



## Sermon, Sunday May 9, 2021, “Only Jesus is for me”

**SCRIPTURE: Genesis 37:1-11** <sup>1</sup> Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan. <sup>2</sup> This is the story of the family of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father’s wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. <sup>3</sup> Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves. <sup>4</sup> But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him. <sup>5</sup> Once Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. <sup>6</sup> He said to them, “Listen to this dream that I dreamed. <sup>7</sup> There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright; then your sheaves gathered around it, and bowed down to my sheaf.” <sup>8</sup> His brothers said to him, “Are you indeed to reign over us? Are you indeed to have dominion over us?” So they hated him even more because of his dreams and his words. <sup>9</sup> He had another dream, and told it to his brothers, saying, “Look, I have had another dream: the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” <sup>10</sup> But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him, and said to him, “What kind of dream is this that you have had? Shall we indeed come, I and your mother and your brothers, and bow to the ground before you?” <sup>11</sup> So his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

### **Introduction: Memories of Saebae (worship elders) Money**

The Lunar New Year is a big holiday in Korea. Families and relatives gather together to cook delicious food and enjoy traditional games. However, there is a tradition that is practiced during the Lunar New Year. It is called Saebae. Saebae is a ritual of filial piety that is traditionally observed on Lunar New Year. Dressed in traditional clothing, people wish their elders (grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles) a happy New Year by performing a deep traditional bow and saying the words, "Please receive a lot of good fortune for the New Year."

Elders typically reward this gesture by giving children new year's money in silk bags made with beautiful traditional designs, as well as offering words of wisdom.

Now, I have to give money to my children and nephews, but when I was young, I had the pleasure of getting plenty of money on the Lunar New Year. However, there was one complaint; sometimes the elders in the family gave more money to older brothers and sisters than me. And the more severe the discrimination, the more I remember feeling sad.

So, after becoming a parent, I decided to treat my children equally in everything. By the way, I don't know how well I am doing.

Today's text is the story of Joseph's dream. It shows how parental favoritism destroys a family. However, the Lord intervenes in a family tragedy brought about by favoritism. And it turns a tragic event into one of redemption that experiences the Lord's grace. I hope today's story will be comforting and a blessing to those who are in the midst of remorse and regret because of past failures.

### **Body: The Lord's Grace Blooms in Despair**

Today's text shows a special love for Jacob's son Joseph. From Joseph's point of view, it is his father's deep love, but to his half-brothers other than Joseph, it is his father's favoritism toward Joseph.



By the way, the Genesis writer wrote Joseph's story not simply to show us his family history, but rather to show the history of the Lord's redemption leading to Abraham-Isaac-Jacob-Joseph.

Looking at Joseph's story, we should not forget that the Lord's involvement in human life is not limited to the characters in the Bible. Rather, it is also permitted to us who are called as children of the Lord. Just as the Lord intervened in Jacob's home and accomplished good, He fulfills His will in our lives. The Lord comes to our difficult lives, corrects mistakes and leads us to healing, reconciliation, and peace. Today's text shows us the process. So what should we see through Joseph's story?

### **1. We must look at the history of the Lord's redemption for our homes and churches.**

In Genesis chapter 36, there is a story about the descendants of Esau, who were not chosen as the ones who would continue the lineage in the history of redemption. This is to show us the Lord's love for Esau, who was not chosen by the history of redemption, and to focus on the story of Jacob, who was chosen by the history of redemption.

So Genesis 37:1 mentions that Jacob resides in the land of Canaan, where his father, Isaac, lived. This shows that there is Jacob's home in the extension of the history of redemption that leads to Abraham-Isaac-Jacob. And then the story of Joseph's dream begins.

In fact, to us living in the present age, the words of the Lord's redemption history can sound too grandiose. But the important thing is that the story of the history of redemption is not irrelevant to us. Through Jesus, His work of redemption was completed, but the church in the world until Jesus' Second Coming must fulfill the Great Commission the Lord gave us. Jesus Christ said in **Matthew 28:19-20**, **“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”**

The reason the Lord has given us personal talents, homes, jobs, and churches is to do His will there. And, through this process, it is from experience that it is grace to realize that the subject who accomplishes good is the Lord. Joseph's story tells us this.

