

The Weekly Word

Feb 18-24, 2013

Time flies when you are having fun. 2013 is flying by, so we must be having fun reading Genesis! Happy reading...

Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

Monday, February 18: Genesis 42– Living with guilt...

I found myself hearing this account through the ears of Joseph's brothers. As Joseph plies them with questions, they had some interesting comments among themselves. *They said to one another, "Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen; that's why this distress has come upon us." Reuben replied, "Didn't I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn't listen! Now we must give an accounting for his blood"* (21-22).

For years they have lived quietly with the guilt of killing their brother. In this situation the guilt breaks the surface of their lives.

Later as they are traveling home they have a strange reaction to finding the silver in their sacks. "*What is this that God has done to us?*" (27) they exclaim. As if they are being punished not blessed. Again, guilt drives their response.

Most of us carry guilt for things we have done that were wrong. We may not show it to others, but it lives in us and in those quiet moments or connected moments, it explodes in to the conscious portion of our lives!

One of the great gifts of God through Jesus is that God not only forgives our sins, He takes away our guilt and shame by lavishing on us His audacious love.

Do you know the love of God the Father through believing and receiving Jesus Christ, His Son? Think about it...

Lord Jesus, praise for saving me, offering salvation, forgiveness and a clean slate to all who put their faith in You. May the world know the peace only You can give. Amen.

Tuesday, February 19: Genesis 43– What is God up to?...

This chapter ends leaving plenty of questions and resolving none of them. It feels like a strange place to pause my reading and this is multiplied since I know the story.

Life is lived like this, however. Life is lived one day at a time and most of the time we do not know the outcome of the situations we find ourselves in. Life is full of ambiguity and uncertain endings. And with that, for me at least, wondering about what God is up to and wondering how things will turn out.

I stopped and reread my last sentence. Before my eyes are two different ways to live. One understands God to be involved in life and the other does not need God to be involved.

Which way do you live life? Do you leave room for God or have you shut Him out of life?

Whatever situation you find yourself in, are you your solution? Work harder, make the right contact, apply for the right job, go to the right school, find the right soul mate... you catch my

drift. Are you the master of your destiny or is there room for the workings of Almighty God in your life?

I prefer to live with God at the core of my life. This doesn't absolve me from living wisely or give me a get out of jail free card. But it does give me someone to seek and counsel with when I am perplexed or uncertain. It does provide me with a 'due north' for my life from which I can orient my thoughts, aspirations and character.

Are you walking with God or are you doing it alone?

Jesus, be the center and source of my life. To You I surrender all, that I may walk with You all the days of my life! Amen.

Wednesday, February 20: Genesis 44– Taking responsibility...

Judah is a man of his word. The unthinkable happened and Benjamin, who apparently stole from Joseph, is sentenced to life long slavery in Egypt. Judah who gave his word to his father to protect Ben, steps up and offers his life and servitude for Benjamin's! What amazing love, what amazing honor to the Father. Judah offers himself in Benjamin's place!

Jesus made the same offer for you and me and the world... although the stakes for Jesus were a bit higher. We had, in fact, sinned –not just apparently sinned- and our sin was against God in heaven and our punishment eternal death. Yet, Jesus to honor His Father and out of love for us, stepped up and took the penalty that we deserved. Jesus died in our place.

Judah's offer sparked thoughts of Jesus action... as I sat with the Lord and His Word this morning. And I find myself blessing and thanking the Lord in response to this meditation.

Bless the Lord, O my soul and all that is within me Bless His Holy Name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul and forget not ALL His benefits...

He forgives my sins and heals my diseases...

He leads me in paths of righteousness...

He restores my soul...

Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever...

Thanks be to Jesus who took my penalty, forgave me all my sins and clothed me in His own righteousness!

Alleluia! Amen.

Thursday, February 21: Genesis 45– The Weaving...

As I thought about Joseph and his response to this brothers (see verses 4-7), I recalled a verse from Corrie Ten Boom, titled 'The Weaving':

My life is but a weaving□between my Lord and me,

I cannot choose the colors

He worketh steadily.

Oftimes he weaveth sorrow,

And I in foolish pride

Forget He sees the upper

And I, the underside.

Not till the loom is silent

And the shuttles cease to fly

Shall God unroll the canvas

And explain the reason why.

*The dark threads are as needful
In the Weaver's skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern he has planned.*

Lord, I pray for the wisdom, maturity and eyes of faith—eyes like Joseph and Corrie- to trust that what You are weaving through my life will bring You honor and glory, will advance Your kingdom and proclaim Your love to the ends of the earth.

*This I pray in the name of the God, the Great Weaver, and Jesus Christ, His One and Only Son, my Lord.
Amen.*

Friday, February 22: Genesis 46– Honoring the Lord...

Just as this chapter gets going there is a pause, a space for thanks and honoring of the Lord. Verse 1: *So Israel set out with all that was his, and when he reached Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.*

It has been years since Jacob has seen his son, his son who he thought was dead. In a time of haste and hurry to be reconnected with his lost son, Jacob pauses to offer sacrifices to his God. Jacob pauses to thank his God.

When a blessing comes your way... when God graces you with some gift or kindness, do you pause to thank Him? That's the question that flooded my thoughts as I meditated on this verse.

Lord, help me to develop a grateful, thankful heart... a heart which pauses repeatedly to thank and praise You for Your many blessings. This I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Saturday, February 23: Genesis 47– Prospering in hard times ...

After introducing Joseph's family to Pharaoh, the heart of the chapter describes the extent of the famine and the hard times it produced in Egypt. By the end of the famine the people were reduced to servitude to Pharaoh, with Pharaoh owning all money, land and livestock.

Then comes a stunning verse, verse 27, *Now the Israelites settled in Egypt in the region of Goshen. They acquired property there and were fruitful and increased greatly in number.*

Even during the years of famine and drought, Israel prospered. That can only be attributed to the gracious hand of God. It was not Israel's brilliance, ingenuity, work ethic, or any other human factor. It was due to God's providential hand.

I sat and considered this.

I can hear some TV preachers shouting that God wants His people to prosper even in bad times. That it is ordained for the people of God to have plenty even while others are in want! Even writing this makes me ill. That's not it at all! I probably shouldn't have even written this since it might plant bad Bible understanding in reader's minds.

A better, more faithful to the whole of scripture, place to go is, that God works His salvation plan and no circumstance can thwart God's plan of salvation. Israel needed to be preserved, so that the Messiah could come from her loins. God was preserving Israel. Nothing, not even a horrendous 7-year famine, could undermine God's salvation. So in the midst of the famine, God preserves Israel.

What about me in the 21st century? Where do I connect in the story?

In our time God's plan and purpose is to make disciples of all nations. So a connection I see is that God will preserve and prosper His church so that they can complete His plan of discipling

all peoples of the earth. It is not about my personal prospering, it is about moving ahead in accomplishing God plan of salvation.

My thoughts flip. How am I using the health (preservation) and material resources (prospering) that God has provided me to advance His plan of world discipling? How am I advancing God's kingdom and reign and plan with my life?

Lord, we are almost one sixth through 2013. Is there more You would have me be doing to advance Your agenda of witnessing to the name and salvation found in Jesus to the ends of the earth? Open my eyes to what You would have me do for You. Amen.

Sunday, February 24, 2013, Sunday Worship

If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.

If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at office@pcogonline.org.

Click here for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.