

POPULAR STORIES

CHAPTER 23

WHEN JOSEPH SAW BENJAMIN

Genesis 43: 11-17

The same way that Joseph was only interested in seeing Benjamin with his brethren, God will only receive a sinner who comes before him with Christ through faith.

NOT OUR GIFTS

We are slow to learn that God is not interested in our gifts to earn his acceptance—**Genesis 43: 11: And their father Israel said unto them, If *it must be* so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds: 12: And take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry *it* again in your hand; peradventure it *was* an oversight: 13: Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man: 14: And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved *of my children*, I am bereaved.**

The key in this passage is that Jacob is sending gifts, payment, and at the same time saying, “God Almighty give you mercy before the man.”

A payment by us and mercy from God do not go together. Salvation is all of God’s mercy, not of a combination of God’s mercy and our payment.

Joseph did not tell them to bring him the best fruits of their own land. Joseph did not tell them to bring their money. In fact, Joseph put their money back in their sacks. Joseph knows their salvation is of God’s mercy. He is teaching them this like as Christ teaches all God’s children the good news.

But Jacob sends them back, not only with fruits of his land, but with double money. They had no other thought of securing the needed food than by purchasing it. Such is thoughts of natural man. Our natural, carnal minds never rise to the level of receiving a gift entirely free from God. By nature, we think God’s mercy involves a payment from us. Joseph told them only to bring Benjamin his brother. But like Jacob we double our efforts to please God. We turn over a new leaf.. We seek harder than ever to win God’s approval.

Joseph is Governor over all Egypt! What does he want with their presents? God owns all things. He said, “If I were hungry I would not tell thee.” So it is that Christ does not teach his child to come to God with our fruits, with our works, but only come to God with Christ through faith in Christ.

Christ is pictured here in Benjamin. Christ is the Firstborn. Christ is the Last Adam. Christ is Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. God receives his people who come trusting Christ our only Bread and Righteousness.

Yet, we are often slow to learn that salvation is free in Christ, apart from our works. When Christ first came and fulfilled the law, though the veil in the temple rent in two, the Hebrew believers were slow to let go of the law.

Brethren, that is true of you and me still. We can become so self-righteous at times. Yet, how does Christ deal with us? In mercy. God will show us salvation is free because he saves his people in spite of our self-righteous sinful flesh.

Paul addressed that issue in Romans 14. To those new believers who thought they should eat according to the law of Moses and to those strong in faith who knew they were free from the law and complete in Christ. Paul wrote,

Romans 14: 3: Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. 4: Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

God is able to teach us, to forgive us, to make us stand in Christ alone. Sometimes God chooses to do this through a slow process rather than all at once. So let us not condemn a weak brother because that is self-righteous legalism. But rather do as Christ does to us. Intercede for one another. Ask Christ our Master to teach his children. And show mercy and forgiveness freely for Christ's sake.

CHRIST ALONE

Our text shows us a picture of how it is in Christ alone that God will receive us. Look at Benjamin as a picture of Christ and Joseph as a picture of God the Father. And catch the important phrase—**Genesis 43: 15: And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph. 16: And WHEN JOSEPH SAW BENJAMIN with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring *these* men home, and slay, and make ready; for *these* men shall dine with me at noon. 17: And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.**

Benjamin was the only one Joseph was looking for. He did not even regard their gifts. He received them because of Benjamin alone!

Even as believers we can come before God with a lot of vain works because sin is mixed with all we are. But if we come before God with faith in Christ, God sees Christ alone. It is in Christ alone that God will receive us.

John 14:6: Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

1 Timothy 2:5: For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

Acts 4: 12: Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Hebrews 7: 25...he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

As depraved sinners we need to be made the righteousness of God. Christ is the Righteousness of God who God has provided for the salvation of his people. We do not work to be made righteous. The will-worker must perform every law without one sin. Sinners are not made the righteousness of God by our works. But by God's gift of faith we believe unto righteousness and with the mouth confess Christ unto salvation.

Romans 10: 1: Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2: For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3: For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4: For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. 5: For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. 6: But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise,...8...The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9: That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10: For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

ALL THINGS READY

When God draws us to Christ we find that Christ has made all things ready—**Genesis 43: 16: And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring *these* men home, and slay, and make ready; for *these* men shall dine with me at noon. 17: And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.**

When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said, "Prepare the feast. These men shall dine with me at noon" So, too, Christ is the One who has spread the feast. The word of the Gospel is, "Come for all things are now ready." Christ is the Provider; the poor sinner is the receiver.

Luke 14: 16: Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many. 17: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

Sinner, God is not interested in your gifts to earn salvation. God's one delight is his Son, Christ Jesus who has finished the work of fulfilling the law and putting away the sin of his people. Christ has declared God just and the Justifier of those who believe in Jesus. There remains nothing to be done by those God saves. If God has drawn you so that by his grace you find yourself believing on Christ then come to God resting in Christ and you shall find that all things are ready!

1 John 5: 11-12: This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.

Amen!