

**Genesis 45: 16-28; “The Spirit of Jacob Revived”, Sermon # 109 in the series – “Beginnings”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020.**

The report of Joseph’s brothers coming to Egypt and of Joseph’s desire to have his father come down to see him, pleased Pharaoh and his servants well, its says in verse 16. They were two years into the seven years of famine. Pharaoh was now greatly pleased with Joseph’s wise counsel to store up the grain as he had done. He was encouraged when he found out about Joseph’s relatives coming to live in Egypt. It says in verse 16 – “So it pleased Pharaoh well”. And so he told Joseph to tell Jacob that he would give him the best of the land of Egypt, and he would eat the fat the land. He wanted to welcome them himself. He wanted to make them feel at home in Goshen.

So now we find that the Lord was taking definite steps to revive Jacob’s faith and hope. This is what I want to speak to you about. I would have you learn from Joseph wise and loving actions. I want you to see, that even as Joseph took definite steps to help revive his father’s faith, that you should understand that Christ can revive your faith as well. He can even so work, that you will be able to learn how to revive the faith of others, as well, when it has fallen low. If Christ is your Lord, you will come to understand that He is the One who creates faith, and He is also the One who revives faith in His people. He does so in these 4 ways that I want to tell you about.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – Pharaoh gave Joseph promises and commands to give to his brethren.**  
(verses 17-20)

You will remember that Joseph’s brothers hated him so much, 23 years before, that they had sold him into slavery. They thought that he was dead, but now they had come to find out that he was not only alive, but he was reigning over all the land as second in command to Pharaoh. He surprised them by what he told them – So now it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, Thus says your son Joseph: God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry. So now that Joseph had revealed himself to his brothers and he had assured them that they were forgiven for their past sins against him. He now made them bearers of this good news to their father back at home.

You see, Joseph knew that his father would have a hard time believing that he was still alive. He knew that his father’s faith must be very low. Jacob had suffered so much disappointment in his family life. Joseph wanted to encourage his father’s heart. And so he sent his brothers to tell their father the good news that he was still alive. And when they did this, the text says that Jacob’s heart stood still, because he did not believe them. What this meant was, that his faith had fallen so low, that it had reached a crisis point with him. Instead of this being good news bringing him joy, he was thinking – This cannot be! How could this possibly be true? His mind rejected it because he did not want to be hurt and sad and disappointed again. He may have been wondering if even his own sons could be trusted to tell him the truth. This doubt and fear in Jacob was something which needed to be addressed. Joseph had the wisdom to know how to do this.

Let’s think together for a moment about how good Joseph’s approach was to this whole business of telling his father that he was alive. He was going to make sure that his father was revived, restored, and encouraged. First of all, he went and talked to the one who was in authority, Pharaoh, who was very willing to go along with his plans. Pharaoh said to him – “Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan.’ “Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land.” It kind of sounds like Pharaoh is giving them the Old Testament great commission – “Go therefore and make disciples”. They are being sent on a mission of great significance in the eyes of Pharaoh, as well as being sent by Joseph. We should learn from this that our faith, and the strength of it, are very important to God. Joseph had said in verse 9 – “Hurry

and go up to my father”. It was an errand related to Jacob’s faith being strengthened. It was something that was very important to both Jacob’s physical strength and his spiritual well-being.

How many people who are Christians are wasting away in their faith? They have become downcast, quiet, withdrawn, introspective, self-pitying people, because life has not gone well for them. If you were to look at Jacob at this point in his life, you would think that he was not the same man who had received the great revelations of God at Bethel and Peniel. He had once stood in wonder and awe at the way that God had revealed Himself to him, and at the way that God led him. He used to rejoice in it, but now he dreaded it. “What next?”, was the skeptical thought of his mind and heart. How many more losses, how many more disappointments must I meet with, in my journey through this life? I have lost my Joseph, I have lost my dear wife Rachel. “All these things are against me.”

Perhaps this is you today, dear Christian. You used to be a person who had strong faith. God had revealed Himself to you, as a sinner, so many years ago. Christ came to your sin-sick soul and He saved you. He became the joy and rejoicing of your heart. But then some things happened in your life. You didn’t get that job promotion, or you had trouble in raising your children to come to know the Lord. They had their interests in worldly things. Then your husband or wife got cancer. Things didn’t go well with that. You lost a parent, or a brother or sister to death. And now it just seems as if nothing can ever be right. Perhaps you can think of your greatest personal disappointment; that event or situation which has brought you to discouragement. You are resolved, still, to glorify God in the things that you do and say, but you realize that that situation has affected your faith.

