

Genesis (2011) 41C

- Joseph has officially become “the man”
 - He is second in command in all Egypt
 - This makes him the second in command of all the world, essentially
 - Though Pharaoh is technically more powerful than Joseph, the Pharaoh has delegated all day-to-day power to Joseph
 - Nothing can happen in Egypt without Joseph’s approval
 - The Pharaoh has reduced himself to the role of figure head monarch for the sake of Joseph
 - This is a remarkable to power for a man who spent the last thirteen years in prison and in slavery
 - We also noted how this rise to power is a wonderful picture of Jesus, ruling under the authority of the Father

Psa. 8:4 What is man that You take thought of him,
And the son of man that You care for him?

Psa. 8:5 Yet You have made him a little lower than God,
And You crown him with glory and majesty!

Psa. 8:6 You make him to rule over the works of Your hands;
You have put all things under his feet,

- Psalm 8 reminds us of the dominion of rule God gave to Adam originally
- And it alludes to the rule the Father assigns to the Son as the New Adam
- Joseph’s rise to world power is a result of God’s promise to deliver Joseph the birthright
 - And when God makes a promise, He delivers
 - The birthright holder is entitled to a double portion of the family inheritance, which has yet to be given to Joseph

- But he is also entitled to become the ruler over Jacob's sons, to become the new patriarch
 - And according to the dreams God gave Joseph, his power to rule would extend over not only his brothers but even over his father
 - And now we see how the Lord intends to accomplish that plan
 - Joseph has reached a point of power in which he can command anyone to bow to him
- While Joseph has become a powerful ruler, he has also become a husband to a member of the royal household
 - So Joseph is officially an Egyptian citizen
 - And this will be his home until he dies
 - And this will be where he raises his family

[Gen. 41:47](#) During the seven years of plenty the land brought forth abundantly.

[Gen. 41:48](#) So he gathered all the food of these seven years which occurred in the land of Egypt and placed the food in the cities; he placed in every city the food from its own surrounding fields.

[Gen. 41:49](#) Thus Joseph stored up grain in great abundance like the sand of the sea, until he stopped measuring it, for it was beyond measure.

- So immediately Joseph begins to enact the plan he described to Pharaoh
 - And we can assume what Joseph did during those seven years using the skills he obtained in the years of his captivity in Egypt
 - Joseph would have spent his time organizing and preparing for the storage of the grain
 - He institutes a system for taxing at the 20% and collecting the grain and storing it
 - He formed armies of men to build the store houses, collect the tax, and guard the storage
 - The seven years of plenty are so abundantly fruitful that Egypt has lost track of it all
 - It was like the sea of the sand

- It's important to remember *why* this abundance has come upon Egypt
- The purpose was to prepare Egypt and the world for the coming famine
 - Without this abundance, the famine that followed would be enough to wipe out Egypt and many other nations
 - So this provision was a means of protecting Egypt in the future
- But that answer just begs a larger question of why create the famine at all?
 - Why does God bother to produce the famine if He was willing to bring this excess to compensate for the coming lack?
 - It's like asking someone to dig a hole in the ground so they can turn around and fill it back up
 - The answer is centered on God's work in Israel
 - The Lord is working a plan - through Joseph - to bring pressure upon Jacob and his sons
 - And by that pressure, the family of Israel will be forced to enter into Egypt, just as the Lord promised Abraham
 - Furthermore, by these circumstances, Jacob's family will be reconciled to Joseph
 - We're going to continue watching this story closely
- While Joseph is building up the storehouses of Egypt, he is also starting a family

[Gen. 41:50](#) Now before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara priest of On, bore to him.

[Gen. 41:51](#) Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh, "For," he said, "God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household."

[Gen. 41:52](#) He named the second Ephraim, "For," he said, "God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."

- Joseph's wife bears two sons for Joseph
 - The first son is called Manasseh

- It is a Hebrew name that means forgetting
- Joseph declares that the Lord has made all His suffering to be forgotten
- Furthermore, Joseph says he has forgotten his father's household
 - This would explain why Joseph hasn't taken an opportunity to seek out Jacob and his brothers
 - Now that he has reached this place of power, you might expect Joseph to at least be curious of his family back in Israel
 - In fact, lesser men would have sought revenge for what was done to him by his brothers
- But Joseph is content to let it go, to forgive the slight against him
 - And that's the sense of "forget" here
 - Joseph has let go, forgiven, and released the hurt
 - And the kindness of God has led Joseph to this point
- Here is yet another picture of Christ's ministry found in the life of Joseph
 - Our salvation in Christ is the product of God's forgetfulness concerning our sins
 - As the Lord said to Israel through Isaiah:

[Is. 43:24](#) "You have bought Me not sweet cane with money,
Nor have you filled Me with the fat of your sacrifices;
Rather you have burdened Me with your sins,
You have wearied Me with your iniquities.

