

Scripture for the Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost, August 16, 2020

Introduction to the Hebrew Lesson: Genesis 45:1-15

We have not read from the Hebrew Bible for a while, but today we pick up one of the great dramatic stories of the book of Genesis: the story of Joseph being sold by his brothers into slavery in Egypt. Today, we pick up the story when Joseph reveals himself to his brothers; they have come to Egypt in the midst of a famine. Joseph has achieved a place of leadership in the government's outreach to the poor and hungry. In doing so, he has gotten his younger brother, Benjamin, to come under his control. In detaining Benjamin, Joseph has gained some power over his brothers. This situation causes Joseph to great pain and he seeks to reconcile with his brothers even though they are the ones who hurt him. Listen to a reading from Genesis

Reading from Genesis 45:1-15 Joseph Reveals Himself to His Brothers

45 Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Send everyone away from me." So, no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. ² And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. ³ 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.

⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵ And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶ 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. ⁷ God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. ⁸ So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. ⁹ Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ 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.’¹² And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you.¹³ 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.”¹⁴ Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck.¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

Introduction to the Gospel Lesson: Matthew 15:21-28 The Message

We continue reading from the gospel of Matthew, chapter 15. After Jesus walks on the water to calm the disciples in the storm, they complete their crossing of the Sea of Galilee; but they land at Gennesaret. While there, Jesus gets into a debate with the Religious Elders about food purity laws. Then Jesus and the disciples go to the district of Tyre and Sidon where Jesus encounters a Canaanite woman. Listen to a reading from Matthew’s gospel:

A Reading from Matthew 15:21-28 Healing the People

²¹⁻²² From there Jesus took a trip to Tyre and Sidon. They had hardly arrived when a Canaanite woman came down from the hills and pleaded, “Mercy, Master, Son of David! My daughter is cruelly afflicted by an evil spirit.”

²³ Jesus ignored her. The disciples came and complained, “Now she’s bothering us. Would you please take care of her? She’s driving us crazy.”

²⁴ Jesus refused, telling them, “I’ve got my hands full dealing with the lost sheep of Israel.”

²⁵ Then the woman came back to Jesus, went to her knees, and begged. “Master, help me.” ²⁶ He said, “It’s not right to take bread out of children’s mouths and throw it to dogs.” ²⁷ She was quick: “You’re right, Master, but beggar dogs do get scraps from the master’s table.” ²⁸ Jesus gave in. “Oh, woman, your faith is something else. What you want is what you get!” Right then her daughter became well.