING TO PASS, AS IT IS THIS DAY, TO SAVE MUCH PEOPLE ALIVE.

Unlike Joseph, Christ is God and our Mediator in the place of God. Like as God overruled all that Joseph's brethren did to Joseph so that God might show mercy to the children of Israel, his brethren, likewise,

Acts 4: 26: The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. 27: For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28: For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

Application: Sinner, Christ says to those who come humbled and broken to him, by his grace, what Joseph said to his brethren. Do you think Joseph turned them away? Nope! Joseph said,

Genesis 50: 21: Now therefore FEAR YE NOT: I WILL NOURISH YOU, and your little ones. And HE COMFORTED THEM, and SPAKE KINDLY unto them.

Sinner, come to Christ a broken and contrite sinner, starved of all righteousness, seeking all in Christ and these are the words he shall speak to you, "FEAR YE NOT: I WILL NOURISH YOU. HE SHALL COMFORT YOU, and SPEAK KINDLY unto you."

And for you, brethren, who believe Christ, never cease trusting in Christ's faithfulness and his Strength alone. Our bow shall abide in strength by the Mighty Hand of Christ our God. The strength God gives to his Joseph's in Christ is real strength: full justification from all our sin, Christ's perfect righteousness, separation into Christ our Holiness, complete redemption from all the chains of sin and death, the mind of Christ to guide us always. Our strength is covenant strength—"the mighty God OF JACOB"—means covenant. Charles Spurgeon said, "Mightier than giants are men of the race of heaven." It is because "from thence *is* the shepherd, the stone of Israel." (Genesis 49: 24) It means Christ came through the lineage of Joseph, yes. But it also means that everything Joseph had, and everything that we have, brethren, is from Christ the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel.

Believer, Christ is our Shepherd always and forever. I'll just remind you to read Psalm 23, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want." Christ is the Stone of his Israel. "The stone which the builders refused, the same is become the head-stone of the corner." (Ps 118: 22)

Spurgeon told this story. He said it may be true or not. Whether it is true or not it is a good illustration. The story goes that when Solomon's temple was being built. Amongst the stones was one they could not make fit anywhere in the building. They tried it at this wall, then another, finally they became so vexed by it that they threw it to the side in anger.

Over the years, the stone became covered with moss. No one acknowledge it or if they did they despised it for the trouble it gave them. Year after year rolled by, the old stone was never used of the builders.

Finally, the temple was almost finished. A multitude was gathered to see the grand sight. The builders only needed the top-stone but there were no more stones. Someone said, "Perhaps that stone which the builders refused is meant to be the top-stone." So they hoisted it to the top of the house; and sure enough it fit right into place. The crowd shouted "the stone which the builders refused has become the head-stone of the corner."

That story may or may not be true. But the builders cast Christ away. Yet, when God finishes gathering together, in one, all things that are in heaven and in earth, in Christ then Christ shall be the glorious consummation of all things—the Head Stone of the whole house. So he is now! Rest in him!

Amen!