

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
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THE MOVE TO EGYPT

Genesis 45:16-46:7

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There are three points to today's sermon:

- Pharaoh's Invitation
- Joseph's Exhortation
- Jacob's Expedition

**INTRODUCTION:** In our series on the life of Joseph, we've covered:

- Some of his family lineage and sins that passed from one generation to the next, such as deception, jealousy, and extreme favoritism.
- Joseph's brothers hated him and sold him into slavery in Egypt.
- Joseph was a trusted servant of Potiphar and avoided temptation but was still thrown into jail.
- In jail, he interpreted a baker and a cupbearer's dreams.
- The baker was put to death by the king, but the cupbearer was let out of jail.
- The cupbearer didn't immediately remember Joseph or help him get out of jail.
- But later, Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dreams and predicted a 7-year famine.
- As a result, he was freed and became Pharaoh's second-in-command.
- Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to secure grain during the famine, but Joseph did not reveal himself to his brothers.
- Instead, he devised an elaborate scheme to determine if their hearts had softened.
- When Joseph's brothers returned a second time with their youngest brother, Benjamin, Joseph honored them with a dinner but still did not reveal himself.
- He tested them again to see how they would treat Benjamin.
- After they passed all the tests, Joseph finally revealed himself to his brothers.

## 1-PHARAOH'S INVITATION

**SCRIPTURE:** Genesis 45:16-20

*When the news reached Pharaoh's palace that Joseph's brothers had come, Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased. <sup>17</sup> Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and return to the land of Canaan, <sup>18</sup> and bring your father and your families back to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you can enjoy the fat of the land.' <sup>19</sup> "You are also directed to tell them, 'Do this: Take some carts from Egypt for your children and your wives, and get your father and come. <sup>20</sup> Never mind about your belongings, because the best of all Egypt will be yours.'"*

**EXPLANATION:** Pharaoh quickly heard about Joseph's brothers being in town, and he extended an invitation through Joseph. Pharaoh invited all of Joseph's family to come and live in Egypt and enjoy the provisions of their land. He provided the moving vans, so to speak, but encouraged them not to worry about bringing their belongings. Pharaoh knew that the riches he had to offer would more than compensate for anything they would leave behind.

**ILLUSTRATION:** This reminds me of a little boy who loved to sleep with his parents. The parents made their son sleep in his own bed. However, if the little boy woke up early, they allowed him to climb into bed with them until it was time to get up. Before long, the parents discovered a problem with the arrangement. Their son wanted to bring all his stuff with him. As he climbed out of his toddler bed, he grabbed his stuffed animals. As he walked through his room, he picked up his favorite toys. As he traveled through the house on the way to his parents' room, he gathered trucks, blocks, books, and anything else that caught his eye. By the time he reached his mother's bedside, his arms were full, and there was a trail of toys that he had dropped along the way. Often, he cried and struggled with his parents. He wanted to go back and retrieve the rest. As much as the boy valued cuddling in bed with mom and dad, he could not imagine leaving all his things behind.

**APPLICATION:** We often act just like that child. Pharaoh invited Jacob and his family to start new in Egypt, but he told them to leave all their possessions behind.

God also calls believers to a new life. He tells us to leave behind the things of our past and promises that the life he has in store for us is so much more than we can ever imagine. Unfortunately, like Joseph's family—and the toddler—we rarely listen. Instead of concentrating on the great things in store for us or on bringing our loved ones to the Lord, we are too busy dragging around our own baggage:

- Guilt from past sins
- Hunger for material possessions
- Anger at the wrong caused by others
- Selfishness
- Personal sinful habits

You may think that what you have is too valuable or important to surrender, but no matter what it is, if it's holding you back from God's best, you need to let it go. In Philippians 3:13-14, Paul said, "*Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*" Don't let your luggage slow you down. God wants you to pursue a new life with him.

So that was Pharaoh's Invitation.

## **2-JOSEPH'S EXHORTATION**

**SCRIPTURE:** Genesis 45:21-24

*So the sons of Israel did this. Joseph gave them carts, as Pharaoh had commanded, and he also gave them provisions for their journey. <sup>22</sup> To each of them he gave new clothing, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five sets of clothes. <sup>23</sup> And this is what he sent to his father: ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and other provisions for his journey. <sup>24</sup> Then he sent his brothers away, and as they were leaving he said to them, "Do not quarrel on the way!"*

**EXPLANATION:** Can you imagine Joseph hugging his brothers and laughing, sending them on the way? Just as they rounded the bend out of Egypt, he shouted after them, "Do not quarrel on the way!" Even after everything they had gone

through, Joseph recognized human nature for what it was. He knew they would be tempted to rehash the past again. It would be easy to start pointing fingers. Joseph wanted them to be unified as brothers should be.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Sibling rivalry is defined as “competition between brothers and sisters.” Most pediatric experts say that sibling rivalry is natural in children.

