

Lenten Devotional March 5, 2024

Scripture

Genesis 45:1-15

1 Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Send everyone away from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. 2 And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. 3 Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. 5 And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. 6 For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. 7 God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. 8 So 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 ruler over all the land of Egypt. 9 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 delay. 10 You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. 11 I will provide for you there - since there are five more years of famine to come - so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.' 12 And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you. 13 You must tell my father how greatly I am honored in Egypt, and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here." 14 Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. 15 And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

Devotion

Elizabeth Nicodemus '23

I can't be the only one that reads this passage and the forgiveness that Joseph has for his brothers (who sold him into slavery!) and be left wondering how Joseph could possibly forgive them. They not only sold Joseph, but we are not told whether they looked for Joseph in the years that followed; and they more than likely did not. Any one of us would probably not welcome the one who wronged us into our lives again, at least not in the way that Joseph has. Joseph, however, not only welcomes them in but shows them such great love and compassion. He grants them the solace to spend the rest of the famine with him, in land that he will provide them. He has shown them unconditional love.

As we read this text during this Lenten season, may we realize that we have been forgiven despite all that we've done. Like Joseph's brothers, we have been blessed with unconditional love: the unconditional love that Christ's death provided and continues to provide for all of us. This love knows no bounds and exceeds any and all expectations. Just like the love and grace Joseph shows his brothers, we are shown this same love everyday as people of faith. We have been forgiven just like Joseph's brothers and are loved by a God who sees us and knows us and loves us no matter what. May we spend this season in contemplation about the unconditional love that we have been given.

Prayer

God of love, open our hearts and minds to the ways that you have loved us. Grant us the peace to know that we are not defined by our past mistakes. Show us how we can love others despite the ways that we have been wronged. Allow us to love others as we are loved. In your name, Amen.