

POPULAR STORIES

CHAPTER 25

DRAWN TO JOSEPH'S TABLE

Genesis 43: 26-34

In conversion God is drawing his child to Christ's table to Christ the Bread of Life. The same is true in all the believer's trials. We have a beautiful picture of it in this passage.

MAINTAINING OUR PEACE

Genesis 43: 26: And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which *was* in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth. 27: And he asked them of *their* welfare,...

Joseph had dealt roughly with his brothers. And his brothers thought Joseph had called them to his house to charge them and put them in bondage. So they were very fearful. They did not want to go into Joseph's house. Yet, the first thing Joseph did was "ask them of *their* welfare."—their peace.

Though God may deal roughly with his elect children as he draws us to Christ in the beginning or as he chastens us or as he brings us to confess our sins and our need of him, we can be sure God's is always taking care to maintain our peace.

As believers, how often you and I become fearful of what the Lord is doing, when all along the Lord's is maintaining our peace. It is easy to get caught up in the moment, in the details, in the second causes—and we forget the Lord is maintaining my peace in this. It is true no matter what God is doing with us in his providence. God is maintaining our peace.

Who is our Peace? The Lord Jesus Christ. In all our trials, God is chastening us for this purpose—to teach us to follow after our Peace, Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 12: 1: Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2: Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God...[so when we are chastened of the Lord, he says]... 12: Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13: And make straight paths for your feet,...

We are to make straight paths to Christ. As he said in the beginning, "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."

Also, remember, Joseph's brothers do not yet know Joseph. So you who do not yet know the Lord would do well to consider this, too! When you hear someone tell you we are going to the Lord's house today are you like Joseph's brothers? Are you fearful because you think God will charge you with sin and put you in bondage? It may be—like it was with Joseph toward his brethren—that God sent this gospel to you because it is his purpose to maintain your peace. It is certainly so if you are his!

Notice where they were when Joseph spoke peace to them. They were in Joseph's house. If God has purposed to speak peace to you it will be in his house.

Sadly, true believers, are often like Joseph's brothers. We become fearful of having our sins exposed, of being rebuked, so we refuse to come into the Lord's house to hear his gospel preached. That is sometimes the case when we are in trials. We may not know it or admit it but it is our fear of hearing the Lord speak the truth. But no matter the situation never hesitate to come into the Lord's house. If he has purposed to speak peace to you this is where he will do so through his gospel!

So each of us should learn from this text that when God sends us the gospel or when God sends us some perplexing providence—it may be rough at first—but if we are his, God is working these things to bring us to Christ our Peace.

MAINTAINING OUR WELL-BEING

In addition, remember that Christ is always maintaining the well-being of his people—**Genesis 43: 27...and said, *Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?***

When Joseph saw his brethren, it moved him to inquire of the condition of their father—his own father. Natural men are like this. When we see our nearest kin, our natural affection is to know if our loved ones are doing well. We do this being sinful. How much more fervent is our sinless Savior's affection and concern for his people in this world!

Isaiah 63:9: In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

It is because of God's predestinating grace that he maintains the well-being of his people—**Genesis 43: 28: *And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance.***

They bowed and made obeisance in gratitude to Joseph because they knew it was Joseph that had maintained their father's health by sending corn in the midst of the famine. But think about these two statements in terms of God's predestinating grace.

God predestinated that Jacob would live and his health would be maintained. And God predestinated it would be by God exalting Joseph over all Egypt. God predestinated these boys would bow down and give Joseph obeisance.

Likewise, God predestinated that all his elect shall be preserved. God predestinated it to be by Christ laying down his life and by God exalting Christ over all this world. God predestinated each of his children shall come and bow and give God our Father obeisance by giving Christ obeisance.

Ephesians 1: 5: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

But if need be, in order to teach us and keep us, Christ sometimes withdraws so that his presence is not known to us—**Genesis 43: 29 *And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son. 30: And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there.***

Christ is always interceding on behalf of his people, blessing his dearly loved children. But it was not the right time for Joseph to make himself known. He must bring his brethren to confess their sins. Yet, all the

while, his heart yearned for his brother. So it is with Christ. Christ is always maintaining our lot. God has predestinated it. Though Christ may at times make us think he has withdrawn his presence yet Christ always yearns for his people and our salvation. Believer, remember that in the midst of your trials. When it appears Christ has hidden his face from you, it is because Christ everlastingly loves his people and he is doing it to maintain our well-being.

