

The great, loving and just rule of Joseph on behalf of his family in Egypt is the overarching theme at the end of the book of Genesis. We see this week how God *qualified and equipped Joseph* with blessing upon blessing in order that *he* might provide all that the 12 tribes of Israel would need. In like manner, may *we* rejoice as we are reminded of the great blessings which God poured out on our “Joseph,” Jesus, in order that *He, the mighty prince of life*, might pour them out on our heads, His undeserving brothers adopted by Grace.

**Monday: Read Genesis 49:22 and Deuteronomy 11:10-12**

**His Eyes Upon Us**

Joseph is compared to a vine in the first words of Jacob’s blessing on his tribe. Throughout the Bible, the grape is a symbol of abundance and fruitfulness. God’s Promised Land, you will remember, was a land bearing such large bunches of grapes that it took two men to carry one cluster (Numbers 13:23). What is the secret to such abundance which can make our lives, like Joseph’s, comparable to a lush and fruitful vine? Deuteronomy 11:12 gives us the answer: God’s care for that place, such that “His eyes were continually on it.” When God’s eyes are upon us, even living in a hostile place such as Egypt can become a place of blessing for us, as it was for Joseph!

**Meditate and Pray:** Even if God has called you to live in a difficult place like Joseph sold as a slave into Egypt, ask Him to give you contentment in the “lot” which He has given you, and to guard you from what the world falsely promises as “greener pastures.” If God could make the land of Joseph’s slavery and imprisonment a place where his life could bear abundant fruit, then surely the Lord can make our lives bloom for His glory wherever we are planted! Ask God to help you remember, that, with His *eyes upon us*, as they were upon the Promised Land, we are promised hope for our futures. *No one* who is the object of such Divine attention can fail to find “fruit that will last.” Let us therefore turn our eyes upon our Savior, even as His eyes are continually upon us, with the words of hymn # 481:

*O soul, are you weary and troubled?  
No light in the darkness you see?  
There’s light for a look at the Savior,  
And life more abundant and free!*

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.*

**Tuesday: Read Genesis 49:22-23 and Genesis 39:21**

**Steadfast Love at the Lowest Point**

While admiring the rich fruit of Joseph’s life, we must not forget the bitter opposition he faced. Though Jacob compares his son to a luxuriant vine, Joseph is a “vine” surrounded by the “wall” of his brothers’ hostility, and the target of their arrows (verse 23). How amazing, given the strength of this hatred, that God is able to make Joseph “grow” to a towering height which is then able to overcome his brothers’ hatred, and the tight difficulties of his life situation, “climbing over” the wall as a vine blessed by God. But what is the source of Joseph’s ability to grow in such a tight spot? Ah, there is a spring of living water provided by God (verse 22), so that Joseph had resources of growth which his hateful brothers knew nothing about! This well was nothing less than the kindness of God which welled up to its height at Joseph’s lowest points. When he was in prison, “the Lord was with him and showed him kindness,” (Gen. 39:21) an oasis of comfort welling up for Joseph where no one would have expected it.

**Meditate and Pray:** Thank God that His mercy is stored up for our lowest points, and that His resources for our growth and strengthening continue to flow like a desert spring even when walls of difficulty surround us. Celebrate the well-springs of His comfort for our most difficult times with the words of this well-known hymn by William Cushing (*Trinity Hymnal* # 655):

*O safe to the Rock that is higher than I,  
My soul in its conflicts and sorrows would fly;  
So sinful, so weary, Thine, Thine, would I be;  
Thou blest "Rock of Ages," I'm hiding in Thee.*

*Refrain:*

*Hiding in Thee, hiding in Thee,  
Thou blest "Rock of Ages,"  
I'm hiding in Thee.*

*In the calm of the noontide, in sorrow's lone hour,  
In times when temptation casts o'er me its power;  
In the tempests of life, on its wide, heaving sea,  
Thou blest "Rock of Ages," I'm hiding in Thee.*

*How oft in the conflict, when pressed by the foe,  
I have fled to my refuge and breathed out my woe;  
How often, when trials like sea billows roll,  
Have I hidden in Thee, O Thou Rock of my soul.*