[Is. 43:25](#) "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake,
And I will not remember your sins.

- And through the Psalmist

[Psa. 103:8](#) The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.

[Psa. 103:9](#) He will not always strive with us,
Nor will He keep His anger forever.

[Psa. 103:10](#) He has not dealt with us according to our sins,
Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

[Psa. 103:11](#) For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him.

[Psa. 103:12](#) As far as the east is from the west,
So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

[Psa. 103:13](#) Just as a father has compassion on his children,
So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.

- The Lord's kindness to forget our sins brings about our reconciliation with Him, through the sacrifice of His Son
- As Jesus bore the guilt of our sins, we no longer need to bear it ourselves
- But what is our obligation to the Lord in response to His willingness to forgive us unconditionally?

[Matt. 5:43](#) "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.'

[Matt. 5:44](#) "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,
[Matt. 5:45](#) so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

[Matt. 5:46](#) "For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

[Matt. 5:47](#) "If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

[Matt. 5:48](#) "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

- The expectation the Lord places on all His children is that we imitate His perfection in forgiving others who offend us
 - Joseph had much to hold against his family
 - Can we say that anyone has injured us as much as Joseph's family injured him?
 - I guess it's possible, but I doubt it's common

- Nevertheless, Joseph was able to say honestly that the Lord's kindness in his life allowed him to forget his family's sins
 - In this way, Joseph becomes both a picture of Christ's forgetting of our sins and a model for how we are to live as Christians
- Can you honestly say you have set the offenses of others against you?
 - A Christian is called to be forgiven to others according to the same manner in which we received the Father's forgiveness
 - The Bible commands us to constantly reflect on how much sin we have so that we can remain mindful of how much forgiveness we have received
 - And then reflecting on how much we have done wrong and how much mercy we have received, then we will be in the right state of mind and heart to forgive others
 - As Jesus taught

Luke 7:47 "For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little."

- When a Christian lives with a judgmental attitude or a heart that struggles to forgive and forget, it means that the person has lost sight of how much Christ had to forgive them
 - Lack of forgiveness is almost always associated with self-righteousness
 - We think ourselves better than we are, which then allows us to feel justified in holding other people's offenses against them
 - Jesus says that those who have been forgiven little will love little
 - His point is not that some people have less sin to be forgiven
 - His point is that when someone thinks they have less sin to be covered, then they begin to feel superior to others
 - And that exaggerated view of self inevitably leads to a judgmental attitude and a failure to forgive
 - And if there was ever a person who might have said they had a right to withhold forgiveness, it was Joseph

- Yet he let it go easily
- Which is a beautiful picture of Christ
 - Because Christ was sinless
 - Yet He was terribly mistreated
 - And yet He forgives those who persecuted Him
- Are you one of those who say I can forgive but I can never forget?
 - If we will be honest with ourselves, then we will admit that such a statement is merely an excuse for not forgiving
 - Remember, the Bible uses forget to mean forgive, as we can see in Joseph's case
 - So if you are not willing to forgive in the way God does - by forgetting the injury - then you are not imitating the Father
 - We are called to let go of other's offenses against us, to put them in our past
 - To separate them as far as the east from the west
 - East and west never meet on the globe
 - North and South do, but not East and West
- What permitted Joseph to release these sins against him?
 - His understanding of God's sovereignty
 - Joseph has recognizes that whatever injury came upon him by the hands of his brothers was something God intended
 - So how could Joseph hold it against his brothers?
 - We learn this later in the story when Joseph confronts his brothers and declares:

[Gen. 50:19](#) But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place?

[Gen. 50:20](#) "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

- Have you ever stopped to consider that the injuries you've suffered at the hands of other people were injuries God Himself inflicted through that person's sin?
 - That God had some good purpose in mind for you, and He worked through the sin of others to build you up?
 - The sin of Joseph's brothers became a vehicle to build up Joseph and prepare him to rule the world
 - So whose to say how the Lord was working to build you and me through the sin of others?
 - Trial and persecution are some of God's most powerful tools, and as He wields them in love, He can accomplish much
- Turning to the second son, Joseph names him Ephraim
 - Ephraim's name means "doubly fruitful"
 - Joseph's forgiving attitude was also made possible by a recognition that the Lord was more than making up for what Joseph's brother took from him
 - Joseph has been restored well beyond what he lost, and so he has been made content to forget the past
 - Here is another picture of God's work in Christ
 - When we have endured like Christ and suffered in justice for no fault of our own, then we can expect a reward scripture says

[Luke 6:35](#) "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.

