Glad Tidings

"And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers…" (Acts 13:32)

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Able To Move On

(Jerry Fite)

He was not kidnapped and sold into slavery by strangers, but by his own immediate family. He was imprisoned on false charges of rape, imprisoned, and forgotten for at least two years. Doing nothing wrong, Joseph suffered harsh indignity for over a decade. But at the age of thirty, he was able to forget the ten to thirteen years of being victimized by injustice, and embrace happiness instead.

Now married, Joseph names his first son, *"Manasseh"* denoting, *"God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house."* He named his second son, *"Ephraim"* emphasizing, *"God hath made me fruitful in the land of my affliction" (Genesis 41:51-52).*

Joseph's emotional feelings were constantly coming to the surface on each reminder of his brethren, and their evil actions toward him. When hearing his brethren confess among themselves their evil of not responding to Joseph's distress from the pit, *"he turned himself about from them and wept"* before returning to deal with their request for famine relief *(Genesis 42:21-25).*

Still unknown by his brethren, Joseph again had to excuse himself *"to weep"* in his inner chamber after seeing his younger brother, Benjamin, for whom his heart yearned after years of being separated *(Genesis 43:30).* Then fearing that after their father's death, Joseph might now requite the evil done to him, they humbly submit to him begging for his forgiveness. Hearing the words from their mouths, Joseph *"wept"* once again *(Genesis 50:17).*

The scars of history still inhabited Joseph's memory bank, but he did not allow his sad emotional feelings to dominate his perspective. Yes, he spoke roughly to his brethren at their first meeting, putting fear in their hearts, but even then, he made sure their money was returned to them with the grain they came to purchase. He did not let wrong done to him make him a retaliatory and bitter man. Yes, his emotions remained raw on the surface, but his deeper spiritual perspective was progressing along the same channel conducive to Manasseh's name: *"God has made me forget..."*

Joseph was able to move on from injustice done to him because of his deep faith in God. God showed kindness unto Joseph and made him to prosper in the confines of prison *(Genesis 39:21-23).* He knew God was the power behind him accurately interpreting dreams, which eventually brought him to leadership in Pharaoh's government *(Genesis 40:8; 41:16, 38).* His faith in God must have been strengthened as he saw his brethren come to bow down before him, and confirm the truth of his earlier controversial dreams regarding his brethren *(Genesis 42:6, 8).* Like Joseph, we can move on without bitterness when we know we are never forsaken by our Lord *(Hebrews 13:5,6).*

Joseph was able to move on because he could see God's providence. Joseph's experiences were part of a greater plan of God to save his family. His brothers' actions indeed were evil, but God *"meant it for good" (Genesis 50:20.* His faith allowed him to wait on the Lord in the land of affliction, and see God's blessings unfold. In the end, he could see those events that brought him so much pain were leading to the greater end of God's glory. As the wise man reminds us, *"For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart" (Ecclesiastes 5:20).* Walking by faith with God, we can move on, even when life hurts!