Brothers and sisters will fight over just about anything: who gets to sit in the front seat, who gets the last piece of chicken at dinner, who gets to play with a certain toy. The rivalry between Joseph and his brothers stemmed in large part from their father’s marital arrangements and displays of favoritism. Unfortunately for many families like Joseph’s, the rivalry does not end when the children grow up.

**APPLICATION:** As Christians, we are all brothers and sisters in Christ, and we act like it in the worst way. We fight and bicker among ourselves like children fighting over toys. We argue about everything from the type of songs we sing in worship service to the color of the carpet in the sanctuary. We argue about things that are important, and we argue about things that are not. Meanwhile, the world watches us and God shakes his head. Again and again, he calls for his people to live in unity so that the world will know that we are his. 1 Corinthians 1:10 says, “*I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.*”

John 13:35 says, “*By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*” Unity does not always mean that we will have the same opinion, but it does mean that we will love and respect one another because God does not want us to quarrel on the way.

- Pharaoh’s Invitation
- Joseph’s Exhortation

### 3-JACOB’S EXPEDITION

**SCRIPTURE:** Genesis 45:25-46:7

*So they went up out of Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. <sup>26</sup> They told him, “Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is ruler of all*

*Egypt.” Jacob was stunned; he did not believe them. <sup>27</sup> But when they told him everything Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him back, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. <sup>28</sup> And Israel said, “I’m convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”*

*46:1 So Israel set out with all that was his, and when he reached Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. <sup>2</sup> And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said, “Jacob! Jacob!” “Here I am,” he replied. <sup>3</sup> “I am God, the God of your father,” he said. “Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. <sup>4</sup> I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph’s own hand will close your eyes.” <sup>5</sup> Then Jacob left Beersheba, and Israel’s sons took their father Jacob and their children and their wives in the carts that Pharaoh had sent to transport him. <sup>6</sup> So Jacob and all his offspring went to Egypt, taking with them their livestock and the possessions they had acquired in Canaan. <sup>7</sup> Jacob brought with him to Egypt his sons and grandsons and his daughters and granddaughters—all his offspring.*

**EXPLANATION:** It was hard for Jacob to believe that Joseph was really alive but seeing the Egyptian carts and provisions convinced him. He was excited to see his son again. So, he and his entire family prepared for and began the trip to Egypt. As they journeyed, he probably began to contemplate his last trip away from home—when he had run away from his brother, Esau, whom he had deceived. He may have also thought about the promise that had been passed down to him from God through his grandfather, Abraham, and his father, Isaac. I wonder if he remembered how they adamantly wanted their families to remain in the land God had promised to give them. Jacob stopped the caravan and took time to seek God.

While God gave Jacob the go-ahead, I want you to notice what God said and what he did not say. God told Jacob that it was okay to go to Egypt. In fact, God was going to use Egypt like a great greenhouse to multiply and grow Jacob’s family into a great nation. God promised that he would always be with Jacob, even in Egypt, and that Joseph would be with him when he died. He also promised that one day he would be brought back to the land that was promised. Because we have the benefit of looking back, we know that God left out a lot of details. God did not tell Jacob how many years would pass before his family would ever leave Egypt.

He did not tell Jacob that he, Joseph, and many generations of his family would die in Egypt. He did not tell Jacob that, in fact, the great nation that would come from his family would become slaves to the Egyptians.

**APPLICATION:** God does not usually give us the five-year or ten-year or lifetime plan. He does not provide a detailed agenda of our lives. There are lots of details we are left not knowing. In fact, like the story of Jacob, we are often left with bookended promises. We know what God tells us at the start and what's supposed to happen at the end, but we do not see a lot of the middle. That's where faith comes in. Jacob trusted God and went to Egypt. How do you respond when God asks you to do something? Do you trust him even when he does not give you a roadmap? Do you hold onto his promises even when his plan for your life includes pain?

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**INVITATION:** Pharaoh and Joseph graciously extended an invitation to Joseph's family. The blessings of the land were at their disposal. In the same way, Jesus has extended an invitation to all of mankind. In Mathew 11:28-30 he says, *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

God calls us to leave our lives of famine in order to feast with him. Have you responded to that call? If not, I encourage you to come today. If you are a Christian, I want you to spend some time today thinking about your journey of faith. Are you held back by the things of your past that you refuse to let go? Are you so concerned with the things you do not know that you will not trust in God's promises of provision? The altar is open if you want to come and pray.

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