

When God Calls, Do Something About It

"The Life of Joseph: but God Intended It for Good"

Genesis 46:1-7

February 11, 2018

BIG IDEA

As the Joseph narrative progresses his father Jacob is facing a difficult decision. God has asked him to leave his homeland for Egypt. "Should I or shouldn't I?" That's the question he must have been asking. We'll see in this section that he heard from God, was assured by God, and that he obeyed God. The consequence of his obedience is monumental. Jesus came into the world. Don't ignore the prodding of God. Take Him seriously. When God calls, do something about it.

REVIEW

These are some of the main ideas we discussed last week:

- There was a great famine in the land, just as Joseph's dream had predicted.
- After leaving Joseph for dead, the brothers came before him to buy grain.
- Joseph wanted to see his youngest brother, Benjamin, and demanded that he accompany the brothers on their return.
- He placed silver in their bags. They feared he would think it was stolen.
- They were terrified of him.
- Fear crippled the family.
- Jacob relented and let Benjamin go. His faith set the stage for redemption.
- The brothers went back and reconciliation began.
- When Judah agreed to give his life for Benjamin, Joseph knew that reconciliation was possible. The ice melted. God worked!
- Joseph now revealed himself to his brothers and a marvelous cycle of forgiveness and redemption began.

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Context:

Jacob has been called by God to go to Egypt. It's a difficult decision. He goes to a familiar place to encounter God. There, he hears God speak. He obeys. The world would never be the same.

Genesis 46:1-7

So Israel took his journey with all that he had and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. ² And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here I am." ³ Then he said, "I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. ⁴ I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again, and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes."

⁵ Then Jacob set out from Beersheba. The sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to carry him. ⁶ They also took their livestock and their goods, which they had gained in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his offspring with him, ⁷ his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters. All his offspring he brought with him into Egypt.

MAIN IDEAS

- Joseph was in Egypt with his brothers. Jacob wanted to be with them but he was also afraid.
- He stopped at a familiar place to grapple with God.
- When he heard God speak, he obeyed.

DISCUSSION & APPLICATION

1. Jacob Finds a Familiar Place in Which to Encounter God

Genesis 46:1 - So Israel took his journey with all that he had and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

Beersheba is the place where Jacob had gone to escape from his twin brother Esau. This is the place where Abraham and Jacob's father, Isaac, built altars to God. It was a special place for his family and Jacob likely went there to consult God. "Should I or shouldn't I go to Egypt?" That's the question he had to answer.



- a. **Do you remember a time when you had to wait for God to speak to you?**

- b. **How hard is it to wait on God? What usually happens when we get impatient and move forward on our own?**

2. God Speaks: Learn To Listen

Genesis 46:2-4 - And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here I am."³ Then he said, "I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. ⁴ I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again, and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes."

It's easy to say, "Well, it would be nice if God spoke directly to me. Obedience would be easy enough!" But God does speak. We need to listen.

God speaks in the following ways:

- (1) Primarily through the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 2:4; James 1:25)
- (2) Through His Spirit (Isa. 30:21; Jn. 6:13-14)
- (3) Through godly friends (Prov. 13:20; 27:6; Gal. 6:1)
- (4) Through circumstances (Gen. 46:1-7 – Jacob could see that God was moving his family to Egypt)

- a. **Why is it important to make the Bible the most important vehicle through which we listen to God? What is the danger of putting the other methods first?**

- b. **Has there been a particularly significant time when God has spoken to you through His Word?**



3. We Can Learn to Believe

Genesis 46:2-4 - And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here I am."³ Then he said, "I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. ⁴I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again, and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes."

Proverbs 3:5-6 - Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Jacob was wiser than his sons. He didn't know everything that God was doing, but he knew enough to trust him and move forward.

- a. **What are other scriptural promises that help us to trust God?**

- b. **Can you talk about a time that you obeyed God and couldn't see the outcome? What was that like?**

4. Believing and Trusting God Leads to Obedience

When God spoke and gave direction, Jacob did something about it. His clan was now on its way to Egypt. There, Israel would become a great nation. Messiah would be born. Jesus is the Savior of the World!

- a. **Is there some area of your life in which God is calling you to obey His direction and you need to respond?**

- b. **Take time to pray together and ask God for a heart of trust and obedience.**



PRAY

Dear Lord, my heart is wayward. It is hard to hear you above all of the noise of my life. I am distracted by anger, bitterness, busyness, and pride. Yet I know you are always available and that you love me. Help me to trust you. Help me to be humble. Help me to obey you. Amen.

DIG DEEPER

For further study this week:

- [*Desiring God*](#) – a book by John Piper (Multnomah)
- [*Knowing God*](#) – a book by J.I. Packer (InterVarsity Press)

NEXT WEEK'S BIG IDEA

Jacob and Joseph are reunited. God is healing a family!

