

IF YE BE TRUE MEN

Text: Genesis 42:1-11

January 1, 2017

INTRO: Let me read our key verse for this New Year's message from the KJV. It is Genesis 42:19, "If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison..." There comes in life a horrible moment. It is for me, the worst of moments. And then begins a battle, the battle of the mind. I find I am in a jail with bars that will not bend nor can they be cut. There is no way out. All is concrete and steel bars around me. And yet, amazingly, there is one door, and the door has a lock on the inside, not on the outside. And nobody can get in. Not only is the lock on the inside, but hanging on the wall is a key to the door, and I can unlock the door myself and walk right out into freedom. But even more amazing, I refuse to use the key. I will sooner stay in the jail and hope and pray and do anything; anything, but use that key.

Oh, how I dislike that jail cell. I can almost panic when I get put in that cell. That cell is the cell of guilt. It is when my conscience takes me by the scruff of the neck, pushes me through that door, and it clangs shut. And what is worse, my conscience hangs the key on the wall and keeps directing my attention to the key. I know I am guilty of a sin that needs to be taken care of. There is the door, and I have the key, but I will not use it. Many will sooner die than use that key, and many, many do.

I want to encourage us this morning, New Year's Day of 2017, to be true men or women of God. Our story took place in the book of Genesis, and 10 of Jacob's 12 sons committed a sin that would put them in the jail I spoke of and they would not come out. They too had the key, but they too refused to use it. So let me begin by giving you the background of our passage which I will read later.

I. THE BACKGROUND

God had chosen Abraham to be the father of the race that would be known as Israel. Abraham had a son by promise of

God, and his name was Isaac. And Isaac had a son by name of Jacob. Jacob was tricked into marrying the wrong woman, but later married the one he loved as well. Her name was Rachel. Well, all in all, Jacob would have 12 sons, and Rachel bore the last two of those, Joseph and Benjamin.

Turn to Genesis 36. You see, Joseph was among the younger sons and he was a favorite of Jacob's and Jacob even made a special coat for him, a coat of many colors. And because he was favored by his father, the ten older brothers, were jealous of him. So let us read verses 1-4.

1 ¶ Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.

2 This is the history of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors.

4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

Now one may blame Joseph for tattling, or Jacob for showing favoritism, but all of that does not excuse the brother's hate. When we let something like this grow, anything is possible, and if we don't get a hold of it, sin is the most likely outcome. You see, there are some events in life that have the potential to reveal what is in our hearts, and we can do all the blaming we want, it does not change our hearts. As a matter of fact some things need to happen to reveal our hearts. So we go on in verse 5:

5 ¶ Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more.

6 So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed:

7 "There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."

8 And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

Well, the hatred is building. Oh the treachery of the heart. Surely we can't blame God for giving Joseph a dream. You see there was something in the hearts of these sons, who would become the fathers of the 12 tribes of Israel, that needed to be dealt with. We go on in verse 9:

9 Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me."

10 So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?"

11 And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

When we have envy or hatred begin in us, it is there that we need to get a hold of it, or it will get a hold of us and we will go to that very bad jail we spoke of before.

From verses 12-19, Joseph is sent to see how his brothers are doing. They are feeding the flock some distance from home. I wonder, when they saw this coat of many colors coming in the distance, how must the hate have churned in their hearts. And you know the story. It is a complicated story because it seems that when they threw Joseph in the pit, which had no water in it, that Reuben later went to possibly free him. And when he got there Joseph was gone. His brothers had sold him to Midianite slave traders.

II. THE PRISON

Let us consider this prison now. Can you hear the doors clang shut on these brothers when Joseph disappears from sight? The decision is now irreversible, with one exception. Use the key of repentance. One moment Joseph's brothers were free men, and the next they were in prison. When the money was exchanged, the doors of the prison clanged shut. The key, as with all men, was thrown in the door, but which of these brothers will use it? There are those who say repentance is a work. It is not. It is absolutely free and merits nothing, but it requires acknowledgement of sin and this acknowledgement keeps many in that prison.

There are those who are on their deathbed. They know the truth. Those standing around them do not know why they don't just accept Christ, but I believe it is often the requirement to use this key that holds them in prison. In modern times, professing believers who stand around the dying think they need only to accept Christ. But accepting Christ is not the first requirement. Repentance is. Once repentance takes place, accepting Christ comes quickly.

Verse 29: Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes.

It seems that Reuben went away and maybe decided he would let Joseph go free, and when he got there, Joseph was gone. And maybe his brothers did not want to tell him that they sold Joseph because they found him to be weak and he might cause trouble for them. It was better to let him think he was gone. We go on in verse 30.

30 And he returned to his brothers and said, "The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?"

31 ¶ So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood.

32 Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, "We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?"

33 And he recognized it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces."

34 Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days.

35 And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

36 Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.

