

Genesis 47:13-27

Brown Community Group

9-29-19

Today's passage is about Joseph, as second in command in Egypt, under Pharaoh, selling food to the people. On its face, not really an inspirational passage. It really is just about selling food to the hungry.

When I first read this chapter, I took it to the next office, to my Lutheran friend, our marketing guy and we had a big laugh-what could be possibly be taught from this passage, that is worth teaching? As our laughter faded, he paused and said, "Now, help me remember, which part of scripture is profitable for instruction, reproof and correction . . .?"

To which I replied, "All scripture", and our snickering, chortling and guffaws disappeared, realizing that there must be something here, something worthwhile, if we only pause to look.

Obscure, boring, seemingly empty sections of scripture. Sparkling jewels, nuggets of gold can be found, buried in them when we pause long enough to look into the crevices, in the shadows.

The most precious jewels and minerals, diamonds and gold are rarely found lying there on the surface of the ground.

Before we go too far with this analogy, in scripture, the most valuable, most important treasures are not only obvious on the surface, but they are shouting at us, boldly grabbing our minds, authoritatively answering our deepest yearnings and needs, if we will only submit to our loving God, our Savior.

But back to the little picture, this little adventure, if we travel too fast, only glancing at the landscape as we skip along the rough terrain, we could easily miss the little that God has scattered throughout His eternally deep and



glistening treasures of truth
multifaceted word.

For two weeks, Nancy and I have been riding around England, Scotland and Ireland with our daughter, son-in-law and her kids. Nothing is more fun to a child, (or an adult, IMHO) than to scamper about the ruins of an old abandoned castle (for if it isn't abandoned, there are limits on how wildly you can jump through windows and how loudly you can scare your siblings as you jump out of an alcove as they are sneaking by.) As we investigated these old ruins, many hundreds of years old, we had fun trying to figure out why they did different things, why they built them this way, what this room was for, where were their bathrooms. (BTW the castle at Bunratty had the most ensuite bathrooms of any castle we explored, nearly one for every room for the castle family.) It was exciting to find the little hidey-holes, nooks and crannies, (our grand-daughter found the hinge pivot, imbedded in the ground, for an old huge door, and an embedded print of a seashell in the door jamb, where they used to stick seashells to ward off evil spirits. You had to look very closely to see this fine little imprint) Yes, the main purpose of a castle is to defend the family and their property from invaders, but it is also fun to find out all the little particulars about how the castle worked in everyday life. And it's also fun to jump out of windows into the soft green grass.



Gems in Scripture- One of my and Nancy's favorite little truth jewels is found imbedded in the verses of 2 Chronicles, Lots of history, wars, - you know-- Chroncles!

The setting- Asa is vastly outnumbered by an army of one million warriors and three hundred chariots. He only had three hundred thousand warriors, less than a third!

¹¹ Then Asa called to the LORD his God and said, "LORD, there is no one besides You to help *in the battle* between the powerful and those who have no strength; so help us, O LORD our God, for we trust in You, and in Your name have come against this multitude. (found in 2 Chronicles 14-15)

God routed their enemy and Asa won a huge victory, due to his faith in God. Then, later, something almost unbelievable happened. In a short paragraph, it tells of Asa's death and why he died.

¹² In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa became diseased in his feet. His disease was severe, yet even in his disease *he did not seek the LORD,* but the physicians. ¹³ So Asa slept with his fathers, ^[h]having died in the forty-first year of his reign.



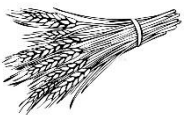
That's just one example of a little gem buried in a seemingly boring historical account. Nancy and I use this little story as an example of how we, today always need to be willing to turn to God for even the smallest things, not just when we have a million warrior problems attacking us with 300 vicious problem chariots. I have actually found myself thinking, I hope my foot gets better, and then remembered Asa's story, and prayed, "Lord please help my foot heal!" (feel free to insert backpain, headache or hangnail) God wants us to turn to him for everything! It won't stress or overwork Him.