- So our willingness to forgive and forget the sins of others is modeled after the experience of Christ, which is pictured in the story of Joseph
 - We forgive because the Father has already forgive us far more than He is asking us to forgive
 - And we are called to be perfect as His is perfect
 - And we rejoice despite the injuries we receive from others because we know the Lord will reward us in Heaven for our patience and forgiving attitude

- But by that same token, if we harbor resentment and fail to forgive others, then we are only injuring ourselves
 - We are losing reward, according to scripture
 - And we are failing to live up to the standard the Lord established for us
 - And we are overlooking the Lord's sovereignty in life to use all things for our good, even the sin of others
- In fact, if we struggle with forgiving others, wouldn't it make sense to expect the Lord to bring even more injuries and offenses upon us?
 - Just so that we might have plenty of opportunities to practicing how to forgive?
 - Because that's how we learn
- So after the times of plenty, the famine sets in

[Gen. 41:53](#) When the seven years of plenty which had been in the land of Egypt came to an end,

[Gen. 41:54](#) and the seven years of famine began to come, just as Joseph had said, then there was famine in all the lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

[Gen. 41:55](#) So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried out to Pharaoh for bread; and Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, you shall do."

[Gen. 41:56](#) When the famine was spread over all the face of the earth, then Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians; and the famine was severe in the land of Egypt.

[Gen. 41:57](#) The people of all the earth came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the earth.

- Right on cure the famine the Lord promised appears, and it is very severe
 - Egypt has long been a source of relief in times of famine, due to the reliability of the Nile river flooding
 - That flooding pattern permitted the Egyptians to plant and harvest even in times without regular rain
 - So other nations would flock to Egypt in times of drought

- But this famine is different
 - Even Egypt is affected just as the dream predicted
 - The only reason Egypt is able to have bread is because of Joseph's storage of grain
 - And at a point when the people's own provision ran out, they came to Pharaoh begging for help
 - But the Pharaoh wisely pointed the people to Joseph
 - Since he had trusted Joseph to prepare properly during the times of plenty, he is also content to allow Joseph to rule over the times of want
- And so Joseph implemented the second half of the plan
 - He begins to open the storehouses and sell Egypt's stock to the people of Egypt
 - And eventually, people from the other nations also begin to flock to Egypt and to Joseph seeking bread
 - And Joseph sells to them as well
- Here's another piece of evidence of God's sovereignty bringing difficulty upon the world when it suits His good purposes
 - Undoubtedly, there was great suffering in the land
 - We can probably assume some people died of this famine
 - And it's severity forced people to make radical steps to find food, including going into Egypt
 - Does your understanding of God and His ways leave room for this kind of work?
 - Have you considered God's words in Isaiah?

**[Is. 45:6](#) That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun
That there is no one besides Me.
I am the LORD, and there is no other,**
**[Is. 45:7](#) The One forming light and creating darkness,
Causing well-being and creating calamity;
I am the LORD who does all these.**

- God is working to produce a good outcome for His people in Israel, and this outcome will depend on bringing trial and tribulation upon the earth
 - We'll look at this purpose again later in our study of Joseph
- Meantime, do you see a remarkable picture of Christ forming in this scenario?
 - Joseph pictures Christ's power to draw the nations of the world to Himself
 - We're told that all Egypt and all the world begin to stream to Pharaoh for bread, bread to sustain their very lives
 - But what does the Pharaoh say?
 - If you want bread to save your life, you need to come to Joseph
 - I have appointed Joseph as the one to give you bread
 - You must go through him to find your bread
 - So because of the famine God has brought upon the world, the world is compelled to seek for a solution, one that can only be found in Joseph

[John 6:27](#) "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal."

[John 6:28](#) Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?"

[John 6:29](#) Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

[John 6:30](#) So they said to Him, "What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform?"

[John 6:31](#) "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'HE GAVE THEM BREAD OUT OF HEAVEN TO EAT.'"

[John 6:32](#) Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven.

[John 6:33](#) "For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world."

- Joseph pictures Christ in offering the bread of life to the world
 - And the Lord is willing to bring great stress and trial upon the world if necessary to bring the world to Christ
 - He is doing that here in the form of famine and through the picture provided in Joseph
 - But He did it spiritually through the provision of His Son, Jesus, the Bread of life
 - And individually, the Lord will bring trial to individuals as He determines so that those trials leaves us seeking for Christ
 - When calamity brings a man to eternal life, how can we judge the Lord's methods?
 - Who are we to say that a famine or earthquake or war was unjustified if it became the tool God used to bring faith and save a life for eternity?
- This is the work God is doing in Israel
 - And in coming weeks we will see an even more remarkable picture forming of a future work God intends to do in Israel
 - As Joseph draws his family back to himself and reveals himself to them, we will learn God's plan to draw Israel back to Himself
 - And we will see a beautiful picture of the end times