

Series: Popular Stories
Title: Exchanging Death for Life
Text: Genesis 47: 11-27
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Now if all we see in our text is Pharaoh, Joseph and Egyptians, we will be like most commentaries. Many accuse Pharaoh and Joseph of taking advantage of the Egyptians. We are so accustomed to governments taking advantage of people, oppressing people, taxing—so a passage like this is apt to present difficulties. But remember, God was ruling this entire scene, showing his people Christ in Joseph. Christ said that all these old testament scriptures are they which bear witness of him.

Before our text, we find these words in Genesis 47: 11-12:

Genesis 47: 11: And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. 12: And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to *their* families. [marg. 'as a little child is nourished']

Before the foundation of this world, God the Father gave all his elect the very best land—Christ the Son of God—Christ is our land of Goshen. The land where all the kings sheep are kept and have green pasture. Is Goshen. Christ is the green pasture where all God's elect sheep are kept. Christ nourishes his people—with the true Bread from heaven—Christ himself.

Ephesians 1: 3: Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: 4: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6: To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

In the end of our text we read this in Genesis 47: 27.

Genesis 47: 27: And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly.

In the end, we shall be where God's elect began, with Christ in glory. But between the beginning and the end, sin entered and death by sin—we dwell in this land of Egypt. For regenerated believers, our fleshly nature is no different than any other Egyptian in this land. We “were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” (Eph 2: 3) Paul said, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing.” (Rom 7: 18)

Thanks be unto God, by his grace, he has created a new man within his saints, he put a new spirit in you, he formed Christ in you. In that inward holy man, we have Christ the Bread, Christ the Life. That new man is the real me—the Israel of God. In that inward man, we hunger and thirst for Christ our Righteousness, Christ our Living Bread. But our old sinful Egyptian fleshly nature, still lusts after earthy things. It is our sinful, Egyptian flesh that puts confidence in things we can see and touch—temporal, temporary things.

So our Lord Jesus is continually nourishing each believer in our inward man, teaching us that every other confidence is nothing and that Christ is our Bread, our Life, our Righteousness, our Holiness, our All!

Our subject is “Exchanging Death for Life.”

THE FAMINE OF OUR SIN

Christ teaches his people by causing us to experience the famine of our sin—**Genesis 47: 13: And *there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine.***

There is no bread—no life—in us or this world. When Adam sinned, we all died in sin—the famine is very sore. All died—Egypt and Canaan—all fell into sin. So Christ shows his elect our sin—and brings us to faint—to be without strength—by reason of the famine.

Before all this, Joseph declared there would be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. So Pharaoh chose Joseph—wise and discreet, the Spirit of God dwelt in him and gave Joseph power over all the land of Egypt—to represent Pharaoh to the people—Joseph was thirty years old—Pharaoh announced to the world this one is our salvation.

God the Father chose Christ his Son in eternity. God entered covenant and gave Christ all power over all the world. When Christ came the Spirit was upon him without measure. God the Father sent Christ forth into this Egypt. Christ was thirty years old when he entered his public ministry. God announced to the world, “This is my Son, hear ye him.”

So Joseph went forth and purchased the fifth part of corn during the time of plenty. Joseph bought it from the people, using Pharaoh’s money. Joseph laid it up in storehouses against the day of famine. These storehouses were in the cities.

Christ paid his own blood and purchased Life for his people. He is our Life, our Living Bread. He is the Bread laid up in the cities—in heavenly Jerusalem from where Christ feeds his people and in his local churches through this gospel.

So when Joseph bought the corn from the people, they had plenty of corn and plenty of money—it was a very prosperous time for the people. During the time of plenty, they looked to their corn and their money. They heard the news that famine was coming but they did not look to Joseph—because they did not need bread—they were prospering without him. Then our text says the famine became very sore and the land fainted because of the famine.

Brethren, that is where Christ brings us. He makes us see our sin so that we have a dire need for Christ to save us. Remember Hosea and Gomer? Hosea said, “I will take away my corn, my oil, my wool and my flax. I will discover to her, her lewdness.”

TURNED FROM OUR MONEY

Not only does Christ reveal our sins, Christ also turns our affection from every false confidence to him. First, they had to be turned from looking to their their money—**Genesis 47: 14: And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh’s house.**

The famine became so bad, that they ran out of corn—they ran out of bread—they were starving to death. When it came between their money and their life—which one was more important? Then they willing to came to Joseph. Then they were willing to part with their money—that thing that was once their salvation—they laid it down. So in EXCHANGE for the money, Joseph gave them bread.