Also, the grace of the Lord frees us from guilt, heals wounds, and gives us the courage to rise again from mistakes. So, living by the grace of the Lord produces the most blessed people in the world. So, what else should we see through Joseph's story?

### **2. We must realize the importance of inclusion and tolerance through conflict.**

The conflict in Joseph's dream story begins for two reasons. One is his father Jacob's favoritism toward Joseph and the other is Joseph tattling the faults of his half-brothers.

Jacob has twelve sons from four wives. Jacob's twelve sons made up the twelve tribes of Israel. However, the Bible shows the conflict between Jacob's twelve sons. In fact, Jacob's twelve sons do not exist simply as individuals, but represent the twelve tribes of the Israel community. Just as individuals have problems that need to be solved, there are numerous problems and conflicts within a community where individuals come together to form a small society. And it takes a lot of time and effort to resolve the problem and conflict.

In Joseph's story, we can see various aspects of the brothers. There are wounds and anger, but there are also aspects of self-sacrifice. We must be able to discover what factors led to overcoming the conflict in these aspects. It is inclusion and tolerance.

Of course, there are limits to the tolerance and inclusion we strive for. However, the important thing is that the Lord always accomplishes his plan for good despite all the conflicts and human weakness.

Most people are impatient when things that start with faith don't pay off. And impatience sometimes leads to conflict. By the way, if we trust the Lord to guide our path, we can be more generous with things we



have done based on faith. Let us not forget that the inclusion and tolerance of believers is based on the belief that the Lord guides us in the good way in the midst of our conflict. So, what is the last thing to see through Joseph's story?

### **3. Sin within us - favoritism and pride**

If you are trying to justify a tragic event caused by Jacob's favoritism, there are many possible reasons. First is the age difference between Joseph and his half-brothers. Second is the harsh culture of nomadic life. Third are the environmental conditions that can easily conceal crime.

But for that reason, wrongdoing and behavior cannot be justified. The same is true of human sin as mentioned in the Bible. Even if you obey the laws of the world, live good, and do a lot of good for others, life without the Lord is in sin.

Do you think this is hard to agree with? By the way, if we know who the Lord is, we cannot ask such a question. God is love. Sin and Holiness cannot go together. This is why the way of the world and the way of the Lord are different.

We see various aspects of Joseph, his brothers, and his father Jacob in Joseph's story. There are conflicts, but there are also efforts to resolve them. However, it is the Lord who has the ultimate key to resolving such conflicts. Joseph's dramatic reconciliation with his brothers and the healing of his own wounds was because Joseph knew what the Lord's grace and love were. Joseph was not able to forgive his brothers on his own, but the grace of the Lord caused Joseph to forgive his brothers and lead them to reconciliation.

We can still live with past mistakes, regrets, and guilt. As such, the nature of sin is persistent and terrifying. But now we are not those under the power of sin, but those who dwell in the grace and love of the Lord. And I bless you all to be one who experiences the grace of the Lord every day.

### **Conclusion: A life with the grace of the Lord**

Now let's summarize today's sermon. Human greed interferes with the Lord's plan to come into human life and allow us the best things. As today's text shows, Jacob's favoritism toward Joseph brought conflict between Joseph and his half-brothers.

However, in spite of these sins and mistakes of ours, the Lord does what He has planned. Just as the Lord came into Joseph's life and presented reconciliation to Jacob's family, the Lord wants us to give peace, healing, and reconciliation. We should pray for peace in our home, church, workplace, and within ourselves through trusting in the Lord's good guidance.

There is nothing happier in the world than living in the grace of the Lord. Now, the Lord dwells in us and we are living by the grace of the Lord. May our lives be filled with praise to the grace of the Lord.

