

Life of Joseph

Lessons in Humility, Leadership and Forgiveness

The Brothers Panic

- After Jacob had been buried, Joseph's brothers panicked because they were afraid that Joseph might still be holding a grudge against them for the way they had wronged him [Gen 50:15].
 - Jacob was no longer able to protect them.
 - They doubted that Joseph's forgiveness was real.
- The brothers relayed a message to Joseph supposedly given to them by Jacob before his death [Gen 50:16-17].
 - It is unclear if this message really came from Jacob, but Joseph did not question that.
 - Twice they said "your father" rather than "our father", intending to invoke his obligations as a son, rather than as a sibling.
 - After relaying the message, they asked Joseph directly for his forgiveness, calling themselves servants of God.
 - Joseph was moved to tears because he realized that they still doubted his genuine forgiveness.
- The brothers then fell down before Joseph and offered themselves to be his servants [Gen 50:18].
 - This was, yet again, a fulfillment of Joseph's dreams [Gen 37:6-10].
 - It is significant that the dreams never showed that the brothers would be enslaved to Joseph – only that they would bow down before him.
- Joseph rejected the brothers' offer of servitude and assured them that he had indeed forgiven them [Gen 50:19-21].
 - He started out by attempting to calm their fears.
 - He then turned their attention to God and acknowledged that he could not sit in His place.
 - Joseph recognized God's plan and His purpose for all the things that had happened.
 - He did not pull any punches, calling his brothers out for their evil intentions.
 - But Joseph knew that God's purpose could not be thwarted and He had produced good out of what was intended for evil [Rom 8:28].
 - The brothers called themselves servants of God, but Joseph was the true servant of God, fulfilling his purpose of providing for the family.
 - In assuring them that he would provide for them, Joseph attempted to calm their fears once again.
 - Joseph put the burden of providing for them solely on his own shoulders, realizing that God would enable him to do so.
 - His demeanor and words brought comfort to his brothers as he spoke very tenderly to them.