

Genesis 45: 16-28; "And Jacob's heart stood still", Sermon # 109 in the series - "Beginnings", Delivered on August 26th, 2007, by Pastor Paul Rendall, on August 26th, 2007.

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. I believe, that now that they were all two years into the seven years of famine, that Pharaoh was extremely pleased with Joseph's wise counsel to store up the grain. He had probably often thought of possible ways that he could somehow pay Joseph back for all the good that he had done for him and for his country. When he found out about Joseph's relatives coming, I'm sure that he jumped at the chance to do Joseph the kindness of putting forth all of his kingly prerogatives to the task of welcoming them. I intend to continue today, to use Pharaoh as a type of God the Father in relationship to Joseph, who we have seen over and over is one of the most eminent types of Christ in all the Bible. It is the love of God and Christ toward fallen sinners that we have studying as we study the life of Joseph. We have seen that Joseph's brothers so hated him, 23 years before, that they sold him down into Egypt. They thought that he was dead, but now they have come to find out that he is not only alive, but he is reigning over all the land as second in command to Pharaoh. Indeed, he says in verses 8 and 9, "So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and 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.'" Now that he had revealed himself to his brothers and had assured them of their forgiveness for their past sins against him; he now proposes to make them bearers of this good news to their father back at home. 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. How would he take the news that Joseph was really alive and ruler over all the land of Egypt?

I have already read to you the verses of Jacob's reaction. When he was told that his son Joseph was still alive, the text says, "his heart stood still, because he did not believe them." His faith had fallen so low that it had reached a crisis point with him. It threatened to make him into a man who could not believe that good things could come to him, or that even the people of his own family could be trusted. But somehow, we shall see, the Lord gave him grace to be able to cast out this unbelief and to walk by faith. The questions that we are asking this morning are these. "How did the Lord use Joseph to bring Jacob to the

point where he could cast out his unbelief?" "And how can we be used by Christ, as His brethren, to do the same thing for others whose faith is faltering?" "How can we do this for those who do not even have saving faith, as of yet, in the Lord Jesus Christ?" Once again, we find that Joseph is a type of Christ, here, in the things that he does specifically to revive his father's faith. Joseph revived his father's faith, and Christ can revive your as well; or even create faith where there has never been faith before. He creates faith and revives faith in these following 4 ways.

1st - Pharaoh gives Joseph promises and commands to give to his brethren which applied not only to Jacob but to his whole family.

(Verses 17-20)

"And Pharaoh said to Joseph, '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 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 Joseph. 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 is an errand related to Jacob's faith being strengthened. It is something that is very important to both Jacob's physical and 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. And 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 mood of his 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, and now perhaps Simeon." "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. He came to your sin-sick soul and He saved you. Christ was 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 mate got cancer and didn't recover. You lost a parent, or a brother or sister to death. And now it just seems as if nothing can ever be right. You are resolved still to glorify God in the things that you do and say, but something is different. It is that your faith is

very low, and you don't seem to be able to bring it up to engage God so that you will be joyful and winsome again. 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 and know 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 our 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 He 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 is the head of the family and he is 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 the presence of Christ, there will be enough. 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 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, this world, and he wanted Jacob to come to Him, to be with him where he was. We need to go to Jesus Christ, in this world, and find our joy and happiness there with Him. It is not enough simply to have the privileges of salvation and to live in the Land of Promise. It is enough to have Christ and to be in His presence. Sometimes true Christians forget this, that their Christ is the most powerful man in all this world that we live in. But you would never know it by the way that they think and live. It is because their faith has fainted. So instead of blaming such people when we see that this is the case, what should we do? We should do what Joseph's brethren were commanded to do. We 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. 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 be simply believing the simple truth that Jesus Christ is raised from the dead? Was it not in your simply resting upon His promise 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? Sometimes they become discouraged because you do not seem to show any interest in spiritual things. But now that you have come to realize that Joseph is really alive, and that he has revealed himself to you; will you not come and try to bring that encouraging news to your fathers and mothers and those whose faith has fallen low with waiting? They wanted to bring you to Christ, but they couldn't until He revealed Himself to you. Now He Himself has come to your soul. So will you not think of how you can encourage them?

"Bring your father and your households and come to me," Joseph tells his brothers to tell his father. This is how it ought to be when anyone with relatives comes to Christ. They ought to go to them and tell them that they know that Jesus is alive. They ought to recount the promises of God, the rich supply of grace that they have experienced, and that they now know that many good things have been stored up for them in their Joseph, Jesus Christ. "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? 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 never participated in the wicked acts of other and were never gross sinners 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.