Truly this is a wonderful principle to learn. I can think of no other passage in the Bible that teaches this so clearly, urgently and vividly. Asa, formerly a giant of faith and spiritual victory, died because he would not ask God to heal his feet. Certainly, we will all die someday, but why hasten the day, simply because we refuse to turn to God for help in a small matter.

There is more about Asa and his life, and for that matter, the rest of the kings. Perhaps someday we will study them.

Back to our story today about Joseph selling food. Let's see what precious bangles we can find here.

¹³ Now there was no food in all the land, because the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine. ¹⁴ Joseph gathered all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan for the grain which they bought, and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. ¹⁵ When the money was all spent in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us food, for why should we die in your presence? For *our* money is



gone.”¹⁶ Then Joseph said, “Give up your livestock, and I will give you *food* for your livestock, since *your* money is gone.”¹⁷ So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses and the flocks and the herds and the donkeys; and he fed them with food in exchange for all their livestock that year.¹⁸ When that year was ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, “We will not hide from my lord that our money is all spent, and the cattle are my lord’s. There is nothing left for my lord except our bodies and our lands.¹⁹ Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for food, and we and our land will be slaves to Pharaoh. So give us seed, that we may live and not die, and that the land may not be desolate.”



²⁰ So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for every Egyptian sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. Thus the land became Pharaoh’s.²¹ As for the people, he removed them to the cities from one end of Egypt’s border to the other.²² Only the land of the priests he did not buy, for the priests had an allotment from Pharaoh, and they lived off the allotment which Pharaoh gave them. Therefore, they did not sell their land.²³ Then Joseph said to the people, “Behold, I have today bought you and your land for Pharaoh; now, *here* is seed for you, and you may sow the land.²⁴ At the harvest you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four-fifths shall be your own for seed of the field and for your food and for those of your households and as food for your little ones.”²⁵ So they said, “You have saved our lives! Let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh’s slaves.”²⁶ Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt *valid* to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; only the land of the priests did not become Pharaoh’s.

²⁷ Now Israel lived in the land of Egypt, in Goshen, and they acquired property in it and were fruitful and became very numerous.



Now perhaps you can see my initial dilemma, seeking some sort of moral or spiritual lesson here.

What can we learn from this passage?

- 1- Joseph was compassionate and truly tried to help the hungry people.
- 2- Joseph did not abuse their predicament, they were thankful for his response and help.
- 3- Joseph was a good steward of his boss’, the Pharaoh’s money and goods.

- 4- Joseph did not get proud, puffed up and “lord-it-over” these hungry masses.
- 5- Joseph did not allow his heart to become bitter at God or people, unforgiving to the world.
- 6- Joseph did not insist that people acknowledge that he had been right all along, “I told you so!”
- 7- Joseph had proved his faith in God by acting on the dreams interpretations that God had given him. He saved lots of food, even when there were undoubtedly scoffers and unbelievers who thought that he was just making it all up and doing all this for his own glory. Similar to Noah building the ark. Seven years is a long time, waiting for it to become a famine.
- 8- Think of the multitudes of people who were blessed by Joseph’s testimony while a captive in Egypt. Like Paul in prison, Joseph had a captive audience of all his co-prisoners, attendants, guards, servants, etc.
- 9- God’s wonderful plan is best demonstrated in the mundane of the everyday. Joseph did the everyday, the mundane, the virtuous, the right things. As a result, millions were led and their futures secured by his actions. He didn’t know how the ripples of his simple faith in God would shake the entire world of people and their futures.
- 10- Any other lessons you see?
- 11- Joseph did not plan all this for his life. He probably just planned on being the best shepherd, enjoying the gentle desert breezes with a beautiful wife sitting outside their tent, with their children all asleep on their bedrolls. What actually happened was not Joseph’s plan. But Joseph saw his life and its circumstances through God’s eyes. He knew that God was in control.

Do you ever find yourself in a situation that is just not what you planned? You would never have planned this for yourself! We need to be willing to turn to God and thank Him for how He has orchestrated our life and brought us to where we are, knowing that He has our best interests in mind. He loves you!

Now, we are going to take a minute for each of us to pray and ask God to help us see our life and our situation through His eyes, knowing that He is in control and that He loves us.