

A Matter of Life and Death

“The Life of Joseph: but God Intended It for Good”

Genesis 42:1-38

November 19, 2017

BIG IDEA

As Joseph ruled Egypt, his family depended on him for food, and for life itself. Jesus is our only path to life. I want you to walk with him. Whether you're willing to take that step is literally a matter of life and death.

REVIEW

What are some of the main ideas we discussed last week?

Genesis 41:1-57

- God miraculously exalted Joseph to second in command in all of Egypt.
- Joseph received a ring that signified his representation of Pharaoh.
- The exaltation of Joseph mirrors that of Jesus, who was exalted after completing his mission of reconciliation.
- The dream is fulfilled and Joseph begins to rule.

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Context: The dream has come true. Joseph is ruling. Now, his family must approach him to secure food during a terrible famine. He recognizes them, but they don't yet know that their brother now holds the power of life and death.

Genesis 42:1-6 (ESV)

When Jacob learned that there was grain for sale in Egypt, he said to his sons, “Why do you look at one another?” ²And he said, “Behold, I have heard that there is grain for sale in Egypt. Go down and buy grain for us there, that we may live and not die.” ³So ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. ⁴But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with his brothers, for he feared that harm might happen to him. ⁵Thus the sons of Israel came to buy among the others who came, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

6Now Joseph was governor over the land. He was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground.

Click [here](#) for the complete text of Genesis 42.

Other key developments in Chapter 42:

- In verse 9, Joseph accused his brothers of being spies. To prove that they were not spies, they were able to leave Egypt in order to go fetch Benjamin, their youngest brother. But one of them was to be imprisoned until their return. Jacob's fear for Benjamin was coming back to haunt them.
- In verse 21, the brothers interpreted this turn of events as retribution for wronging Joseph.
- Verse 24 tells us that Joseph wept before chaining Simeon. This must have been an exhausting ordeal. He held the power of life and death in his hands but he didn't to use it. He loved his family! He was a life-giver!
- Simeon served as the deposit guaranteeing their return. But before they went, Joseph slipped the silver used to pay for the grain into their baggage along with more grain and other supplies. They found it and trembled. The man with power to take their lives would be angry. He'd spoken roughly to them. They were afraid!
- The brothers traveled back to their father and made their report to Jacob.
- And still, according to verse 38, Jacob refused to send Benjamin. He didn't want to lose him, too. He was afraid. He was shrinking back because this was a life and death situation.

MAIN IDEA

- The exaltation of Joseph was by divine power. The dream came true. The first part of the dream was agricultural in nature. Now, it was a terrible famine that brought his family to kneel before him.

DISCUSSION & APPLICATION

1. Joseph Held the Power of Life and Death

Genesis 42:1 - When Jacob learned that there was grain for sale in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?"



Joseph had the food, which meant he had the power. Obtaining grain was a matter of life and death. This wasn't just an Egyptian problem. It was everyone's problem. If you didn't have grain, you didn't eat. The ancient near east diet was based on grain. It was essential to survive.

a. Joseph now held complete power. His family bowed down to him. He would decide if they would live. Do you believe that Jesus has that kind of power? Do you bow down to him?

b. The dream came true. What does this tell you about the sovereignty of God?

2. Joseph Was a Life-Giver

Genesis 41:49 - And Joseph stored up grain in great abundance, like the sand of the sea, until he ceased to measure it, for it could not be measured.

Joseph was sole distributor of grain. He gave life when no one else could. His rule was absolute. God chose famine to give us a glimpse of the coming Messiah—Jesus Christ—who also gives life.

John 7:37-38 - On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"

a. Joseph prefigured Jesus. Jesus gives life to all that ask. John 7:37-38 is an offer to come and drink the water of eternal life. Why don't more people take advantage of this amazing offer?

b. What is our role regarding leading people to the water of life?



3. Jesus Has the Power to Offer Eternal Life

John 11:25 - Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live."

This correlation between Jesus and Joseph extends to the giving of life. Joseph passed out food. Jesus passes out eternal life. He is the resurrection and the life. He is the ultimate ruler.

- a. Why do you think God used various biblical figures to give us a glimpse of Jesus?**

- b. What keeps people from coming to Jesus? Is there anything you can do about that?**

4. Please Take a Courageous Step and Save Your Life

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

You can find life in Christ by acknowledging him as the controller of your life. You can find new life by giving all of yourself to Him. Eternally, heaven and hell hang in the balance. Temporally, failure to embrace him with your whole being means partial death to the soul, a closing of the heart, and the failure to fully experience him as he meant you to.

- a. Have you chosen today to follow Christ? If so, we encourage you to talk with a Christian friend, a pastor, or your community group leader about your decision.**

- b. If you have been a believer in Jesus Christ as Savior for some time, how has this changed the path of your life? With whom can you share your story of faith?**



PRAY

Father God, Joseph's brothers must have been terrified to enter the throne room of Egypt. Don't let fear keep me from you. Take all of me. I totally submit my life to you. Do whatever you please in order to make me the person that you want me to be. I trust you. Amen.

DIG DEEPER

For further study this week:

- [Authority and Submission](#) - a classic book from Watchman Nee (Living Stream Ministry)
- "[The Faith of Paul Goldschmidt](#)" - a short video regarding the baseball superstar's brand new faith in Jesus: <http://bit.ly/2ypZTb8>
- "[Give Me Jesus](#)" - a musical video regarding submission to Christ by Danny Gokey: <http://bit.ly/2yqbM0R>

NEXT WEEK'S BIG IDEA

- *A Special Thanksgiving Message*

I am thankful for the amazing things God is doing at Ridgewood Church!

