

into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

It was enough. Judah's plea for his father and for his father's favored son convinced Joseph that a change in his brother's attitude had occurred. Enough of a change anyway, to allow the release of the pent up emotions he had contained for so long a time. Joseph was ready to reveal himself and his heart of love to them. Here is a fruitful example of an injured one counting the words and actions he observes as enough evidence to forgive the offender. Perhaps not a legally provable, defendable repentance, but enough to trigger an assumption of the best take one could put on their words and actions. We are not judges of one another but faithful "keepers" of our brothers and sisters. The optimism of a loving heart takes sway over the suspicions of a legal mind. We are to nourish that attitude in our relationships with others, especially our brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul shows us the more excellent way.

1Corinthians 13:4 *Love has long patience, is kind; ... does not seek what is its own, is not quickly provoked, does not impute evil, ... bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

2Corinthians 2:6 *Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. 7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. 8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him.*

Philippians 2:3 *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

And having put the most favorable construction upon a brother's or sister's actions, if we should later be disappointed we are in a good position to again seek their soul. That's what God does. When an Assembly happily is called upon to determine the reality of an errant one's repentance, it has the Resource "there am I in the midst of them," Matthew 18:20. It is the temple of the Holy Spirit in that place. We might well observe here that Joseph had the mind of Christ in his conduct with his brethren..

Needless to say, the brothers were astonished and confounded. Joseph patiently and compassionately seeks to ease their troubled hearts. Not that a heart troubled about one's sins ought to be shut down by others. Repentance is spiritually and emotionally cleansing. Of course, persistant mourning over one's past failure can develop into an unhealthy self-occupation. We need to encourage personal occupation with Christ through the scriptures. And yet we can be watchful in case of a relapse that can discourage and dishearten a recovering soul.

Joseph gives them a marvelous explanation of God's underlying plan and His role in the seemingly random, fortuitous events leading up to this situation. "God did send me to preserve life." **Now God has sent His Son.**

"John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son*

The Lord Jesus' mission was that the world through Him might be saved. To preserve life, for apart from His substitutionary death on the cross none could or would be saved. God sent His only Son to die for my sins and yours. But He had a greater mission, much broader in scope than simply saving you and me. God's Eternal Purpose is to head up all things in Christ. And saved human souls are essential to the Plan. God's Christ would acquire a Gentile Bride. You and I were saved personally so we could comprise His **Assembly**, the church, His Heavenly **Bride**. His Bride is to reign with Him over His earthly people **Israel**. Israel will be "resurrected" nationally when He returns to preserve the world from utter self destruction. He will live and rule 1000 years on the earth as head of all the nations. Joseph's story portrays this future outcome while enabling it by saving Israel's children from certain starvation. God was preserving and preparing them for the huge role they were to play in His Plan for the history of the world. The Bible tells that extraordinary story. And the New Testament reveals the hidden purpose of God to head up all things in Christ (as He did, in type, in Joseph). So God, through Joseph, provided a refuge for the Israelites. They who were guilty of rejecting Joseph then found themselves being saved and preserved and blessed by him. The Prophet Zechariah touchingly reports the yet future fulfillment.

John 19:34 *But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. ... that the scripture should be fulfilled, They shall look on him whom they pierced.*

Zechariah 12:10 *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. 11 In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. 12 And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; 13 The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; 14 All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.*

Acts 2:36 *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. 37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

So, Do not quarrel on the way (verse 24, DBY).

By Ronald Canner, February 16, 2011