

"Go to Joseph"

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Joseph is a most beautiful and complete type of the Lord Jesus in the days of His humiliation and in the days of His exaltation. The day is not come yet when God will compel men to give Jesus as due; because God has, what Pharaoh had not, long patience, and the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation.

Joseph, you will remember, went out in the guilelessness and love of his heart to meet his brethren (Gen. 37). They plotted against him to slay him, and at length he was sold to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver, the price of the meanest slave. And I need not remind you of Another, who came from His Father's house to see how His brethren fared, and met with precisely the same treatment — "His own received Him not" — and at length for thirty pieces of silver He was betrayed, and sold, and then cast out of this world; not into a dungeon, but into a grave.

It is true loving hands took Him down from the cross, and placed Him in a sepulchre; but wicked hands sealed Him there, and the world hoped never to see Him again; "but God raised Him from the dead." The One whom men slew God raised up.

He came in all the love of His heart; but man had no love for Him. I ask you, my reader, Have you any love in your heart for Him? - Does He look in and see in your heart affection for Him. self? If not, do not you be the one to judge those who cast Him out in the day of His lowliness and humiliation.

As Pharaoh placed Joseph by his own side in his day, and they cried "Bow the knee" before him (Gen. 41: 40.43), so God has placed Jesus at His right hand today, and commands men everywhere to bow to Him. Every knee shall bow to Jesus; but God would have you bow your knee — and more, bow your heart — to Jesus now. Have you gone down in His presence, delighted to own His value now, delighted to call Him Lord? If not, the sooner you do, the better will it be for you.

The humiliation of Jesus gave Him a moral claim on God for exaltation, and He has exalted Him, and "given Him a name which is above every name." There is no name like the name of Jesus. God has declared that all shall own Him Lord — angels, men, and demons — and you may be sure all includes you. The demons never owned Him Lord when He was on earth, but the day will come when God will compel them to own Him Lord. And for you, my reader, when is to be your day of owning Him Lord? now, when He is waiting on you in long-suffering grace, or in the day of His power, when you must bow? "Bow the knee" is God's word to you now.

Doubtless to many a proud Egyptian noble there was great humiliation in having to bow to this Hebrew servant; but the day of famine came, and neither their pride nor their parentage would meet the pangs of famine. Then they cried to Pharaoh and Pharaoh's word was, "Go to

Joseph." And many a soul in trouble cries to God. What is God's answer, as it were? "Go to Jesus." Have you, my reader, the sense of soul hunger? God's word is, "Go to Jesus." Do you say, I know what soul hunger is; I would like to be saved, if I knew how to go to Jesus? Look and see, in this interesting narrative, how they came to Joseph.

He was, according to the meaning of his name Zaphnath-Paaneah, "a revealer of secrets," and "the saviour of the age." And is not this what Jesus is?

Look at Him in the fourth of John, when that poor woman meets Him at the well. Does He not show Himself to her as the revealer of secrets, when He said to her, "Thou hast had five husbands"? Ah! Christ knows all about you; Christ knows every sin, and for those who believe in Him, He has pardoned every one. Knowing all about us, He loved us; and loving us, He came down to save us.

When the woman found He knew all about her, does she fly? No, she stays and talks with Him, and one moment she is a convicted sinner, and the next Christ reveals Himself to her, and she leaves her water pot and goes into the city, and says, "Come, see a Man which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" Instead of being afraid of Him, she calls to all to come and know Him too; and they come and find He is not only the Revealer of Secrets, but the Saviour of the age — the true Joseph.

Let us look at how Joseph received his brethren when they came to him in their need.

"Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt; get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die. And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt" (Gen. 42: 1-3). They heard that there was corn in Egypt. They heard that there was deliverance to be had if they could only get it, and they were perishing. They heard there was salvation, and they felt their need, and felt they would like to be saved, but they could not get salvation without going to the saviour. They could not get deliverance apart from the deliverer; they could not get food in their hunger save from Joseph — Joseph the despised one, the one they had hated, the one they had cast out and sold, but the one whom God had raised up to have every resource in his power, and every thing that could meet their need.

And you, my reader, do you feel you are in need of salvation? Have you heard of a deliverance which you would like to be yours? Is your soul hungry, and have you heard of "bread enough and to spare"? Have you heard of salvation that others have known, and would you know it too? Then you must come into living contact with the *Saviour*. It is from the Saviour only you can get salvation. Jesus is that Saviour, and He waits and longs to save you.

Joseph's brethren are in need now, and they come to Joseph; and you must do just the same — come to Jesus.

"And Joseph was the governor over the land, and *he it was that sold to all the people of the land*; and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth" (ver. 6).

They come and bow themselves down to Joseph; and it is a blessed thing when you are compelled, even by your need, to bow to Jesus, for He is the only One who can meet that need.

"And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food. And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. . . . And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies. Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. . . . And he put them all together into ward three days" (vv. 7-17).

His brethren did not know Joseph, but he knew them. He spake roughly to them. They thought he was a hard man. Do you think Christ is an "austere Man"? He will tell you what you are; tell you that you are a sinner full of enmity to God, that there is no good thing in you. People do not like that. They do not like to be shown what is in their hearts.

Joseph deals with his brethren as God does with the sinner, for God must get at our consciences, and must make us feel and know what we have been and are. So Joseph's dealings with his brethren arouse conscience, for they say, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us" (ver. 21).

