

TO PRAY "THY WILL BE DONE", I MUST BE WILLING, IF THE
ANSWER REQUIRES IT, THAT MY WILL BE UNDONE

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Seeking God's Will

Genesis Chapter 46

As you're reading this chapter, it's important to notice "Beersheba," a little pit stop between Canaan and Egypt. It's here that Jacob takes a moment to pause and reflect on God's will. If we look back on his father in Genesis Chapter 26 we see that God specifically told Isaac not to go down to Egypt. The circumstances were similar as both times there had been a famine in the land of Canaan, and Egypt was the place to get food.

At the end of the last chapter we could sense the excitement as Jacob said, "I'm convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die." But the question remained, was it in line with God's will?

I don't know a single person who wouldn't rush out to see their son the moment they found out he was alive. I'm sure Jacob felt that way too. His long-lost son was waiting for him.

Here's the thing—I'm impatient. When I want to do something, I set my mind to it, and when I'm excited about it there's no slowing me down. But that's not the best way of handling things—and by God's grace I'm learning to breathe, to give thanks, and to seek His will before stepping out.

I get the sense that Jacob is doing that here. He's pausing in Beersheba to wait for God's lead. He's slowing down to breathe, to give thanks, and to seek God's will before stepping out. I'm reminded of the words in Proverbs Chapter 3:

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6, KJV)

Our own understanding makes sense, but it's not always in line with God's will. It is for that reason, we need to seek Him and trust Him as He's guiding our steps.

Beersheba was his war room in a sense—his prayer closet. This was the place where God spoke to his father Isaac, where Abraham dug a well, planted a tree, and worshipped God, and



where God spoke to Hagar. This place was familiar to Jacob and his family. It was a place to meet God.

Even on your best days—your busiest days—you need to go to Beersheba. You need to slow down, close yourself in with God and offer Him a sacrifice of praise.

There's a saying that goes, "May I never forget. On my best day, that I still need God as desperately as I did on my worst day." Our worst days bring us down to our knees in prayer seeking God. They have us asking for guidance, digging into the word, wondering what His next move is. But our best days? Those are the days we tend to forget the importance of knee time. Scripture after scripture reminds us to seek God's will in all that we do. To go to Him first, and to pursue Him with all of our heart.

Jacob sought God and then He listened for His voice. It's interesting to note here that Jacob recognized the voice of God. Now, God spoke to him in a vision, but throughout history, God has spoken to people in numerous ways. Sometimes it was through a prophet, sometimes it was an audible voice, sometimes he came in a dream, other times He sent His angels, once He spoke through a donkey, He speaks through the Holy Spirit, and of course He speaks through His word.

I've had friends who have asked. *How do I know if I should do this or that? How do I know it's God's will?* Sometimes we wait and we wait and yet we still don't have clear direction. Should we go to Egypt or should we stay put?

Here's the answer I give them. First, we must seek God with all of our heart. Go to our own Beersheba, close ourselves in with God and earnestly pray. The second thing we must do is acknowledge God's will and be willing to let go of our plan when it's not in line with His. Ask ourselves: Does the Bible have anything to say about this? Am I doing this for the right reasons? Is it pleasing to God? If it is indeed in line with God's will then step out in faith. Believe me, God has the power to lead. He'll open gates to one pathway and put road blocks on another.

I was invited to speak on a televised talk show once with all expenses paid. It was down in California where the weather is warm, I was up in Canada stuck in the snow. I couldn't get there fast enough. My bags were packed, I was at the airport with my ticket in hand, and God had other plans. All flights were cancelled because of thick ice on the runway. I remember trying everything I could to get there, but one by one each door was firmly closed shut.

The door was wide open for Jacob when God said, "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again."

God had big plans for Jacob on this journey. They went in to Egypt as a family but would later come out as a nation. 70 people in total counting Jacob, Joseph, and Joseph's two sons went into Egypt, but as we see in the book of Exodus a multitude of people came out.

In Jesus' Name

Prayer Seeking God's Will

Dear Heavenly Father,

Give me the strength to walk in obedience to Your will.

Regardless of how tough a decision may be, my hope is to always choose Your wisdom in lieu of my own.

Please remind me to run to You often. To choose You before anything else—like Jacob, who humbly stood in Your presence before moving on.

Teach me to hunger and thirst after righteousness and to be a doer of the Word—not just one who hears.

Give me the strength to bring my body into subjection to Your Spirit. And to accept Your will when it's not in line with mine.

Help me to bring both my thoughts and my actions into obedience to Your will.

In the name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.

Did you know...