It is one thing to be guilty for sin as an individual. The strength of the concrete and iron bars is multiplied when the sin is a group sin. There is much less chance of one individual to come out of a group sin than it is to come repent for a sin he or she did alone. To repent in a group sin is to turn the group in.

III. THE TORMENTORS

We want to consider another aspect of this prison. It has tormentors. Go to Matthew 18. I have not time to deal with Jesus' parable on forgiveness here. A certain servant was forgiven a huge debt which he could not pay.

He was to be thrown into prison,

but he begged for time. His master forgave him everything. Then he went and demanded payment from one who owed him a small debt. The man begged for time but though he had been forgiven a huge amount, he would not give this man time but had him thrown into prison. A prisoner like that made very little money and he had to stay there until he had worked off his debt. Well, the other servants heard about this and went and told the master who had forgiven the first man that huge amount, and so we begin in verse 32:

32 "Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.

33 'Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?'

34 "And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

35 "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

Now, the prison cell I told you about before has these tormentors in it that God delivers a person to who does not forgive his brother when he repents. By the way, the parable teaches repentance before forgiveness as any careful study will show. I believe it is this same prison we are delivered to when we have sinned and we refuse to repent. The man in this parable will not come free until he repents, that is what I believe it means to pay all. The greater the debt, the greater the torment.

Back to Joseph now. No doubt in all those intervening years before these brothers saw Joseph again, they suffered in this jail. And after they saw him, the tormentors came again and again. The cell is guilt, the tormentors are

guilty feelings. But there is no way these brothers could bring themselves to tell their father. They had the key to the prison they were in, but they refused to use it. You see, that key is repentance. When repentance is due before man, we balk. That is how sin works. Do you want to know if you are a humble person? See how readily you repent in an upright manner when you are caught by your conscience.

Well, you know the story. Joseph prospered and eventually ended up in prison too. But this was a different prison from the one his brothers were in. But it happened that he interpreted two dreams and eventually through Pharaoh having a dream and finding out that Joseph could interpret dreams, Joseph got out of prison and became the president of Egypt.

The dream he had interpreted for Pharaoh was a dream that foretold about seven years of plenty, and then seven years of famine. And Joseph was set over all of Pharaoh's works in storing up food during the seven years of plenty and then being responsible for the distribution of it during the seven years of famine.

And so, in Israel, the famine sets in as well and it gets worse and worse. It got to where hunger pangs set in. Someone said that if the prodigal son lived today, with the way modern missions are going, we would have built a bigger better pig pen for the prodigal son. We would not let him suffer until he was willing to use the key. But not so with the father of that son, or with the Lord. He allowed the tormentors to do their work so that the time came for the prodigal son that it was less painful to repent to his father than it was to stay in the pig pen. That is what will have to happen to the sons of Jacob.

We go to chapter 42. In verses 1-5 Jacob's sons finally leave for Egypt to buy grain. So let us begin in verse 6:

6 And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth.

7 And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food.

8 And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.

9 And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

10 And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come.

11 "We are all one man's sons; **we are honest men**; (KJV true men) your servants are not spies."

Now let me ask you, why would they add that they are honest men? Could they not just have said, "your servants are not spies"?

12 But he said to them, "No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land."

13 And they said, "Your servants are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and in fact, the youngest is with our father today, and one is no more."

They did not own up to what had happened to the one who is no more and nor did they know he was no more. So look at verse 14:

14 But Joseph said to them, "It is as I spoke to you, saying, 'You are spies!'

15 "In this manner you shall be tested: By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here.

16 "Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether there is any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies!"

17 So he put them all together in prison three days.

18 Then Joseph said to them the third day, "Do this and live, for I fear God:

Now comes our text, 'If ye be true men...' The NKJV says,

19 **"If you are honest men,** let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house; but you, go and carry grain for the famine of your houses.

20 "And bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die." And they did so.

21 ¶ Then they said to one another, "We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us."

22 And Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not speak to you, saying, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us."

23 But they did not know that Joseph understood them, for he spoke to them through an interpreter.

Here we see Joseph's brothers in prison and the tormentors are at work. Think of it. They think Joseph is an Egyptian, but he understands every word they are saying. They are putting two and two together. Their conscience is at work. They are guilty of sin. But they will not use the key. We go on in verse 24:

24 And he turned himself away from them and wept. Then he returned to them again, and talked with them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.

If unconditional forgiveness were true, Joseph could have ended it all right here. But in spite of the pain, Joseph refused to do that which we are told is the right thing to do, that is to forgive unconditionally. Joseph did not set them free without repentance. It seems to me that he sought to bring them to acknowledge their sin and he wept at their hardness of heart. We read on:

25 Then Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain, to restore every man's money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. Thus he did for them.

