



Vayechi

(and lived)

B'reshit 47:28-50:26

Uh-oh!

B'reshit 50:15

And when Yoseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "It may be that Yoseph will hate us, and will fully repay us all the evil which we did to him."

Have you ever noticed how some people always think the worst about other people? Have you ever wondered why they do this? Simply put: that is what is in their hearts. Please consider this passage.

Matithyah [Matthew] 15:18-20

18 But the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and they defile the man.

19 For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders;

20 these are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.

While it is important that we eat clean food as defined by Scripture, it is not the eating of clean food with unwashed hands that defiles us. It is not what goes into our mouths that make us unclean, but it is what comes out of our mouths.

The reason that Yoseph's brothers thought that he might repay them for all the evil that they had done, was because that is what they probably would have done. In our culture today, that

is called “projection”. When one person accuses another person of all sorts of evil, then we need to take a step back and look at the person making such accusations. Why? Simply because, one who is making such accusations, is most likely doing so because he is seeing a reflection of his own dark heart in others.

What Yoseph’s brothers could not comprehend, was a person’s heart being so pure, that when another person does evil to him, he actually forgives the person who so wronged him; and he is even thankful and praises Elohim for it. Who does that kind of thing, anyway?

Yoseph’s brothers were so sure that Yoseph was now going to take the opportunity to get even with them now that their father was dead, that they began conspiring once again. This is a very sad situation that is recorded for our instruction, upon whom the end of the ages has come.

The one thing that the text does not tell us, but that we can most likely rightly surmise, is that Benjamin was not involved in this discussion, since he did not take part in the original conspiracy. This little plot was hatched out once again by Yoseph’s ten older brothers. The only difference now, is that Yoseph was clearly in the driver’s seat and they knew it all too well. And they were very much afraid for their lives. I mean, after all, they had tried to kill him.

Cowards

B’reshit 50:16-17

16 And they sent a message to Yoseph, saying, “Your father did command before he died, saying,

17 ‘So shall you say to Yoseph, “Please, forgive the transgression of your brothers, and their sin, for the evil they did to you.”’ And now, please, forgive the transgression of the servants of the Elohim of your father.” And Yoseph wept when they spoke to him.

These verses are quite informative about what is going on. Please note first of all, that Yoseph’s brothers did not go to him right away and face him personally. They sent word to him. They not only were afraid for their lives, but they were cowards as well. That is the thing about bullies; most often they are bullies because they are cowards on the inside, so they bully in order to hide what is truly in their hearts. And particularly when the advantage is not in their favor, their true colors will shine right through for all to see, who are willing to be honest with what they are seeing. In this case, Yoseph’s brothers were afraid and not willing to face the music which they themselves set in motion.

The next thing that we need to take note of, is that his brothers state that “your” father, rather than saying “our” father. Why do you suppose they did that? Well, most likely because the way that they said it carries more weight than saying “our” father. They wanted Yoseph to think that Ya’aqov was speaking directly to Yoseph, rather than speaking to all of them. They also knew that Yoseph loved his father very much, and they also wanted to capitalize upon those feelings of love.

The next thing of which we need to take note, is that they simply fabricated this whole story. Simply put, they lied! They lied once again. For as old as they now were, they had not learned much in life because they were still lying to try to get out of a jam. (A jam, by the way, that was only imagined in their own minds.) Had they ever taken the time to get to know their little brother, they would have seen a heart that was incapable of revenge of any sort. They would have seen a man that only saw the good in others, and always saw the hand of Elohim at work in his life at all times. Whether those times were good (like now when he was the ruler of Egypt) or when they were bad (like when he spent so many years in the dungeon for no wrong doing on his part).

We are not told exactly when it was that they went to face Yoseph to his face, but they did at some point, perhaps at his beckoning. But the last portion of verse seventeen seems to indicate that they asked their brother Yoseph to his face, to forgive them. Now notice what happens when they do this. Yoseph weeps.

If you have ever had someone you love come and accuse you of things that you would never even dream of doing, ever, for any reason, then you can understand exactly why Yoseph wept. If you have never had this happen to you, then you may have difficulty empathizing with this part of the story. Yoseph wept because his brothers were stuck in the past. Even after all the time that they had spent with Yoseph in Egypt (17 years), they still did not know him. It seems that they could not get past the turmoil of their own hearts to see the wonderful shalom in their brother Yoseph’s heart. This shalom was equally available to each one of them. However, they could not embrace it because they had not allowed YHWH to deal with them in the way that He wanted to deal with them. They were too busy hiding. They were hiding from themselves and hiding from the past.

A Personal Appearance

B’reshit 50:18

And his brothers also went and fell down before his face; and they said, "Behold, we are your servants."

This is quite a reversal of their earlier attitude in which they taunted him that he was a dreamer, and they would never bow down before him. Now here they are, eating their words. The saddest thing, was that they were not sincere in what they were doing. If it had not been for the reality that their brother had the power of life and death in his hands, they would not be doing it now. What we see in the verses before this, is that the reason they were bowing down before Yoseph now and saying these words, was to preserve their own skins; and they could see no other way out of the situation except doing this.

Please consider the following passages.

Romans 13:7

Render to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

Yoseph's brothers did this, at least outwardly.

Romans 13:1

Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers; for there is no power except from Elohim; and the powers that be are ordained of Elohim.

We are to be in subjection to those whom YHWH places in authority over us. And we are to do this from a heart of love for our Elohim.

