

An Unplanned Reunion

Genesis 40-50

September 20, 2026

Please open your Bibles to Gen 39. If you were with us last week, you followed Joseph from the riches of being his father, Jacob's favorite with a multi-colored coat, to the rags of being stripped and sold by his brothers into slavery, back to riches as he ended up down in Egypt in charge of Potiphar's entire household which prospered under his leadership reminding us that sometimes businesses, schools, and other organizations are blessed by one employee living faithfully for Jesus. Will you be that one? Sadly, Joseph ended up going back to rags when Mrs. Potiphar accused him of attempted rape, but today, we're going to see him go back to riches and to an unplanned family reunion. Speaking of reunions, I recently attended one with my old limbo friends. We go back a long way. If the USSR got back together would it be called the Soviet Reunion?

When we last left Joseph, he was in an Egyptian jail where the king's prisoners were held. If you are able, stand as we read from Gen 39, Vs 21 the Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. 22 So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. 23 The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

Joseph has again found favor in the eyes of his superior and in this case he becomes head trustee. So while he was still in prison, he certainly had it much better than the others for the Lord was with him and gave him success in whatever he did. Just like with Potiphar. In chapter 40, we meet two of Joseph's fellow inmates. Pharaoh's baker and cupbearer both did something to upset the king and got thrown into jail. And while they're there, they each have a dream the same night. When they were in the palace, there were probably folks who could interpret dreams and they would have been in good shape. But since they're in prison, they don't have access to this service. But...Joseph says, "Hey, interpretations belong to the Lord. Let me hear about your dreams!"

So Carl the cupbearer tells him his dream and Joseph says it means he will be released and reinstated in his position as cupbearer within 3 days. Well, Bill the baker likes the sound of that so he tells him his dream. Only Bill's dream is not as rosy. Joseph says his dream means he will be executed in 3 days. BTW, Joseph tells the Carl, "When you're back in the palace, put in a good word and get me out of here!" Vs 23 The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him." Maybe on purpose. It

might be a bit dangerous to stand up for another prisoner, especially after what happened to Baker Bill.

Gen 41:1 When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream..." There's only a little bit of space Gen 40 and 41, but in that space 2 full years passed. 24 months. 730 days. A very long time to be imprisoned unjustly. But after those 2 additional years, Pharaoh has 2 dreams and he knows they mean something. Vs 8 In the morning his mind was troubled, so he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them for him." Now he's in a pickle. What do they mean? No one can help. Suddenly, now that it might benefit him to do so, cupbearer Carl conveniently remembers Joseph. "There was this guy in prison with me who had an uncanny knack with dreams." So they send for Joseph and vs 15 Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." 16 "I **cannot** do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "but **God** will give Pharaoh the answer he desires." Notice how Joseph keeps the focus on God. Gives the praise to God. If God has given you an ability, praise Him for it! Give Him the credit. We're nothing without Him!

Pharaoh tells him the dreams and Joseph tells him the meaning. There's going to be 7 good years followed by 7 bad years, 7 years of plenty, then 7 years of starvation. And oh, BTW, you'd be wise to store up in the good years to have in the bad. Pharaoh says, "You're right! And you're just the man for the job!" And Joseph goes back to riches again. So rich in fact, he becomes vice-pharaoh, second in command in all of Egypt, the most powerful nation on earth at the time. From the prison to the palace in one short step. Imagine if Joseph moped and in prison and tried to undermine his superiors. Imagine if he constantly complained and stirred up trouble. Do you think God would have promoted him? Do you think the warden or any of the others would have recommended him? Don't think so! What attitude do we have when we've been mistreated. I have to wonder though what Mrs. Potiphar thought when she read the headlines the next morning. Joseph appointed over all Egypt! I also wonder what all God reveals to national leaders to protect their people and if they always listen?

Thankfully Pharaoh did listen and Joseph goes to work storing up food, building storehouses, and store cities. Grain was plentiful so he could buy low. The years pass by, 1, 2, etc. 7. Then, just as God revealed to Pharaoh, the rain stopped. The climate changed and the crops failed. Starvation hit. No problem, Pharaoh's in great shape thanks to Joseph. In spite of the famine, the Egyptians have food and to spare. And so they sell high to other nations as well.