Indeed, your faith has fallen so very low that you don’t seem to be able to raise it up to engage God and to have fellowship with Him so that you would know the joy of your Lord to be your strength. You have a resignation to the Lord’s will, but it is not a holy resignation. You are sad and disappointed with God, who you know is Sovereign. And you are sad and disappointed with yourself, because you sense that you are failing to really live up to all of the grace that He has given to you. What is to be done? We should understand, first of all that God sees this. Our Christ sees and knows all about your doubts and fears and sadness. And He is going to do some very tangible things to help you come out of this sad state of yours.

Let’s consider what Joseph did for Jacob. He used the members of his own family, his sons and daughters to encourage him. Joseph gave his brethren promises to give to Jacob. These promises applied to all of the family, not just Jacob. But Jacob was the head of the family and he was responsible for making all the major decisions for them; where they will live; whether they would simply visit Egypt, or go to stay there. It is very important that when we are trying to witness to other people about our faith in Jesus Christ, that we relate to them the promises of God; the things that He has said that He will do for them. It is not enough to try to tell them that things are going to be all right. This may not be true. But anywhere in this world that we have Christ, and we know that we have the presence of Christ, this ultimately will be enough for the believer.

This is the picture of our text. You might be asking yourself – Why is it that Egypt, which is usually the picture of the world, its temptations and lusts, is being used here in a good sense as a type? What is it a type of? This is a good question and it fits in well with what I am trying to say to you here this morning. The land of Canaan, which Jacob was already in, is the type of the Promised Land. Jacob was already in this Promised Land, but he thought that he had lost His Joseph. It was the crowning blow of all of his disappointments. Now you and I know that he hadn’t really lost Joseph at all. In fact Joseph was alive and the most powerful man in the land of Egypt. But Jacob didn’t know any of this. Joseph is alive in Egypt, in this world, and he wanted Jacob to come to Him, to be with him where he was. Let me apply this to you in this way: We need by faith to go to Jesus Christ, in this world, and find our joy and happiness with Him, here and now.

It is not enough simply to have the privileges of salvation and to live in the Land of Promise. But it is enough to have Christ and to know His blessed presence bringing you peace. Sometimes a

believer may forget this, that Christ is more powerful and loving than any other person that they know. But you would never know it by the way that they think and live. Why is this? It is because their faith has faded. Often in a situation like this you will find a believer becomes very down because things have not gone well for them in the way in their plans or their expectations of what they wanted for their life. You may even find them looking back in time and questioning why this situation of great disappointment had to come to them, and saying that everything is against them. What can you do to help them? Well, I think that you should do what Joseph's brethren were commanded to do. You should take the wagons, load them with the promises and provisions of encouragement, and drive them right over to the house of the discouraged brother or sister. You do what you can to encourage them.

Ask yourself now, dear Christian, do you think of the spiritual welfare of your brethren, your fathers in the faith? You who are younger in the faith; you who have just recently come to know the Lord? How was it that you came to saving faith? Was it not by your simply believing the truth that Jesus Christ is raised from the dead? Was it not by your simply resting upon His promise that by believing in Him that God will never to remember your sins or hold them against you? Are you not even now excited to tell others about your Savior, what He has done for you? Are you not desirous to encourage those who have for many years prayed for your conversion? Perhaps they have become discouraged because as they look at you, you do not seem to show any interest in spiritual things in the way that they expected that you would. But now, since you have sought Christ for yourself, once again, you have come to know that your heavenly Joseph, your Lord Jesus Christ is really alive; that He really is paying attention to all that is going on in your heart, and so will you not come and try to bring that same encouraging news to others whose faith has fallen low with waiting to see it in you?

Joseph tells his brothers – “Bring your father and your households and come to me”. This is how it ought to be when you come to Christ. You ought to go and tell others that you know that Jesus is alive! You ought to recount the promises of God, the rich supply of grace that you have experienced. Tell them that you know that many good things have been stored up by Christ, for them too. Tell them that He will be faithful to give these spiritual riches to them, even as they walk through this life. “Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness.” “Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.”

Do you believe these promises and apply them to yourself? Then you can also give the same encouragement of the promise of the Lord's faithfulness to others. You who have sinned greatly against the Lord in times past; has He forgiven you of all your sins? You know that He has as you confessed them to Him. Is He showing you the wealth of blessing laid up for you in Him? Then tell your close relatives about it. You who are “Benjamins” among us here this morning; you have never participated in the wicked acts of others and you have never been a gross sinner against the Lord. And yet you have come to know Christ revealed to you as well. Will you not also come and tell your relatives of your faith? What an encouragement and a strength to their faith it will be.