2ndly- 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." The exercise of faith is dependent upon the promise of God and Christ. 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, it says that the inheritance of things related to eternal life and salvation are "not of the law." "For if the inheritance is of the law, it is not longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham as a promise." And he is giving to the family of Jacob in this same way as well. 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. You will see this if you turn to Isaiah 61: 10. It says there, "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 he or she receives salvation as a gift and lives the Christian life in that way. His soul greatly rejoices in the Lord. He greatly rejoices in the Lord. It is our greatest joy to know Him 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 will be provided for richly by Him in His grace. There are garments given to God's Elect that cover the shame of the past. There are garments that give us joy in the present. The garment of Justification by Faith is this way. When we believe in Jesus Christ we are declared righteous by God. We are seen by Him and accepted by Him and welcomed to receive all the other blessings of salvation for Christ's sake. This is seen in our text in the way that Pharaoh saw, and welcomed and treated Joseph's brothers. He treated them so graciously, 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 our salvation, our hearts are like ground which the Lord tills and cultivates as a garden which brings forth the things which He by His grace sows in them. Jesus had to suffer in the Garden of Gethsemane and upon the cross in order to purchase the garments and to be able to be the One who give us all we need to live and flourish spiritually and to bear fruit unto Him. Justification covers us with the robe of Christ's righteousness. And this robe of righteousness also covers us when we are going forth into the world to live the Christian life. To encourage ourselves and to be an encouragement to faith of others we must see the greatness of the gift given to us by Christ. Turn with me to Romans 5: 15. Contrasting what was brought to us through both Adam and Christ, the Apostle Paul 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." 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 through 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 Christ gives us our spiritual clothes for all the same reasons. We need to recognize that Christ has given us clothes for every occasion and rejoice that we have them to wear. Let us put them on. To "put on Christ" means that we will make no provision for the flesh or its lusts. To clothe ourselves with Christ means that we as younger people will submit to the older and all of us would be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility." (1 Peter 5: 5) But most of all, to be clothed in these garments would mean that we will be able to rejoice day by day in our Lord's faithfulness and care over our lives. Then being encouraged in our own faith, we may be an encouragement to others. These garments given by Joseph to his brethren were there not only for themselves to be encouraged by, but they were meant to be a witness of Joseph's love and care for his father. So too, the garments of salvation are not meant simply to be an encouragement and provision for ourselves, but they show others whom we love Who it is Who really sustains our faith; and Who it is Who really cares for, and provides for, all of our needs including our faith becoming stronger.

3rdly- 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 we are given to enjoy in this life. Joseph sent a generous sample of these things to his father in order to encourage his fainting spirit. John Gill says that these "good things of Egypt" are translated in the Targum of Jonathan as "wines", the wines of Egypt. Gill says, that Jarchi, one of the Hebrew Rabbins

says that there were no wines in Egypt, but imported ancient wines "for ancient men". But Psalm 104: 14 and 15 are a better representation of what perhaps was given. "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 aged saint's faith to know that Christ is the One who is richly giving us all things to enjoy, in terms of our earthly comforts. We prize the heavenly comforts and encouragements of grace far more than any earthly comforts and gifts, but our God and our Christ are responsible for our having both. 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 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 them or do for them to 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 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 this is to recognize that our Christ looks at our lives and studies to see how He might encourage and revive the spirit of each one of his saints. He is generous and thoughtful in what He does for each one who is looking to Him for grace, no matter how weak their faith. Let us remember that He is this way and rejoice today. May it revive your spirit.

4th- Christ creates faith and revives the faith of his faltering people by making his brethren his witnesses. They succeed by declaring Joseph's "resurrection". (Verses 24- 28)

When I say Joseph's resurrection, I hope that you understand by now that I am not referring to Joseph's literal resurrection. He had never died during this ordeal. I am referring to his "resurrection" in the life of his brothers and in the life of his father. They had 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, and 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. Joseph's brothers obeyed him in this command that he gave to them. It says in verse 25, "Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father." "And they told him, saying, "Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." "And Jacob's heart stood still, because he did not believe them." Sometimes people, even Christian people will not believe our witness that Jesus is alive and he is 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, 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 love and grace and concern for all the details of their lives. This is often the means that the Lord Jesus will use to encourage and strengthen the fainting faith of his people. Let us give them the promises of Christ in His Word and 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."