Gen 41:46 tells us Joseph is now 30, the same age Jesus was when He began His public ministry. How old was Joe when he got sold into slavery? 17. 13 years have passed, at least 2 of which, and probably several others, in prison. But at 30 Joseph is looking better than ever and he gets married and has two sons. Joseph has arrived. Wife,

family, career, wealth, respect, power. God has taken good care of Joseph in spite of how his brothers and others tried to take him down. Stay faithful to God, He will take care of you, too.

In Gen 42, the spotlight returns to Jacob. 1 “When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you just keep looking at each other?" Don't just stand there looking stupid, do something! And he tells them to go get food. Vs 3 Then ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt. 4 But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with the others, because he was afraid that harm might come to him.” Jacob is living in fear. In spite of God's blessings, in spite of God's promises.

So the 10 brothers go to Egypt to buy groceries and as soon as they walk in, Joseph knows exactly who they are. 13 years older, but still the same boys. Now because of his clothing, his haircut, his accent, and his position, perhaps, his brothers don't have a clue it's Joseph. Afterall, they thought he was long gone. But the tide has turned. Instead of **them** having all the power and Joseph having none, it's now just the opposite. He can take them out in a heartbeat and I can't imagine that thought didn't cross his mind. What would **you** do? What have you done? When you came into a position to get revenge over someone who hurt you, what did you do? What will you do if it comes around?

Gen 42:6 Now Joseph was the governor of the land, the one who sold grain to all its people. So when Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground. 7 As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them.” Vs 9 Then he remembered his dreams about them and said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see where our land is unprotected." They deny it but he persists to which they reply in vs 13, "Your servants were twelve brothers, the sons of one man, who lives in the land of Canaan. The youngest is now with our father, and one is no more."

What do you know? They haven't forgotten Joseph, who then puts them through a few tests. But first he puts all 10 in jail for 3 days just so they can get a taste. Then he brings them out, and Vs 21 They said to one another, "Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen; that's why this distress has come upon us." 22 Reuben replied, "Didn't I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn't listen! Now we must give an accounting for his blood." (I told you so!) 23 They did not realize that Joseph could understand them, since he was using an interpreter. 24 He turned away from them and began to weep... ”All those memories came flooding back. All the bullying and abuse, All the name-calling and the times around the supper table. All the memories of dad. Joseph had buried all of that. He didn't need his family anymore. Oh but he did. He regained his composure and Vs 24 ... then turned back and spoke to them again. He had

Simeon taken from them and bound before their eyes.” He’s going to keep one as a down payment to make sure they return. Why Simeon? The Bible doesn’t say. Perhaps it was his idea to do sell him. Perhaps he had treated Joseph the worst? But Joseph told them when they return to bring their little brother whom they told him about.

The other 9 get their grain and go home only to find their silver they paid returned in their sacks. They get back home and tell dad and he’s even more distraught because now he’s certain he’s lost another boy. And when they run out of food again, they have to return and take Benjamin with them. Only Jacob is dead set against it, confident he will lose #3. Why’d you even tell him you had another brother? What were you thinking? When they couldn’t take the hunger any longer, Vs 11 Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be, then do this: Put some of the best products of the land in your bags and take them down to the man as a gift — a little balm and a little honey, some spices and myrrh, some pistachio nuts and almonds. 12 Take double the amount of silver with you, for you must return the silver that was put back into the mouths of your sacks. Perhaps it was a mistake. 13 Take your brother also and go back to the man at once. 14 And may God Almighty grant you mercy before the man so that he will let your other brother and Benjamin come back with you. As for me, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved." Whatever will be will be.

So they make a second trip, this time with Benjamin. And when they arrive, they’re summoned to Joseph’s home. They’re scared to death thinking they will become slaves. But Joseph brings out Simeon and they all sit down for lunch. They still don’t know it’s him. Vs 30 Deeply moved at the sight of his brother (Ben), Joseph hurried out and looked for a place to weep. He went into his private room and wept there.” It’s the first time he’s seen his full brother in at least 22 years. And all that pent up emotion has finally found a way out. He gathers himself, comes out and has all his brothers seated in proper birth order and Benjamin gets a double helping of vittles. They’re amazed at all this but still don’t suspect a thing. Afterwards, Joseph’s helpers give them grain and send them off again only this time they put Joseph’s special cup in Benjamin’s bag.

