

Handout (Genesis 42-50)

Part 1: The Masquerade

Have you ever withheld information from someone (family, friends, etc.)? Why or why not?

- What were the consequences of your decision, if any?

Genesis 42:6-8

⁶ Now Joseph was the governor of the land, the person who sold grain to all its people. So when Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground. ⁷ As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them. "Where do you come from?" he asked. "From the land of Canaan," they replied, "to buy food." ⁸ Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him.

Why do you think Joseph chose not to reveal his identity to his brothers?

How would you have responded had you been in Joseph's place? Why?

Genesis 42:9-11, 19-21, 25-28

⁹ Then [Joseph] remembered his dreams about them and said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see where our land is unprotected." ¹⁰ "No, my lord," they answered. "Your servants have come to buy food. ¹¹ We are all the sons of one man. You servants are honest men, not spies."...

¹⁹ [Joseph said] "If you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay here in prison, while the rest of you go and take grain back for your starving households. ²⁰ But you must bring your youngest brother to me, so that your words may be verified and that you may not die." This they proceeded to do. ²¹ They said to one another, "Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen; that's why this distress has come on us."...

²⁵ Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, to put each man's silver back in his sack, and to give them provisions for their journey. After this was done for them, ²⁶ they loaded their grain on their donkeys and left. ²⁷ At the place where they stopped for the night one of them opened his sack to get feed for his donkey, and he saw his silver in the mouth of his sack. ²⁸ "My silver has been returned," he said to his brothers. "Here it is in my sack." Their hearts sank and they turned to each other trembling and said, "What is this that God has done to us?"

What kinds of "tests" have you gone through in your life?

- What was the purpose of your test(s)?

Why do you think Joseph puts the silver back in his brothers sacks? What does he hope to accomplish?

Genesis 44:18, 30-34

¹⁸ Then Judah went up to him and said ... ³⁰ "So now, if the boy is not with us when I go back to your servant my father, and if my father, whose life is closely bound up with the boy's life, ³¹ sees that the boy isn't there, he will die. Your servants will bring the gray head of our father down to

the grave in sorrow.³² Your servant guaranteed the boy's safety to my father. I said, 'If I do not bring him back to you, I will bear the blame before you, my father, all my life!'

³³ "Now then, please let your servant remain here as my lord's slave in place of the boy, and let the boy return with his brothers. ³⁴ How can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? No! Do not let me see the misery that would come on my father."

How do the brothers offer to deal with the accusation of the stolen cup?

- Why is this significant?

Have you ever taken the blame for someone else's mistakes/failure? Why?

Part 2: The Great Reveal

Genesis 45:1-8

¹ Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. ² And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it. ³ Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence. ⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! ⁵ And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. ⁶ For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. ⁷ But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. ⁸ "So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt.

What is unique (surprising) about how Joseph revealed himself to his brothers?

Imagine you're one of Joseph's brothers. What would be running through your head during this moment?

Joseph's story is just one of many examples in the Bible of how people's plans don't always line up with God's plan. Can you list any others?

- How have you experienced this reality in your own life? What happened?

Part 3: The Covenant Continues

Genesis 50:24

²⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

How are God's promises fulfilled in the time of Joseph? How do they remain to be fulfilled?

Now that our study of Genesis is completed, take a minute and reflect. What is our community application of this passage - and of the book of Genesis?