Now We’re Even

Gen 50:15-21

1. Even the Score
   1. Weakened Enemy
      1. Dad passed removing protection
         1. With father dead, Joseph may seek revenge just as Esau had planned (cf. 27:41, where the same term, “bear a grudge,” is used).
      2. Joseph’s deeds and words (from chap. 45) had shown he wanted to be reconciled to his brothers, Now with their father dead and the great funeral over, they are gripped by fear that all Joseph has done was motivated by affection for Jacob, not out of real love for them.
   2. They knew they Deserved it
      1. Grudge - **be at enmity with, be hostile towards,** to keep anger
      2. Pay us back- to **cause to turn around**, meaning to **give back,** to pay back his anger in fury; REB: bringing retribution with his furious anger
         1. The language, “pays us back in full,” forcefully expresses the dread of their deserved requital.
      3. That they did not go in person to start with is implied by v 18
      4. The final confession “all the wrongs we did to him” translates the word *gāmal*, meaning what one “deals out” requires appropriate recompense, whether for good or evil behavior (vv. 15, 17; cf. 1 Sam 24:18; also noun *gĕmûlâ*, 2 Sam 19:37; Isa 59:18; Jer 51:56).
   3. Apologize
      1. I beg
      2. Forgive - Forgive - to **take away** someone’s guilt (and punishment)
         1. Forgiveness is the wiping out of an offense from memory; it can be effected only by the one affronted. Once eradicated, the offense no longer conditions the relationship between the offender and the one affronted, and harmony is restored between the two.
         2. but they had never asked for forgiveness, so their feelings of guilt had continued to haunt them.
         3. Third, they twice plead for forgiveness. Fourth, they describe their sin in the most comprehensive way, as “crime” (twice), “sin,” and “evil
         4. The vocabulary of the message draws on the semantic field of sin: “sins” (*pešaʿ*, “transgression, rebellion, crime”), “wrongs” (*haṭṭāʾt*, “sin”), and “so badly” (*rāʿâ*, “evil, harm”). The appearance of these three standard terms for “sin” occurs only in this verse. “Sins” translates the noun *pešaʿ*, which generally means an “offense”; here the nuance of the term is that the brothers committed a breach in their relationship with Joseph as siblings.
   4. We are your servants
      1. Their deeds and words continue to recall those earlier occasions. “Fell down” (cf. his dreams and their fulfillment, 37:7, 9; 42:6; 43:26, 28).
2. Taking the “L”
   1. He wept
      1. So Joseph wept” (cf. 42:24; 43:30; 45:2,14–15). “He weeps because they think they need a mediator, because they are afraid of him, because they ascribe to him the attitude of v 15, because he hears his father’s voice, because he recalls his youth persecuted by their hate, and because it is they who remind him of this through their submissiveness.
      2. He was brokenhearted, probably realizing that their estrangement was not yet fully healed.
   2. Even though he was saddened and hurt?
3. Now We’re Even
   1. Afraid - Emotional foreboding or dread of impending distress or misfortune
      1. Are we in God’s place
         1. Divine purpose prohibits Joseph from exacting personal vengeance, even if he wanted to (cf. Lev 19:18; Deut 32:35; Ps 94:1; Rom 12:19). This is the role of God; Joseph cannot usurp deity’s designs (cf. Num 23:19–20; 24:13).
   2. You Meant
      1. For Evil against me
      2. God meant it for good
         1. Bring about present result
         2. Preserve many people – to keep alive
      3. nothing more explicit is said about the way in which God incorporated man’s evil into his saving activity.
      4. which heightens the contrast between human and divine intentions
      5. In these two passages we have expressed the key idea that informs the whole Joseph story, that through sinful men God works out his saving purposes.
   3. Do Not be Afraid
      1. I will provide
         1. Provide - Provide- Sustain
            1. You and your little ones
            2. What he promised to them before his father arrived in Egypt he now reaffirms after he has gone.
            3. Joseph concludes his speech (v. 21) by promising to perpetuate the necessities of life that he had afforded since Jacob’s arrival in Egypt (45:11; 47:12), noting especially that he himself will see to this (lit., “I myself will provide
            4. Although the seven-year famine was over (45:10–11), Joseph had continued to ensure the preservation of the tribal families. The acquisition of land (Goshen) by the Israelites appears to have been exceptional at that time (as with the Egyptian priests, 47:20–27). Joseph is saying that the death of his father will not change his benevolence toward them.
      2. He comforted – he encouraged
      3. Spoke Kindly – to their heart