Ivrim [Hebrews] 13:17

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them; for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief; for this would be unprofitable for you.

It is right and good to be in subjection to those who watch over us. Yoseph was YHWH's man of the hour. He was a benevolent benefactor. The problem was, that his brothers were so caught up in the past that they could not see this. The only thing that they could see, was their own needs. Yoseph's brothers were conducting themselves in such a way that it was causing grief in Yoseph rather than joy.

Fear Not!

B'reshit 50:19

And Yoseph said to them, "Fear not; for am I in the place of Elohim?"

Yoseph had the perfect perspective. Yoseph's brothers did not share this same perspective. Their perspective was flawed. Why? Because the focus of Yoseph's brothers was not on YHWH, it was on something other than YHWH.

Let us examine these two perspectives. First, Yoseph was in the place of authority for the very reason that he had the right perspective. He knew that Elohim was Sovereign over His creation, and that nothing happened to him without YHWH's say-so. Furthermore, Yoseph was willing to accept YHWH's will, regardless of what it meant for him, personally. He was very much available to YHWH, for Him to do with Yoseph as He desired. Therefore, YHWH was able to place him in a position of authority.

In contrast to this, Yoseph's brothers did not share this same perspective. Their perspective was one that is very common today. Their perspective was one of randomness. They did not see YHWH's hand in everything that happened. The truth of the matter is, that nothing bad happens to His people. Please consider this passage.

Romans 8:28

And we know that to them that love Elohim all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to His purpose.

While Yoseph knew this to be absolutely true, his brothers did not understand this elementary truth. Had they known this, they would not have felt the need to conspire to lie once again.

Do you know that today you are in exactly the place that YHWH needs for you to be? Do you know this to the degree that you feel no need to complain about anything? Hummm.... Yea but preacher, if you only knew what my circumstances are, then you would not say that. Well, are you spending years of your life in prison as Yoseph did? The Scripture records no complaining by Yoseph. Nothing except an acceptance of whatever it was that Elohim had for him.

Yoseph's brothers on the other hand, wanted to be in control of their own personal situations and circumstances. What they did not realize, was that in taking this position, they were severely limiting the hand of YHWH in their lives.

It's All About Perspective

B'reshit 50:20

“And as for you, you meant evil against me; but Elohim meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.”

What is good? What is evil?

The use of these two words today has lost its mooring to Scriptural definitions. These two words, even in religious circles, and perhaps *especially* in religious circles, are used with flippant disregard of what Scripture teaches us about them. There are religious teachers all across this world today, who define what is right and good, and wrong and evil, according to the dictates of their own fleshly minds. Will man ever learn the lesson of the Garden of Eden?

The very first commandment that Elohim gave to mankind, was that he was not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Yet, we as humans are constantly eating from this tree, even today. There is only one Being qualified to make a proper determination of what is good and what is evil. His name is YHWH. No other being is qualified to determine what is good and what is evil. To attempt to do so, is eating of this forbidden fruit.

Most often, when mankind makes these arbitrary determinations of what is good and what is evil, he is doing so based on a selfish perspective of fairness. When a person states that something is not fair, that person is eating of the forbidden Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Yoseph's brothers did not understand these things. They violated this commandment repeatedly by taking matters into their own hands, rather than trusting in YHWH to work things out according to His will and according to His time. Many times we fallible humans do this same thing in an attempt to force things to happen according to the way we think that they should happen. When we do this, we have eaten of the forbidden fruit. Furthermore, when we take matters into our own hands, we are revealing the presence of an impurity in our heart, that unless we allow Elohim to deal with it according to His will and His ways, will separate us from the best that YHWH has available for us and put it out of our reach. And unless one repents of these sinful actions, this path will remove any possibility of His best for us forever!

While Yoseph's brothers meant harm (evil) towards their brother, the protection that YHWH gave to Yoseph was a direct result of Yoseph's understanding and submission to His will for his

life. When we walk in perfect harmony with YHWH's Spirit, doing and saying as He directs us moment by moment, then no matter what happens to us in this life is okay, for we know that YHWH is watching over us and His shalom fills us. Therefore, we can be at peace with Elohim, with our fellow man, and with whatever circumstances that YHWH puts us through.

Fear Not!

B'reshit 50:21

"Now therefore fear not; I will nourish you, and your little ones." And he comforted them, and spoke kindly to them.

Yoseph was watching his brothers as he spoke to them. He apparently could see that the words that he was speaking were not quite getting through. He told them twice in the space of a couple of sentences that there was no reason for them to be afraid. But Yoseph could see that his brothers needed more than mere words, they needed a demonstration of love.

Yoseph went to them and comforted them. He did not yell at them! Wow, what a heart of gold Yoseph had! He spoke kind words of reassurance to them, and promised them that he would take care of not only them, but their families as well. The feelings of insecurity that his brothers felt that day probably did not go away that day. Yoseph most likely had to show them day after day, that his word was good. He said that he would take care of them, and he did, day after day, all through the years.

May all of the leaders that YHWH sets over His people be as kind, compassionate, and loving towards His people, as this man Yoseph was towards all His brothers, even though they had sought to do him harm.

ABBA YHWH, we ask that You would mold our hearts into hearts like Yoseph's so that we can display Your love to those around us at all times and in all circumstances; in the name of Yeshua our Mashiach, Amein.

Shabbat Shalom

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