

Build Bridges

Genesis 43:29-34

Sermon Outline

A. Become a Bridge Builder (vs. 29):

1. Joseph at first seem more interested in dealing with his pain and distrust (Genesis 42).
2. Carry; Stirred – Joseph endlessly looked straight into his brother’s eyes as if to express care and concern for them hoping that his reunion with his brother goes well.
 - a) When they arrived in Egypt, they were startled to find that they were to go to the governor’s house to dine. The news puzzled and alarmed them. They feared that some dreadful punishment was to be visited upon them, for they did not know what to expect from the grand vizier of Egypt. When the great man entered the room where they were, they bowed themselves to him to the earth in full homage (v. 26). [11](#)
3. Carry; Stirred – Despite the fact the other brothers are in the room Joseph focused his attention only on Benjamin.
4. See – Despite the years that went by (maybe 12 years) Joseph completely and clearly understood who Benjamin was at first sight.
5. Said – Joseph continuously with no intent on stopping repeatedly spoke directly to his brothers summoning them to respond.
6. Of whom you spoke - Joseph asked his brothers to confirm the conversation they had completed in reference to Benjamin.
7. Said – Joseph then said repeatedly as if he is going to endlessly say the same thing confirming what he already suspected.
8. God be gracious to you – Joseph expresses his desire that God shows kindness and generosity to Benjamin.

B. Manage Your Pain (vs. 30):

1. Joseph hurried out – Joseph suddenly with urgency and lots of energy left the room where his brothers were. His emotions seeing his brother for the first time in years explodes.
2. Deeply stirred – Joseph’s emotions came from deep down inside. It was a natural emotion ‘deeply affected with passion.’
3. Seek - Joseph’s state of mind was to endlessly keep looking for a place he can allow his emotions to be freely poured out.

4. Weep – Joseph explosion of strong emotions was really loud demonstrating the level of distress he was feeling. This expression was spontaneous. It was not something Joseph planned.
5. Entered his chamber – Joseph went into his room to weep as if, because of the deep anguish he felt, he could not come back out. He needed to remain until it all came out.
6. Wept - Joseph cried bitterly as if he was not going to ever stop.
 - a) *Joseph...wept* – Both emotionally and sensitive, he wept often (42:24; 45:2, 14-15; 46:29).
7. Then he washed his face - Joseph had to thoroughly wash his face in order to remove any semblance that he was weeping.
8. Came out; To go forth – Joseph continuously focused on going back to the room where his brothers were waiting on him. How much time passed, the text does not say but it does seem to imply that once he fully shed his emotions, he made every attempt to get back with his brothers.
9. Control himself - It took a lot of strength to hold all emotions back so that he can calmly and collectively go out and interact with his brothers.
10. Said – One of the first things he did to keep his emotions in check is to continuously summon his servants to feed his brothers.
11. Serve the meal – Joseph commanded his servants, exercising his authority to get everything put in place so that his brothers may eat.
12. Serve the meal – Joseph commanded his servants, exercising his authority to get everything put in place so that his brothers may eat.
 - a) In the KJV the word *bread* appears 281 times in the Old Testament and 80 times in the New Testament; however, the 7 Hebrew words that refer to bread are not always translated as such. In the NIV, the word *bread* appears 188 times in the Old Testament and 83 times in the New Testament. The frequency with which the word is mentioned indicates that bread, not vegetables or meat was the basic food of ancient people. It is probably for this reason that in most Bible translations several of the seven Hebrew words for bread are translated *food* or *meal*. For example, the KJV says that after Joseph's brothers cast him into the pit, "they sat down to eat bread," but the NIV says, as do other versions, "they sat down to eat their meal" (Genesis 37:25).^[2]
13. So, they served him by himself – The Egyptian servants placed Joseph food in front of him first. The Egyptians did not put Joseph with his brothers even though they do eat with Israelites. They gave him the respect of being their boss. They were continuously serving making sure everything was placed before everyone.

14. Ate with him by themselves – The Egyptians remained in the room as they consumed the meal but they did not do so in the same part of the room as Joseph and his brothers.
15. Loathsome to Egyptians - To eat at the same table with Israelites was morally disgusting and a dangerous thing to do because it violated their religious practices.

C. Confront the Challenges (vs. 33):

1. They were seated before him – Everyone took up a place as if this was going to be a permanent place. Joseph’s mindset was that his brothers (maybe because of the dream and 45:7-9) were going to endlessly share this time in his presence.
2. They were seated before him – Joseph also purposefully lined his brothers up by their age.
 - a). Moreover, by seating the brothers according to their order of birth, from the eldest to the youngest, Joseph symbolically recreated the tension of sibling rivalry that had led to the crimes against him and potentially against Benjamin. The distinct term “firstborn” (*běkôr*) appears, unlike the generic word for “oldest” (*gādôl*) as in 44:12. ^[3]
3. Astonishment - Joseph’s brothers were completely surprised and bewildered as to how Joseph can know how to line all of them up by their ages. They knew something amazing was taking place and it made them fearful.
4. He took – Joseph continuously, as if he did not plan to stop, looked his brothers straight in the eye with his servants present and took food from his own table.
5. Portion – Joseph took from his own table food that his brothers did not need to pay him because it was a gift to them.
 - a). The provisions of food and drink for the brothers came from Joseph’s personal portion, signifying that he would be the source of the family’s survival (v. 34; e.g., 45:11, 18, 20–21). The five additional portions for Benjamin have a parallel in the lavish gifts (five sets of clothing) that Egyptian Joseph bestows on the boy (45:22). The wine flowed and the brothers became merry, if not actually inebriated (“drank freely,” from *šākar*, “to be drunk”). Joseph’s actions could exacerbate any latent jealousy toward Benjamin. Through drink they become unguarded, readied by Joseph for the crowning ruse. ^[4]

6. Five times – Joseph purposely gave Benjamin 5 times more than any gift of food he provided to his brothers.

a). The unusually large portion assigned to Benjamin was designed as an expression of his strong fraternal affection, and perhaps also as a test of his brethren to ascertain if they were now free from that spirit of envy which had prompted their former cruelty to him.^[5]

7. Freely - Joseph's acts of kindness seem to cause his brothers to become merry as they fill themselves with alcohol. Could mean that they got drunk as they relaxed after the meal.

8. Freely – Healing was taking place; peace was being re-established.

^[1] Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). [*The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: Old Testament*](#) (Ge 43:15). Chicago: Moody Press.

^[2] Freeman, J. M., & Chadwick, H. J. (1998). [*Manners & customs of the Bible*](#) (p. 83). North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers.

^[3] Mathews, K. A. (2005). [*Genesis 11:27–50:26*](#) (Vol. 1B, p. 792). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

^[4] Mathews, K. A. (2005). [*Genesis 11:27–50:26*](#) (Vol. 1B, p. 792). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

^[5] Spence-Jones, H. D. M. (Ed.). (1909). [*Genesis*](#) (p. 485). London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company.