It is a wonderful thing when the soul is brought to this point, to own itself a guilty sinner before God. God must have reality. Have you, my reader, ever seen yourself thus in the light of God's presence? Has your conscience ever been awakened to cry, I am undone; I am verily guilty?

"And Joseph turned himself about from them and wept." And did not Another greater than Joseph weep over guilty Jerusalem; and not only weep, but shed His precious blood because of the love of His heart to guilty man?

"Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack" (ver. 25). What is the lesson of the money in the sack? That if you are to get salvation, you cannot buy it. You are too poor to buy it, and God is too rich to sell it. Salvation must be God's free gift, and you must have it as a gift, or not have it at all.

Joseph's brethren come back, and tell their father all that Joseph had said; and Jacob refuses to let Benjamin go down with them, for he says, "His brother is dead, and he is left alone; if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave."

But the famine increases. Their need increases; food they must have or die. Judah offers to be surety for his brother, and Jacob is constrained to let the lad go; but he says, "Do this: take of

the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present. . . . 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. Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man: and God Almighty give you mercy before the man" (Gen. 43: 11-14).

This is man's way of getting salvation. People think they are going to be saved by propitiating God. They will work and give alms, and what not. But it will not do. No money will buy salvation, and God does not want appeasing. He is *waiting* to be gracious, waiting for the moment when He can display what is in His heart, which is only love.

Joseph's brethren came down again to him, and when he saw Benjamin he gave commandment that they should be brought into his house. "And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house." Yes, the soul wakes up to learn it is guilty, and then it fears the presence of God. But Joseph spake comfortably to them to win their hearts, and they sat at meat with him. "And the men marvelled one at another. And he took and sent messes unto them from before him; but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him."

Then in Genesis 44 they have to confess their sins. Judah says, "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants" (ver. 16). This is the point God would bring us to. Not only conscience making us see our state, but also there is the *owning* of that state. "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." So said David in Psalm 32, and so must every soul that really turns to God.

In Genesis 45 the wonderful climax is reached. Joseph reveals himself to them. "I am Joseph." The Joseph they had sold as a slave stood before them as a ruler over all the land, but meeting them in all the grace of his heart. He caused every one else to go out, and the guilty were left alone in the presence of the saviour. What a lovely picture of divine grace follows: "And Joseph said unto his brethren, *Come near to me, I pray you.* And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt" (Gen. 45: 4).

When the work in the conscience is done, then the Lord can come near and reveal Himself. He never comes and reveals Himself till the sinner takes his true place — is angry with himself.

"Be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither," he says: "for God did send me before you to preserve life." You have been guilty, Joseph says, but God had a purpose in it.

And man was guilty of nailing the Saviour to the cross: but God had His own thoughts, His own meaning in it all, and that very death, on the cross, of the Saviour, becomes the basis and groundwork, through atonement, of the great deliverance Christ accomplishes for the sinner; salvation for him is the fruit of the sufferings of the Saviour there.

But after all this display of the heart of Joseph to his brethren, and after seventeen years of caring for them, and giving them the best of everything, and rewarding them only love for their hatred, the last chapter of Genesis shows they still did not fully know Joseph.

"When Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph *wept when they spake unto him*" (Gen. 50: 15-17).

All this is like some doubting, fearing, unhappy Christians, who tell me they believe on the Lord, and yet they have not peace. They are full of fears; they are not sure He has received them and forgiven them: they do not know His heart; and another thing, they have never had all out with Him. Have no reserves, my reader. Have it all out with Jesus, and do not you be the one to make our Joseph weep; for the heart of the Lord Jesus feels today your lack of trust in Him, after all He has done for you, all the kindness and the love He has shown to you. Wound not then His loving heart by any lack of confidence in Him.

"And Joseph said unto them, Fear not." That is just the way the Lord Jesus loves to comfort the soul. To get the confidence of the heart, He says to the trembling one, "Fear not: I am Jesus."

Joseph says again, "Fear ye not: I will nourish you and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them."

And that is what Jesus says; for we are not only sheltered by His blood, but saved by His life. He will nourish and care for each me all the way along. Oh, my reader, believe Him simply, and never wound His heart again by one single doubt.

"JACOB'S WELL WAS THERE"

SWEET was the hour, O Lord, to Thee

At Sychar's lonely well,

When a poor outcast heard Thee there

Thy great salvation tell.

Thither she came; but, oh! her heart,

All filled with earthly care,

Dreamed not of Thee, nor thought to find

The hope of Israel there.

Lord! 'twas Thy power unseen that drew
The stray one to that place,
In solitude to learn from Thee
The secrets of Thy grace.
There Jacob's erring daughter found
Those streams unknown before,
The water-brooks of life, that make
The weary thirst no more.
And, Lord, to us, as vile as she,
Thy gracious lips have told
That mystery of love revealed
At Jacob's well of old.
In spirit, Lord, we've sat with Thee
Beside the springing well
Of life and peace, and heard Thee there.
Its healing virtues tell.
Dead to the world, we dream no more
Of earthly pleasures now;
Our deep, divine, unfailing spring
Of grace and glory Thou!
No hope of rest in aught beside,
No beauty, Lord, we see;
And, like Samaria's daughter, seek,

And find our all in Thee.