

Order of Worship

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost, October 18, 2020

WELCOME

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP Psalm 40: 1-11 UMH p. 774

HYMN 92 *For the Beauty of the Earth* DIX

SCRIPTURE Genesis 45:1-15

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

HYMN 156 *I Love to Tell the Story* HANKEY

SCRIPTURE Genesis 45:16-28

MESSAGE

GENEROSITY, INVITATIONS and CELEBRATIONS

HYMN 2158 *Just a Closer Walk with Thee* CLOSER WALK

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Prayer Corner

- Mary Borchardt's mother and longtime member of First UMC, Shirley G. Johnson Krueger, passed away on October 12. There will be a private family gathering in lieu of a public funeral service. Please pray for Mary and the rest of Shirley's family and friends as they grieve.

Are You Satisfied with God? Gen. 45 Pastor Rebecca Voss

They start with an outdated, often disorganized, and sometimes downright dangerous house. A team of builders, contractors, and decorators swoop in, and a week or month later (23-46 minutes in TV time), there is the "big reveal". I enjoy seeing the fresh layout and style of the home and wonder if I could knock down a wall and transform my home. But the best part at the end is the look of amazement on the faces of the family who often need a fresh start in their lives.

For the past six weeks, we've watched the story of Jacob's household being completely rebuilt. There is deceit like wallpaper that hides the reality of a crumbling foundation. Shame and grief have been like gaping holes for wildlife to enter and destroy their household. The pain, regret, and stress are greater than even the most intense remodeling project could bring. But we've also seen hints of hope. Joseph recognized his brothers and has secretly tested them and watched as they show signs of being truly repentant. Ugly envy is torn out, walls of pride are replaced with windows of humility, and their sagging faith is being jacked up to allow for this household to become level, square, and true.

Today, we get to see the "big reveal" as Joseph reveals his real identity to his brothers. *Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.* (v. 3) What are they thinking? How will they react? Will they "love it or list it"? Will they recognize God as the master craftsman and designer who has rebuilt their household? Will they be satisfied with all of God's faithful work behind the scenes?

Before we can get a read on their reaction to this stunning news, Joseph addresses not only their shock but their fear with his next words: *"Come closer to me."* They do, and he gives a short but powerful speech with both truth and comfort that reveals how God can redeem the pain of their crumbled family and repurpose it to bring healing and strength. *"I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on*

earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God;” (vs. 4-8a) This does not absolve the brothers’ behavior, but shows how God’s sovereignty can’t be stopped by sin.

Imagine his brothers’ shock. They had long assumed he was dead, and now he was alive. Not only was he alive, but he was second in command over the mightiest known empire in the world. How was any of this possible? How did all eleven of them fail to recognize the resemblance of their long-lost-or-dead brother? Though those questions were certainly spinning in their minds, Joseph keeps the focus on God. He gives a redemptive perspective on how he wound up in Egypt: God sent him to preserve life. Through the betrayal and bondage of Joseph, God would bring blessing and abundance.

Let’s get back to the key word of the theme of this message: satisfied. Yes, my mind drifts to a chocolate bar with peanuts and caramel. But I remind myself that true satisfaction is even sweeter and lasts much longer. It is not only having a full belly, but a fulfilled life. It also describes when a requirement is completely fulfilled, or enough evidence is gathered. Joseph continues to promise long-term satisfaction, *“You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.”* (vs. 10-11)

But there is one deep desire in Joseph that is not yet satisfied. He longs to see and be reunited with his father, Jacob. Imagine the many years that have passed, and how, as my mother would frequently say, “absence makes the heart grow fonder”. Joseph tells his brothers his only request of them: *“You must tell my father how greatly I am honored in Egypt, and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here.”* (v. 13)

After this we see the culmination where their tears of joy cause our own eyes to get misty. *“Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.”* (v. 14-15). The joy of this revealing and reconciliation is obviously so much deeper than grateful tears that homeowners shed when seeing a new sparkly kitchen or park-like

patio. These are tears of a torn-apart family finding forgiveness and reconciliation. This is how the family of God is supposed to work.

Even Pharaoh and his household share in the joy. Pharaoh offers Joseph's brothers to take wagons back to Canaan with them in order to bring back everyone and everything. Joseph's extended family is given the best land to settle in so they can all be and stay together. Joseph then adds to the blessing by loading them up with provisions for the journeys. No one would be hungry; everyone would be satisfied.

And then we get to verse 24, which sounds like something every parent has said more than we would like to admit: *"Then he sent his brothers on their way, and as they were leaving he said to them, "Do not quarrel along the way."* We know that quarreling does more than shut down the good vibes. Quarreling is a sign that someone finds something unfair and is no longer satisfied. Like the people we each know who can't seem to find contentment in life, quarreling seems to be the sign that someone "can't get no satisfaction" as the Rolling Stones wrote 55 years ago.

When they arrive back in Canaan, presumably free of quarreling, they immediately blurt out the stunning news to their father: *"Joseph is still alive! He is even ruler over all the land of Egypt."* He was stunned; he could not believe them. But when they told him all the words of Joseph that he had said to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived" (vs. 26-27). Jacob had to wonder if he was on candid camera, or what prank his sons were pulling on him to say something so outlandish. But both their reports of Joseph's words and the overflowing provisions in the carts satisfied Jacob's heart and mind to trust and believe the good news – Joseph is not only alive, but he is well and ruling righteously.

The chapter closes in v. 28, *"Israel (the name God gave Jacob) said, "Enough! My son Joseph is still alive. I must go and see him before I die."* The Hebrew word translated as "enough" is *rab*, which can be translated "abundantly satisfied". God has revealed to Jacob and to all of his sons that the old lies, broken promises, and skeletons in their closets can be transformed by the Master Craftsman into a redeemed household full of souls satisfied by God's abundant love. May we all find satisfaction in God's grace, provision, and restoration!