Brethren, look at this with spiritual eyes. Christ is our Bread from heaven—true life, eternal life, lasting life—salvation from all things. He will not allow anyone or anything else to compete for our affection. (do not look at this as a purchase but as an exchange—death for life)

One thing men think is salvation is money. When we don't have it, we think we are unsafe; when do, we think we are safe. We think money will set us high enough that we will escape the power of evil. But at best money is only a carnal, temporary salvation.

Habbakuk 2: 9: Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil!

It is impossible to serve God and mammon. It is impossible to look to attempt to deliver ourselves by our money and at the same time trust Christ the Bread to deliver us.

Matthew 6:24: No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

As long as we are coveting after money to save us then we are erring from Christ our eternal salvation. That is why God says:

1 Timothy 6: 10: For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith,...11: But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and...12...lay hold on eternal life,

But many saints have been wealthy men and used their money to further the gospel of Christ. Scripture often uses riches to speak of self-righteousness. It is probably because the two are the most common things sinners look to.

So from the beginning of conversion throughout the life of faith, Christ works all things in providence to make his child flee riches—literal money and self-righteous riches—and lay hold of Christ our *Eternal* Life—our *eternal* salvation—our *eternal* safety. Christ makes us exchange death for life.

TURNED FROM OUR CATTLE

So then their money ran out. Again, they came to Joseph. But they still had their cattle—so they have to be made to part with their cattle—**Genesis 47: 15: And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? for the money faileth.**

Money fails, self-righteousness fails and everything else fails—but Christ never fails—by God's drawing grace, believers are continually coming to Christ—why should we die in thy presence?

Genesis 47: 16: And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail. 17: And they brought their cattle unto Joseph: and Joseph gave them bread *in exchange* for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses: and he fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year.

Behind money, their cattle was their most prized possessions. That is us. Behind money, our stuff is what we prize: our cattle, our cars, our houses, our stuff! In vain religion it is professions, religious ceremonies, programs, so-called fruit—which is only dead fruit.

Isaiah 57:12: I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee.

So Christ—like Joseph—makes us willing to part with our cattle. But once again, Christ gives us something better—he gives us heavenly Bread. Salvation is...

Titus 3: 5: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6: Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

TURNED FROM US

So the cattle ran out. All they had left was their bodies and their land—**Genesis 47: 18: When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide *it* from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands:**

Now we come down to what we really trusted in all along—ourselves—our body, our land. So Christ turns us from us to him—and makes us willing to be his willing servants—**Genesis 47: 19: Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give *us* seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate.**

We need life in Christ, we need him to give us Seed—the incorruptible Seed—we need him to regenerate us and our brethren. And Christ did just that—he bought and he gave us the Living Bread.—**Genesis 47: 20: And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaoh's.**

Matthew 16: 25: For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. 26: For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Did you notice, each time they parted with their vain confidence—Joseph gave them bread. At last, they gave themselves to Joseph and he provided for them at his own expense—**Genesis 47: 21: And as for the people, he removed them to cities from *one* end of the borders of Egypt even to the *other* end thereof.**

Commentaries say he did this to prevent them from having sentimental attachment to their land so they would not rise up in rebellion. But look back to

Genesis 41: 48: And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same.

The country is where the famine hit the hardest. So Joseph moved them to the cities to the storehouses and fed them and he did it all at his expense. Christ moves us from all our vain confidences to him and puts us in his city—his church—where he feeds us the Bread from heaven.

Then the rule Christ brings us under is light and easy—**Genesis 47: 23: Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, *here is* seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. 24: And it shall come to pass in the increase, that ye shall give the fifth *part* unto**

Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones.

Christ bought us—he gives us seed and says “Sow the land”—preach my gospel. Christ says, “Glory in my Father”—in the increase give the fifth part—give glory to God. Christ says, “All this bread is yours.”

Matthew 11: 28: Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29: Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30: For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

Then Christ makes us praise and glory only Christ and God our Father—**Genesis 47: 25: And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh’s servants.**

NEVER THE LOSER

We never lose when Christ strips us of everything else but him—**Genesis 47: 22: Only the land of the priests bought he not; for the priests had a portion *assigned them* of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them: wherefore they sold not their lands.**

These were Egyptian priests—but every child of God is a priest unto God in Christ. Before the world began, God assigned our portion to us in Christ. So though Christ turns us from the carnal and brings us down in the flesh—in Christ we have our portion, even as we have had from eternity.

When the end comes, we will be in Christ where we were in the beginning—where we have always been since before the foundation of the world—in Christ our Goshen—**Genesis 47: 27: And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly.**

John 6: 35: And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. 36: But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. 37: All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 38: For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39: And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40: And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Amen!