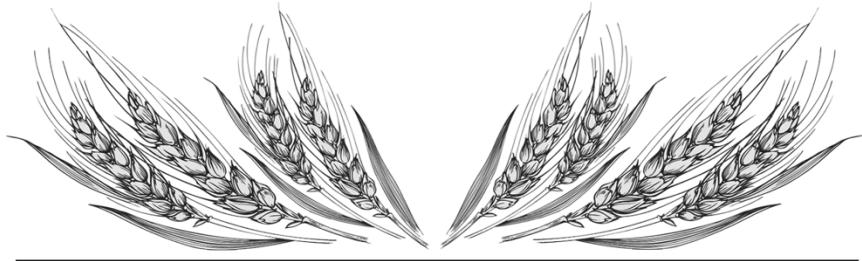
Genealogies were an important part of Israel's history as they proved one's identity as a Jew.

This was especially important in the genealogy of Christ. Illustrating that He descended both from King David and from Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation.

Did you know...

Beersheba was founded in Genesis 21:27-31 when Abraham and Abimelech swore an oath to one another. It was also at that place and time that Abraham planted a Tamarisk tree.





Pause and Reflect

What four promises did God give to Jacob in Genesis 46:3-4?

Before you do anything else, take a moment to list the things for which you need to be seeking God's will.

In Mark 1:35 we see that Jesus went to a secluded place to pray. Do you have a quiet place where you can spend time with God? Why might that be important?

What does Ephesians 6:18 say about prayer? Write the verse out here.

What things (if any) hinder you from having a strong prayer life? What can you change to strengthen your prayer life?

What instruction and comfort do we find in Proverbs 3:5-6?

HE IS NOT ASHAMED. HAND IN HAND
BEFORE HIS FATHER'S THRONE, JESUS
PRESENTS HIS SPOTLESS CHURCH
AND LOVINGLY CALLS US BRETHREN.

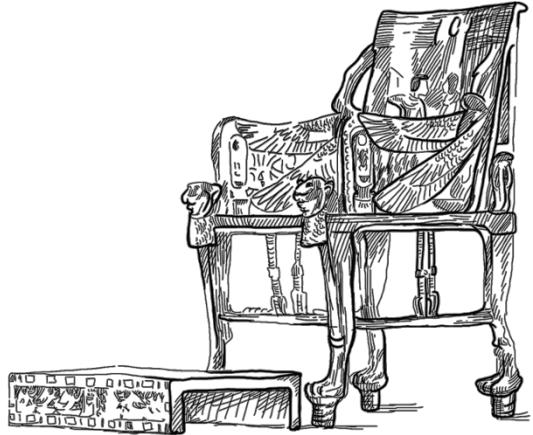


He's Not Ashamed to Call Us Brethren

Genesis Chapter 47

In this chapter, we see a beautiful picture of Joseph as a type of Christ who embraces His brethren and brings them before the throne. As I'm reading it, I'm fondly reminded of the words in Hebrews 2:

Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters; in the assembly I will sing your praises." (Hebrews 2: 11-12, NIV)



He is not ashamed. Hand in hand before His Father's throne, Jesus presents a spotless church and lovingly calls us brethren.

Remember, it's not because of who they were or what they had done that got them to this place, it was nothing but grace. In fact, these guys were shepherds, and as we saw at the end of the last chapter, shepherds were an abomination to the Egyptians. They were detestable to Pharaoh and his people, but by the grace of God they were ushered in.

Had it not been for Joseph's imprisonment and resurrection to power in Egypt, they would not have been standing beside him that day.

Here's the thing we're all wise to remember: as dreadful as these brothers had been, we're no better. The Bible tells us that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. That means that you and I are just as guilty of sin as these brothers, which is why we're in need of a Savior. And just like their savior, our Lord will present us faultless before the King with great joy.

To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy. (Jude 1:24, NIV)

I love the fact that Joseph doesn't expose the sin of his brothers anywhere in this story. He doesn't reveal it here in the throne room, and he didn't expose it before. In fact, in Chapter 45 we saw that he cleared the room before revealing himself to his brothers. Like Christ, he presented them faultless—that's grace.

The Bible has a way of confounding the wise. It goes against our way of thinking to teach us God's way of thinking. It teaches me not to assume anything when God's hand is at work.

An example of that upside-down way of thinking is found in Genesis Chapter 47 when Jacob blesses Pharaoh, not once, but twice.

Here's where my assumption comes in—shouldn't it be the other way around? Wouldn't the king be the one blessing Jacob? In fact, isn't that what Hebrews 7:7 is telling us when it says, "The less is blessed by the better?" So why do we see this man blessing a king?

This is where God's way of thinking comes in—not that of Man. You see, Jacob wasn't the lesser man in this story at all. He was a man chosen of God. He was the patriarch of a great nation to come. His blessing was truly a gift and there's no doubt Pharaoh sensed that holy presence in the room that day. As we see in the latter part of the chapter, God indeed blessed Pharaoh immensely through the blessing of Jacob.