**2<sup>nd</sup> – The Lord revived the faith of Jacob, through Joseph, by his giving gifts to his brethren.** (verses 21 and 22)

“Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them carts, according to the command of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey.” “He gave to all of them, to each man, changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments.” We need to ask ourselves, why did Joseph do this? What is the meaning of this for ourselves? Well, I believe that this action of Joseph's shows us that the exercise of faith is dependent upon the promise of God and Christ, and the gift of Christ's grace. The promise is that He will lavish great and manifold grace upon all those whom He forgives and saves.

In Galatians chapter 4, verse 18, the apostle Paul says that the inheritance of things related to eternal life and salvation are “not of the law”. He says – “For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham as a promise.” And we see here that Joseph was

showing his own family members, this same kind of grace. Joseph gave to all of them, each man, changes of garments. This represents what Christ does for every believer. He clothes them with the garments of salvation. Isaiah 61: 10 says – “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation and has covered me with a robe of righteousness.”

The thing that makes a believer joyful is when they receive salvation as a gift of God’s grace, and then they live the Christian life from that vantage point of God’s supplying their every need and His even going beyond their expectations. In this their soul greatly rejoices in the Lord. In other words, it is our greatest joy to know Christ and the reality of His grace. Spiritual garments are given to sinners by Christ which show them that they are completely reconciled to Him, and He will continue to provide for every believer out of the riches of His grace. There are garments given to you, the believer, that will cover all the shame of your past sins. There are garments that will give to you joy in the present, each and every day, Christ keeps giving of His grace.

The garment of Justification by Faith is this way. When you believe in Jesus Christ you are declared righteous by God. You are seen by Him and accepted by Him and welcomed by Him into a life of fellowship and communion with Him. You begin to understand that you receive all the blessings of salvation for Christ’s sake, not because of anything that you have done. This is all pictured very well in our text in the way that Pharaoh saw Joseph’s brothers, and how he welcomed them and treated them in a very gracious manner; all for Joseph’s sake. There are also the garments related to Sanctification which are given. Isaiah 61: 11 tells us about them. “For as the earth brings forth its bud, as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.”

In your salvation, your hearts is like ground which the Lord tills. Christ cultivates your heart as a garden which will bring forth to Him the things which He by His grace sows there. Jesus had to suffer in the Garden of Gethsemane and upon the cross in order to purchase these garments and to be able to be the One who will give to you all you will need to live and flourish spiritually, and to bear fruit unto Him. Justification covers you with the robe of Christ’s righteousness. And this robe of righteousness covers you at all times, when you are going forth into the world to live the Christian life. In order to become an encourage to the faith of others you must see the greatness of the gift which has been given to you by Christ. Look with me at Romans 5: 15. The apostle Paul is contrasting what was brought to us through both Adam and Christ, and he says – “For the free gift is not like the offense.” “For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.” “And the gift is not like that which came through the one who had sinned.” “For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification.” “For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”

So you and I who have come to believe in Jesus Christ are given abundance of grace as well as the gift of righteousness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. That grace abounds toward us. Therefore we should be encouraged by this thought; that Christ will be faithful and generous in the giving of that grace, even as Joseph was with his brothers. He knew not only what they needed, but what would enrich their lives. They would need spiritual clothes for every occasion. They would need clothes when they were meeting with the Pharaoh and in his presence. They would need clothes when they were meeting with Joseph in his presence. And they will need clothes when they were going about their assigned task of delivering the good news to Jacob. Joseph wanted them to be joyful in these things, to be encouraged and to be an encouragement to others. So he gave them these clothes.

And so too, Christ will give you your spiritual clothes for all the same reasons. You need to recognize that Christ has given you clothes for every occasion and to rejoice that you will have

appropriate clothes to wear for every situation and for every occasion. Let us put them on. Romans chapter 13, verse 10 says – “Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.” “And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.” “The night is far spent, the day is at hand.” “Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.” “Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.” “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”

To be clothed with the garments of Christ will also mean that you will be a humble person and not a proud person. 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5: 5 – “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders.” “Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud, but give grace to the humble.” But most of all, I want you to be able to see, that to be clothed in these garments will mean that you will be able to rejoice day by day in Your Lord’s faithfulness and His care over your life. When you see this, and have been encouraged in your own faith, then you be able to be an encouragement to others and help strengthen their faith. These garments which were given by Joseph to his brethren were not only given so that they would be encouraged, but they were also given to be a witness to them of Joseph’s love and care for his father. So too, when you cloth yourself with Christ, you are showing others who you love, who it is who really sustains your faith; who it is who really cares for you, and provides for you everything that you need, including your faith becoming stronger.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> – Joseph made great provision for his aged father’s journey to Egypt.**