But it’s another test. And they pass, for when they find it and bring it back and confess to having it. Joseph threatens to imprison Benjamin. But instead of selling him out like they did with Joseph, Judah offers to take his place, to be a substitute just as Judah’s Descendant would do 1800 years later taking our place on the cross. In addition, they’re finally concerned about how this sorrow would affect their dad. They’ve grown quite a bit.

Gen 45:1 Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. 2 And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it. 3 Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because

they were terrified at his presence.” They can’t believe it. They are scared witless. How could this be? But it is! Vs 4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! 5 And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.

Say praise God! Instead of torturing them, instead of dumping shame on them, instead of paying them back double, he forgives. And declares that God has been able to work through all of this to save their lives and many thousands, perhaps millions of others. Vs 14 Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. 15 And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.” Imagine that reunion. For the first time in their lives, the 12 of them had a decent conversation. Why? They had confessed and repented; he had forgiven, and God brought healing. A good formula.

Orders are given and carts are sent to bring dad, their wives and children to Egypt to ride out the famine. Imagine how Jacob felt when his boys got back and told him little Joe was not only still alive, but a ruler over all Egypt! He can’t believe it, either. Remember, he’s still believing the lie the boys told him about the bloody coat. They finally had to come clean. The truth always comes out. When it finally sinks in, God gives Jacob another dream and assures him this it’s OK to go to Egypt and in vs 46:29 Joseph had his chariot made ready and went to Goshen to meet his father Israel. As soon as Joseph appeared before him, he threw his arms around his father and wept for a long time. (Joseph’s not afraid to weep. Another similarity to Jesus. Joseph weeps 7 times in this story. Don’t tell me real men don’t cry.) Vs 30 Israel said to Joseph, "Now I am ready to die, since I have seen for myself that you are still alive."

So Jacob and all his sons and their families move to Goshen in Egypt and settle in for a while. In the next few chapters, Jacob blesses each of his sons before he dies at the end of chapter 49, having given orders to have his bones carried back to Canaan to the cave where his parents and grandparents were buried.

Praise God for reconciliation! For re-union- actually a real union. Praise God for healing! This family reconciliation is a true trophy to God’s work! What about our families? Like Joseph’s family, torn by envy, jealousy, bullying long ago or recent. Inheritance squabbles. Follow Joseph’s example! Put another trophy on God’s shelf! Forgive, love, show mercy, receive forgiveness.

But there’s one other scene in this play. Gen 50:15 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?" 16 So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died: 17 'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you

so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father." When their message came to him, Joseph wept. 18 His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said. 19 But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? 20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. 21 So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

They can't believe this mercy. They can't believe grace, forgiveness, second chances, new starts. They even offer to be his slaves! This hurts Joseph so bad he weeps again. "You still don't get it, my brothers. You still don't understand. When I said I forgive you, I meant it! Am I in the place of God?" Vengeance is mine says the Lord I will repay. We don't have to. Joseph knew that, do you?

And then one of the most amazing verses in all the Bible, Vs 20, "you intended to harm me, but God intended it for good." In spite of their hatred, in spite of their jealousy, envy, greed, and all the rest, God was still able to use even their sin to accomplish His will. Could God have done it if they hadn't sinned? Of course! It's never His will that we sin. But even this did not prevent God from working His grand plan to save them and us. John MacArthur says this is the classic statement of God's sovereignty over the affairs of men.

And the same is true with Jesus. His Jewish brothers rejected Him and sold Him out. They meant to harm Him but God meant it for good! This same Jesus whom they crucified, God raised up as both Savior and Lord. Not for them only, but for all of us, for all mankind. And instead of being vengeful and bitter, He freely forgives in spite of the sins we have done. Like Joseph's brothers, we can't believe it. We can't accept it. Grace is too good to be true! But as we remain in our disbelief that someone could love us that much, He weeps desperately wanting to hold us and care for us. The One who is in the place of God to wreak havoc and destruction on us for our sin, instead gives us grace, mercy, forgiveness, and love. If you never have, do what Joseph's brothers had to do, receive it freely today.