OUR SLOWNESS

We see how slow believers are to recognize Christ in his dealings with us—**Genesis 43: 31: And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread. 32: And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians. 33: And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another.**

Put yourself in the shoes of Joseph's brethren. The Egyptians will not eat near them because they are Hebrews. It was an abomination for an Egyptian to eat with a Hebrew. But here is Joseph—this man they think is a great Egyptian head of state. Yet, the Egyptians will not eat near Joseph either. But Joseph's brethren were ordered to be seated right before Joseph. Wouldn't that be an indication to you that this man may not be an Egyptian but he might be a Hebrew, too! Also, Joseph had his brethren seated in order of age from the firstborn to the youngest. Only someone who knew them would know their ages. All of this got their attention—"the men marveled one at another."

Now, compare this to a child of God toward whom God is working a work of grace.

First, when God begins drawing us to his table, to partake of Christ our Bread, like the Egyptians, men of this world will begin to separate from you and look down upon you. As soon as this world even suspects you to be a child of God they will separate themselves from you. Why did the Egyptians refuse to eat with a Hebrew? "For every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians." (Gen 46: 34) To the world, Christ our Shepherd is an abomination. The carnal mind is enmity against God. So the world regards Christ's people the same as they regard Christ. Our Savior said, "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also." (Jn 15: 20) Yet, when the Lord is using this separation to teach us it is his work, sadly, we are slow to get it. Due to our sinful flesh, we are prone to want to fit in with this world. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor 6: 17-18)

Secondly, as Christ makes us hear the gospel, we begin to realize he knows us and knows everything about us. We are like these brethren of Joseph's. We begin to marvel that Christ knows us. And indeed, Christ knows them that are his. "Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." (Jn 1: 47-48) As Christ spoke to the woman at the well, he exposed her sin, he exposed her vain religion and "The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, 29: Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" (Jn 4: 28-29) Yet, Joseph's brethren were slow to comprehend who it was that was feeding them. And we are so slow to comprehend that it is Christ dealing with us. But thankfully, he knows his child.

Also, there is a lesson here for you and I who believe. We look at this situation in our text and say, "How could they not see that this was Joseph!" And we often say that about those who have not yet confessed

Christ. But remember, our eyes were holden just as Joseph's brethren, just as that unbeliever's eyes are holden. As we continue in Genesis we will see that Joseph will reveal himself when it is his time. And Christ will reveal himself in his time.

CONTENTMENT IN CHRIST

When Christ causes us to eat at his table—to partake of Christ the Bread—he makes the believer content in him—**Genesis 43: 34 And he took *and sent* messes unto them from before him:**

Christ takes and sends heavenly Bread unto each of his true people before him. Notice, Joseph gave bread from his table to his brethren but not to the Egyptians. Through God-given faith, Christ effectually gives to those who are God's elect, those he redeemed, his brethren.

Christ gives us his Life. Christ gives us faith and repentance. Christ gives us his free righteousness. He gives us his free justification, free forgiveness of sins. He gives us all that Christ is and all that he purchased by his blood on Calvary's tree.

Likewise, as the Head of his church, Christ rules all things in providence, giving each of us substance in this life, exactly as he will—not more, not less. It was having Christ, his contentment, that made the apostle Paul say:

Philippians 4: 11...I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. 12: I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13: I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

And Christ gives us trials to test us—to prove we are content with Christ alone—to prove to us that whatever he gives us is right so that he makes us content with him. Notice how Joseph tests his brethren—**Genesis 43: 34:...but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs.**

Why did Joseph do this? Do you remember how Joseph's brother's envied Joseph because he was his father's favorite? Remember how they envied his coat of many colors? It was for envy that they stripped Joseph and threw him in a pit. Then they sat down by the pit to eat. Now, here they are eating with Joseph in Joseph's house, at Joseph's table, from Joseph's hand.

Believer, that is our story. In our sinful, unregenerate state we hated Christ because he is God's Firstborn choice Son. We stripped him and nailed him to the cross. Then we went back to feeding on the husks of our vain will-works religion. Now here we are in Christ's house, at Christ's table, eating from Christ's hand.

Does Christ make us content? Seeing what we have done to Christ and seeing what Christ has done for us, Christ makes those that God draws to his table content with him—**Genesis 43: 34:...And they drank, and were merry with him.** (Ge 43:26-34) Did you catch that? Though Joseph gave Benjamin five times more than he gave them, they drank and were merry WITH HIM! So it is that Christ makes his child to drink and be merry with Christ alone!

These are just some of the ways that Christ deals with us as he brings us into communion with him in saving faith. These are a few of the ways God makes us one with each other. This is how Christ makes us content in him in his house at his table. We are reminded of Christ's words to his disciples when they begin to argue over who should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. He said,

Luke 22:...he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. 27: [For which] is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth. 28: Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. 29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; 30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom,...

Amen!