(verse 23 and verse 27)

Verse 23 says – “And he sent to his father these things: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey.” There are many good things in this world which God has given for us to enjoy in this life; things which we should share with one another because we think kindly of each other. Joseph sent a generous sample of these things to his father in order to encourage his fainting spirit. I believe that Psalm 104, verses 14 and 15 are a good representation of what Joseph sent to Jacob. It says there – “He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the service of man, that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine that makes glad the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread which strengthens man’s heart.” It is indeed a great encouragement to an aged saint’s faith to know that Christ is the One who is richly giving them all things to enjoy, in terms of their earthly comforts. They prize the heavenly comforts, and the encouragements which Christ’s grace brings, far more than any earthly comforts and gifts, but our God and our Christ are responsible for our having both.

This leads me to ask – Do you thank God every day for the good gifts of earthly things that He gives you? Does your heart rejoice in the Lord for the legitimate earthly enjoyments and pleasures that He has given you? Joseph was very concerned with every aspect of his father’s comfort in order that he might be an encouragement to his faith and uplift his spirit. It says of Jacob in verse 27 – “When he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived.” Let us ask ourselves whether we think of what we ourselves could give to a older believing father or mother to encourage them? Or even what we might give to our believing relatives; something which would encourage their faith?

We could apply this also to any saint whom we know who is in need of encouragement to their faith. Can we help them by giving them or supplying to them some item that will make their life easier or more pleasant to them? Can we take them out for a meal? Can we buy their air plane ticket so that they might come to see us? These are the kind of things that show the love of Christ to those who need it. In Joseph’s case he was very generous and very thorough in his preparations for his father. This was one of the real things that revived the spirit of their father. Let us understand that the way that we come to think this way, and to act this way, is to recognize that our

Lord looks at our lives, and He studies our experience to see how He might encourage and revive our spirit. He is generous and thoughtful in what He does for each one of us who is looking to Him for grace; no matter how weak our faith. Let us remember that He is this way and rejoice today. May it revive your spirit.

**4<sup>th</sup> – Joseph revived the faith of his brothers by making them his witnesses.**

(verses 24-28)

Joseph's brothers succeeded in reviving Jacob's heart by declaring Joseph's "resurrection"; his being alive. When I say Joseph's resurrection, I hope that you will understand that I am not referring to his literal resurrection. He had never died during this whole ordeal. I am referring to his resurrection in the minds of his brothers and in the mind and heart of his father. They had all thought that he was dead. He was now proving that this thought was quite wrong. Joseph sent his brothers away to His father saying in verse 24 – "See that you do not become troubled along the way". The King James says – "See that you fall not out by the way." The Septuagint says, "Be not angry by the way". These phrases are all applicable to our study. Jesus Christ is not dead. He is very much alive and active in our lives.

One of the great obstacles to our being good witnesses of Christ's grace is that we become troubled over what either we ourselves have done in the past in terms of sins that we have committed, or we become angry over the sins that others have committed which have affected our lives. We know what we should have done, or what others should have done, but we are not willing to put these things under the blood of Christ or to cover them in love. Joseph did not want to see any of this retrospection taking place on their journey back to Canaan. It would not profit them, and it would take away their joy in relation to what he had done, and was doing for them. It would blunt the witness and testimony of the strength and power of his grace to help them. He was determined to bring good out of evil. He wanted his brothers to cooperate with him in this. That is why he exhorts them not to fall out on the way. How many Christians need this exhortation today. We are all in similar circumstances at some point in our Christian life.

What is the answer to this sinful tendency? I think that it is to be a joyful expectant Christian, believing that God has called us to be good witnesses not only to unbelievers, but to the people that he has put us closest to in this life; our parents and our children especially. Sometimes people, even Christian people will not believe your witness that Jesus is alive; that is, that He is actually looking out to see how He can revive their faith, or in the case of unbelievers, save them from their sins. They have had much to discourage faith in their lives, and they will not cast out their unbelief easily.

They do not want a faith based on pious platitudes. But we who have found that Jesus lives and moves in our lives every day to encourage and strengthen our faith, we should bring the carts of God's promises to them. There are many evidences of His love, and we need to show them these. We should show them and tell them all of what Christ has done for us. And we should point out to them to the evidences of Christ's love and grace and concern for all the details of their lives. This often will make a difference with them. It will often be the means that the Lord will use to encourage and strengthen their fainting faith. Let us give them the promises of Christ in His Word, and let also show them how generous and kind He has been to us, in the many details of our lives. Then they will hopefully say with Jacob – "It is enough." "Joseph is still alive." "I will go and see him before I die."