

## Lenten Devotional March 3, 2018

### Scripture

#### Genesis 43:16-34

<sup>16</sup>When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, 'Bring the men into the house, and slaughter an animal and make ready, for the men are to dine with me at noon.' <sup>17</sup>The man did as Joseph said, and brought the men to Joseph's house. <sup>18</sup>Now the men were afraid because they were brought to Joseph's house, and they said, 'It is because of the money, replaced in our sacks the first time, that we have been brought in, so that he may have an opportunity to fall upon us, to make slaves of us and take our donkeys.' <sup>19</sup>So they went up to the steward of Joseph's house and spoke with him at the entrance to the house. <sup>20</sup>They said, 'Oh, my lord, we came down the first time to buy food; <sup>21</sup>and when we came to the lodging-place we opened our sacks, and there was each one's money in the top of his sack, our money in full weight. So we have brought it back with us. <sup>22</sup>Moreover, we have brought down with us additional money to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks.' <sup>23</sup>He replied, 'Rest assured, do not be afraid; your God and the God of your father must have put treasure in your sacks for you; I received your money.' Then he brought Simeon out to them. <sup>24</sup>When the steward had brought the men into Joseph's house, and given them water, and they had washed their feet, and when he had given their donkeys fodder, <sup>25</sup>they made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon, for they had heard that they would dine there. <sup>26</sup>When Joseph came home, they brought him the present that they had carried into the house, and bowed to the ground before him. <sup>27</sup>He inquired about their welfare, and said, 'Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?' <sup>28</sup>They said, 'Your servant our father is well; he is still alive.' And they bowed their heads and did obeisance. <sup>29</sup>Then he looked up and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, 'Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me? God be gracious to you, my son!' <sup>30</sup>With that, Joseph hurried out, because he was overcome with affection for his brother, and he was about to weep. So he went into a private room and wept there. <sup>31</sup>Then he washed his face and came out; and controlling himself he said, 'Serve the meal.' <sup>32</sup>They served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians could not eat with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians. <sup>33</sup>When they were seated before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth, the men looked at one another in amazement. <sup>34</sup>Portions were taken to them from Joseph's table, but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

### Devotional

#### The Rev. Adam M. Davis, Associate Pastor, Thoburn United Methodist Church, St. Clairsville, Ohio / Field Education Supervisor

This passage from the first book of the Bible details the beautiful reunion of Joseph with his estranged family. In large part, this account is why Joseph is held high before us as a model of biblical forgiveness. In spite of the (beyond) ill treatment Joseph received at the hands of his brothers, not to mention the cascading disasters that followed, Joseph was able to arrive at a place of forgiveness and reconciliation.

What is not highlighted in this particular passage, however, is Joseph's own role in provoking the ire of his brothers, or the ways that Joseph, in turn, tortured his brothers before arriving at this blessed place of reunion. Certainly one can understand the difficulty Joseph would have experienced in encountering his brothers so many years later, with the tables having been turned in the dynamics of their relationship in such a profound way.

So, while we admire Joseph and his willingness to forgive, we look beyond Joseph to Jesus as our model—Jesus, who calls us to turn the other cheek; Jesus, who calls us to bless, heal, and forgive.

**Prayer**

Most gracious God, we thank you for those who have modeled for us what it looks like to follow you. Thank you for the many times we have been forgiven. Make us faithful to give as we have received. As we continue to face our own humanity throughout this season, make us your instruments of healing and peace. Amen.