It would seem that Jacob blessed others wherever he went. He blessed Pharaoh when he came into his presence, and he blessed him as he went out. As believers in the body of Christ, we also have the opportunity to be a blessing to others. Either in word or in deed, our actions speak volumes, and so, we should be using our lives to draw others to Christ.

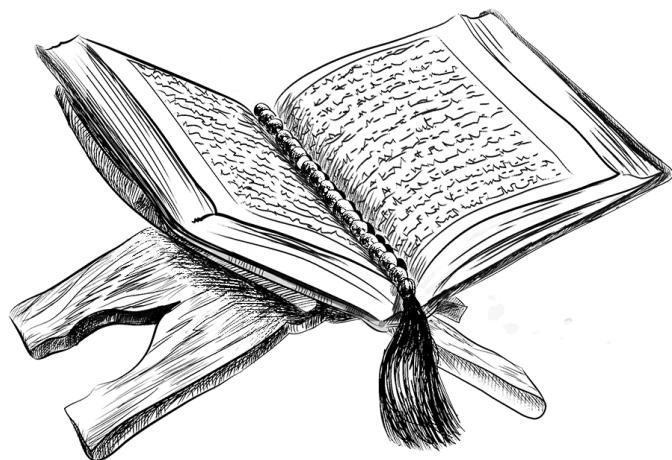
Matthew 5:16 says, "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." (NIV)

The question is, are we merely a recipient of God's blessing or are we a blessing to others?

The best way I've heard it explained is that God is looking for conduits. A conduit isn't a storage facility, it's a channel by which something is freely conveyed. Examples of a conduit would be the casing through which wires are fed or a channel in which water can move. Whether it's money, service, love, grace, or time we are merely a channel through which God can move. None of this really belongs to us, it belongs to our Father in Heaven Who pours down His blessings upon us.

When we trust God with our blessings, we hold onto them loosely. Not carelessly—loosely. We trust that God will bless us again and again and so we give to others as we have been given.

One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed. (Proverbs 11:24-25, NIV)



HOLD EVERYTHING IN
YOUR HANDS LIGHTLY,
OTHERWISE IT HURTS WHEN
GOD PRIES YOUR FINGERS OPEN.

CORRIE TEN BOOM

Did you know...

In Exodus 28:21, the Israelites were instructed to fasten 12 stones onto the priest's breast piece, one for each of the names of the sons of Israel.

Did you know...

Revelation 21:12 talks about 12 gates in the New Jerusalem. Each gate has the name of one of Jacob's 12 sons, "The 12 Tribes of Israel."



In Jesus' Name Prayer May My Life Be a Blessing

Dear Heavenly Father,

Your Word tells us that Jesus came so that we might have life more abundantly, yet most days we're struggling to just get along.

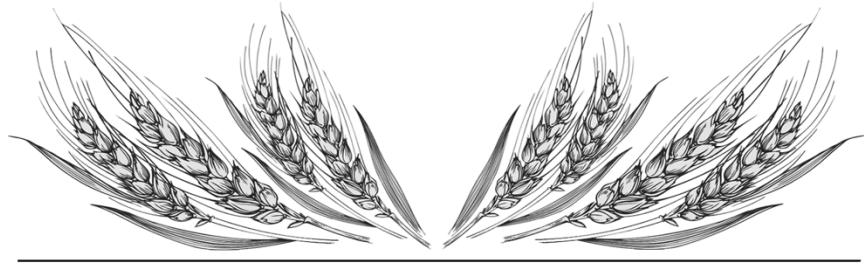
I know You want more for us, Lord, and I know that You want me to give more to others.

I recognize my failures and my short comings. I see that my words have the power to hurt or to bless. I know that pride stands in the way of my kindness, and I realize that I'm in need of Your strength.

May my life be a blessing to others. One who represents the true meaning of a Christ-like life that gives hope to others. Help me to walk in kindness and grace, to honor others with my words, as my desire is to be the humble servant you design me to be.

Grant me the strength to be an imitator of Christ Who gave up His life for the church. May I bless in abundance as you have blessed me.

In the name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.



Pause and Reflect

What are some practical ways you can bless others this week?

In what ways has God blessed you over the past year?

What are some specific ways that others have blessed you?

Our words hold the power both to heal and to harm. What are some of the ways we can bless other with our words? What are some ways we harm them?

What does 1 Peter 3:9 say?

We see a reflection of this story in 2 Timothy 1:9-11. What similarities if any can you find there?

THY WORD HAVE I HID IN MINE
HEART, THAT I MIGHT NOT SIN
AGAINST THEE.

PSALM 119:11, KJV

