

New Life Family Matters

March 2006

Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine near a spring, whose branches climb over a wall.

²³ *With bitterness archers attacked him; they shot at him with hostility.*

²⁴ *But his bow remained steady, his strong arms stayed limber, **because of the hand** of the Mighty One of Jacob, **because of the Shepherd**, the Rock of Israel, Gen 49:22-24 NIV*

Because...

In the last few years our world has experienced tremendous geological and political events that have spanned our globe with an impending sense of “what’s next?” On a more personal scale, but nonetheless tumultuous, many individuals and families have been shaken by all kinds of relational earthquakes and physically challenging upheavals. The man described in the above verses knew this assessment as true of his own life too, but within the historical account of his life we see an empowering grace that was unearned and yet abundantly bestowed. Joseph lived in and experienced grace to save: from himself, from his familial and societal tendencies toward selfishness, from ecological upheavals (famine), and the circumstances of life that relegate us from victors to victims. Joseph is a Biblical example of how to live in tumultuous times. (See Gen. 37-50)

Because...

It takes grace to know grace, Joseph responded to God’s initiating and sustaining grace by intentionally living a life of grateful dependency before the Lord. He chose to live among those within his circle of influence with a heart of humility and service that was not his natural demeanor. His adult years didn’t start out this way, but the pressures of life and God’s grace shaped his heart. He is an example to us in how we might experience the power of our resurrected Savior promised to us throughout our everyday lives.

Because...

Jesus promised us an eternal quality of life on the planet. This promise does not come with an exempt certificate from life’s pressures and pain, rather, Jesus promises us an ability to stand strong in the face of them and shine forth with hope and endurance. Ours is to choose to believe: by getting honest with Him about ourselves, by turning in trust to His Lordship, by yielding ourselves fully to Him as Master, and by following His example of living a life-giving relationship with His (and ours too) loving heavenly Father. Joseph learned the secret of experiencing God’s promises for life by returning again and again to the Promiser. Here are a few promises to fuel our hope, trust, and love.

“I am the Gate. Anyone who goes through me will be cared for — will freely go in and out, and find pasture. ¹⁰ A thief is only there to steal and kill and destroy. I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of.” John 10:9-10 (The Mess.)

“If death got the upper hand through one man's wrongdoing, can you imagine the breathtaking recovery life makes, sovereign life, in those who grasp with both hands this wildly extravagant life-gift, this grand setting-everything-right; that the one man Jesus Christ provides?” Rom 5:17 (The Mess.)

“Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ's love for us? There is no way! Not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, not even the worst sins listed in Scripture... ³⁷ None of this fazes us because Jesus loves us.” Rom 8:35-38 (The Mess.)

When life on the planet “hits-the-proverbial-fan” –when pressures mount and seem unbearable we need to remember that God isn't angry, but sovereignly orchestrating His plan for us with a love that hopes we will turn to Him daily; and moment by moment as necessary. He desires that we respond by acts of faith that sow spiritual seeds into our lives and our world. Let's choose to live out the essentials of our faith walk with Jesus. Joseph shows us God's heart to see us through victoriously.

Pastor Dave