26 So they loaded their donkeys with the grain and departed from there.

Is it not most amazing how the tormentors work? When Joseph requested that they bring their younger brother, immediately their hearts smote them and they remembered their sin. The most horrific thing in life is when our sin finds us out. And if we do not deal with it, it has this habit of setting the alarm of the conscience off at the slightest jog of memory.

Well, they did what Joseph said, and Simeon stayed in Egypt. So look at what happened when they got back to Egypt in 29-32:

29 ¶ *Then they went to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan and told him all that had happened to them, saying:*

30 *"The man who is lord of the land spoke roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country.*

31 *"But we said to him, 'We are honest men; we are not spies.*

32 *'We are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no more, and the youngest is with our father this day in the land of Canaan.'*

Notice they said in verses 31-32, " 'We are honest (true) men; we are not spies. And here is my challenge for each one of us for this new year. Let us be truly honest men. Let us be, as the KJV says, "True men." Let us be men of integrity.

We go on in verse 32:

32 *'We are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no more, and the youngest is with our father this day in the land of Canaan.'*" They did not repeat the story that they made up to tell their dad. They just said, "One is no

more." This thing keeps coming up. These are the tormentors.

And here is the point of this message: Are we true men? Are we honest? So my question for us this morning, and a guideline for the year before us is this: Are we true men or women of God? Are we honest? We had a neighbor when I was young. He was a bachelor and walked with a limp because he had lost the front part of one foot. His name was John Angley. My dad had a worker from the Ukraine, and he had a name for *Da John*: he called him *Honest John*. That was a nice way of saying that John had trouble staying with the whole truth.

God had a big work to do in these sons of Jacob, as he does in everyone of us. Jacob's name means 'heal catcher.' He was a smooth man. And he had sons who were truly his sons.

Well, these brothers will in no wise acknowledge their transgression, though it is ever before them. And so God was not yet done with them either. The famine continued and they ran out of grain again. Hunger set in again. But Jacob refused to let his sons go again until it was a matter of life and death. And they argued. Jacob did not want to send Benjamin. Finally, seeing that was the only way they would get food, he had them take double money to take back, along with Benjamin.

So we go to 43:15:

15 ¶ So the men took that present and Benjamin, and they took double money in their hand, and arose and went down to Egypt; and they stood before Joseph.

16 When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Take these men to my home, and slaughter an animal and make ready; for these men will dine with me at noon."

17 Then the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.

18 Now the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, "It is because of the money,

which was returned in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may make a case against us and fall upon us, to take us as slaves with our donkeys."

19 When they drew near to the steward of Joseph's house, they talked with him at the door of the house,

20 and said, "O sir, we indeed came down the first time to buy food;

21 "but it happened, when we came to the encampment, that we opened our sacks, and there, each man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it back in our hand.

22 "And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks."

23 But he said, "Peace be with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them.

24 So the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys feed.

25 Then they made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there.

26 ¶ And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed down before him to the earth.

27 Then he asked them about their well-being, and said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?"

28 And they answered, "Your servant our father is in good health; he is still alive." And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves.

29 Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your younger brother

of whom you spoke to me?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son."

30 Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought somewhere to weep. And he went into his chamber and wept there.

Why did he do that? His brothers are still hard. They are still not true men. We go to verse 31:

31 Then he washed his face and came out; and he restrained himself, and said, "Serve the bread."

32 So they set him a place by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians.

33 And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in astonishment at one another.

34 Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

Now there were numerous things they should have interpreted. Joseph knew where each one should sit and Benjamin got five times as much as the rest. So we go on in the next chapter.

You know the story. They got their grain and left and Joseph told his steward to follow them and accuse them of returning evil for good because they have stolen the cup from which he divined. Well, the steward catches up with them and accuses them of stealing Joseph's cup, and they said, "With whomever you find the cup, let him die, and we will be your slaves." They have given their own judgment. So the search began and nothing, nothing, nothing, until he came to Benjamin, and there was the cup! I wonder if you can imagine what went through the hearts of these men? They have now given their own judgment!

So we go to verse 13:

13 Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city.

14 So Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he was still there; and they fell before him on the ground.

15 And Joseph said to them, "What deed is this you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice divination?"

16 Then Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; here we are, my lord's slaves, both we and he also with whom the cup was found."

17 But he said, "Far be it from me that I should do so; the man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. And as for you, go up in peace to your father."

Well, at this point Judah explains how his father did not want to let Benjamin go and how they finally persuaded him, and that if Benjamin does not come back, **Jacob would die**. So Judah begged to stay instead of Benjamin. He said, "For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.'"

We go to the next chapter:

1 ¶ Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers.

2 And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it.

3 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence.

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.

So Joseph told them that the famine would last five more years, and that they should bring their father and come live in Egypt for this time. So we go in verse 14:

14 Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck.

15 Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him.

