

## **Old Testament Sermon Outline No: 3**

### **Subject: Forgiveness in Adversity**

**Textual context: Genesis 32-50**

#### **Introduction**

Joseph dominates the last part of the Book of Genesis. His life teaches so many lessons for us today particularly of how to face trials and the use of forgiveness.

He was born his father's favourite son. Was spoilt and this incurred the envy of his brothers.

He heard from God in a vision and foolishly shared it with his family. He was further ostracised and eventually sold by his brothers into slavery. His life from there on is a great lesson for all of us.

#### **1. Behaviour while in slavery.**

Joseph was sold to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.

God was already preparing Joseph for his future life. Unknown to him this position of slave would bring him into contact with people who knew the senior people of the land. Potiphar would know the Pharaoh.

We learn never to despise people's influence. God can use them to advantage. And this would be instrumental in Joseph's ultimate destiny.

Joseph was good at his job as all Christians should be. He was noticed and promoted to high office in the general's house. One of the reasons declares scripture was that 'the Lord was with Joseph'. We need the Lord to be with us in our work and business. Success alone is not sufficient. Unless God is in it with us we labour in vain.

#### **2. Behaviour while in prison**

Temptation faced him when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him not once but several times. His reaction and resistance to temptation again helped him secure confidence of other people although the immediate result was false imprisonment. His defence again reveals his heart. 'How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God.' (Gen 39:8).

God again was with him and he rose and controlled all the prisoners. They obviously all had confidence in him.

### 3. Behaviour when overlooked

He was able to interpret the dreams of two men. Both proved correct and he asked that he would be remembered but the one who survived forgot. There is recorded no reaction on Joseph's part. All part of God's plan. Not once did he blame his brothers for his predicament.

### 4. Behaviour when recognised by the State

In Gen 41 Pharaoh had a dream of fatted cows and thin cows. Then Joseph was remembered by the wine server who was helped by him. Joseph was called before Pharaoh and interpreted his dream as seven years of plenty and seven of severe famine.

His solution was this: "Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. (Gen 41:33-34).

Pharaoh enquired among his own associates and Joseph was chosen and appointed in effect as the prime minister and second only to Pharaoh.

Joseph was able to use the skills acquired by his experiences. Without them he would not be properly prepared to rescue a nation.

### 5. Behaviour when meeting his brothers

The story of meeting his brothers fills several chapters. Essentially he reveals himself and makes this astounding statement.

Genesis 45:3-8

4 And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. 5 But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. 6 For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither ploughing nor harvesting. 7 And God sent me before you to preserve posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. 8 **So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.**

This passage of scripture shows clearly the power of forgiveness.

- a. Vs 5 God sent me before you to preserve your life.
- b. Vs 8a it was not you who sent me here but God
- c. Vs 8b He made me father to Pharaoh and lord of his house and ruler of Egypt.

This is the result of holding no resentment towards his brothers or to Potiphar's wife.

Let us examine our own lives and try and copy this extraordinary man