Now it has been said that this passage teaches unconditional forgiveness. It appears that Joseph just lets everything go. But that is not so, and what I would like to know is, when the brothers got back to Egypt, what story did they tell their dad? Did they tell him that they sold him to slave traders? How did they explain the coat of many colors? Did they make up another story? Did Jacob ask Joseph what happened when he got to Egypt? Or was he like many of us as parents who don't dare ask our children certain questions because we are afraid of what the answer might be?

Well, Israel moved to Egypt with his family and dwelt in Egypt and they prospered there. And these brothers were still in jail. There was no unconditional forgiveness here. Years went by and the brothers, it seems, never divulged their secret. And then Jacob died, and all of a sudden the brothers realized that now Joseph might take revenge. I have read that back in that day, in some such cases they would not take revenge until the father was dead. We go now to the last chapter in Genesis, Genesis 50. We begin in verse 15.

Genesis 50: 15 ¶ When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may actually repay (revenge) us for all the evil which we did to him." There is confession of sin, but to the wrong party. But they could not bring themselves to face

Joseph, so, guess what they did? They sent Joseph a text. Look at verse 16:

16 So they sent messengers to Joseph, saying, "Before your father died he commanded, saying,

17 'Thus you shall say to Joseph: "I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you."' Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father." And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

When I first read this, I thought, Wow, they are free at last! They have used their 'Get Out Of Jail Free' card, they have finally used the key! But as we look at this, I'll let you decide if you think they really used the key. And I wonder, did they ever truly tell their father about what happened? First, I want you to notice most carefully that they did not repent. Here is what they said, "Before YOUR father died he commanded, saying, 'Thus you shall say to Joseph: "I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you."' I ask you, is that repentance?

One of our folk had a man come and ask to be forgiven and he spoke in the third person. He said, "So and so (referring to himself) did some very bad things, could you find it in yourself to forgive so and so?" He wouldn't own up. Oh, how we fear to own up. How hard we find it to say, "I sinned. I did wrong. I ask you to forgive me for doing..." and then naming precisely what we did. Anything but that.

So notice what these brothers do after they tell him that their dad asked Joseph to forgive them. It seems that after Joseph got their text, he called his brothers from Goshen to come meet with him. And when they came they said, "Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father." Now notice what they are doing. They speak of themselves in the third person. "Please forgive those guys." They did not say, "Please forgive us for sinning against you." They said, "Forgive the trespass of your servants." They are bowing but I ask you, are they acknowledging? Furthermore, they asked forgiveness on the

ground that they are the servants of, "...the God of your father." They asked forgiveness, not on the ground that they were repentant, but on the ground that they are servants of the most high God, and he is the God of 'your father' as well.

When I first read this passage I thought, "Wow! They finally used their get out of jail free card!" They have repented. But when you study the commentaries, they are not clear as to whether real repentance took place. Many Jewish rabbis, I read, believe Jacob never learned what truly happened. We don't know for certain either.

Well, after their plea, Joseph wept. He wept before them in earlier circumstances as well. May it be that he realizes they will not come clean? They should have been weeping before Joseph over their sin, but instead he is weeping over them. Why did he weep? Because even now they cannot bring themselves to own up? "We be true men" they had told Joseph. Really?

Verse 19, 19 Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God?

20 "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.

21 "Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

CONCL: And in conclusion, Let me ask you, did they really repent? Or did Joseph weep because he gave up on them? May the Lord find us fully honest.

Recently I read a book by a man named Bo Lidegaard. It is a book on how the Danish people sought to help the Jews in Denmark when Hitler moved in. Most of the Danish people were sympathetic to the Jews and they helped to save most of them. The writer, having studied this subject in depth, and having had a look at the human heart begins chapter 9 with this sentence, "It is dangerous to underestimate our formidable ability to close our eyes to what we do not want to see." And I would add, it is just

as dangerous to underestimate our formidable ability to justify ourselves in almost any wrongdoing.

Several times Joseph's brothers said, "We are true men." Several times Joseph tried the trueness of their hearts, and several times he wept. It is amazing that we will sit in this prison cell to the death and not repent. It is also amazing how easily we allow ourselves to be derailed from being entirely honest, entirely true. This is my challenge for us this year, to be true men.

In 42:11 Joseph's brothers said to him, *We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies.*

In Genesis 42:19 he said to them, *If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses:*

Here is what Joseph's brothers told their dad in Genesis 42:31, *And we said unto him, We are **true men**; we are no spies:*

In Genesis 42:33 Joseph's brothers said to their dad, *And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, **Hereby shall I know that ye are true men**; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone:*

Then Joseph said to his brothers in Genesis 42:34, *And bring your youngest brother unto me: **then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men**: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffick in the land.*

Oh to be true men or women of God indeed! May that be a challenge for us throughout this coming year, if we have that much time, and may it be true of us throughout all the days we have to live.