### Wednesday: Read Genesis 49:22-25

### All God's Names at Our Disposal

Lest we forget that all the spiritual resources and blessings which Jacob conveys on his sons are from God's power and grace alone, and not from his sons' fitness for blessing, Jacob is inspired in Genesis 49:24ff. to elevate his words far above even Joseph's deservedness to the all-sufficiency of the Name of God. All the blessings of salvation which Jacob longs to see bestowed on the heads of his sons are sure to come to pass only because God, on whose promise he relies, is the "Mighty One of Jacob," "the Shepherd," "the Rock of Israel," "the God of your father" and "God Almighty." Before such mighty panoply of God's Names, even the most hateful enemies of Joseph must bow, and even an imprisoned and weakened Joseph must find strength! Indeed, as Gen. 49:24 says: "his bow remained steady, his strong arms stayed limber," because it was the very hand of God which supported him!

**Meditate and Pray:** Do you face challenges today, and are you wondering if your arms will be able to hold up in the heat of the battle? Do you long for God to bless your efforts but see tall walls surrounding you and threatening to imprison you in dejection and despair? Be of good cheer. Aged, weak, bed-ridden Jacob rises up with God-given strength to proclaim every Name of power which God possesses to be at your disposal! Affirm your faith in the strength of such Divine support and rejoice in God's ability to bless you, despite the hostile world's attacks, with the words of this hymn (*Trinity Hymnal* # 16):

*What a fellowship, what a joy divine,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms;  
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.*

*Refrain:*

*Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms;  
Leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms.*

*O how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms;  
O how bright the path grows from day to day,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.*

*What have I to dread, what have I to fear,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms;  
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.*

### Thursday: Read Genesis 49:23-25 and Psalm 18:28-29

### For Those Confined Within Walls

The universal testimony of believers like Joseph and his father (Gen. 49:23-25) and David (Psalm 18:29), is that God's enabling grace meets them at their precise point of need. No matter what challenging height must be scaled, no matter how confining our circumstances, or the pain we endure because of the hostility of others, the Lord has the ability to miraculously turn defeat into victory, bringing good out of what men mean for evil (see Genesis 49:23 compared to 50:20) and enabling us to climb out of our difficulties, or at least to live above them.

Nevertheless, we must also realize that the treasured knowledge of Divine Names which Jacob expresses (Genesis 49:24-25) was acquired only through a life which Jacob describes (Genesis 47:9) as full of years of “difficulty” or “evil.” It was not always Jacob's experience that God lifted him *out of* the mire, or *over* the wall to victory. Sometimes God's sufficient aid and the sustaining power of His Name showed itself to Jacob only as he *remained surrounded and even immersed in trial*. As David testifies in Psalm 18:28, God can “lighten my darkness” even while I am constrained by difficult situations.

**Meditate and Pray:** Thank God for His special ability to sustain us in the darkest of times and in the very heart of difficulties. Thank Him especially that He often shows the enduring nature of His comfort and peace by putting them to work while we are still laboring in difficulties and even before deliverance has come. To bring out this reality most clearly, we could read Philippians 4:7 as promising that “the peace which passeth understanding will garrison our hearts in the very midst of warfare while the battle is hot against us.” Ask the Lord to give you this “battle-tested” peace through the “battle-tested” Names of God, using the words of this hymn by Frederick Faber:

*Workman of God! O lose not heart,  
But learn what God is like;  
And in the darkest battlefield  
Thou shalt know where to strike.*

*Then learn to scorn the praise of men,  
And learn to lose with God;  
For Jesus won the world through shame,  
And beckons thee His road.*

*Thrice blest is he to whom is giv'n  
The instinct that can tell  
That God is on the field, when He  
Is most invisible.*

*For right is right, since God is God,  
And right the day must win;  
To doubt would be disloyalty,  
To falter would be sin.*

### Friday: Read Genesis 49:25-26 and Psalm 36:1-6

### A Mercy-Oriented Perspective

Behold Jacob, inspired by the prophetic Spirit of God, as he stretches the limits of human words to try and plumb the depths and scale the heights of God's blessings on His people. “The blessings He showers upon His people are as high as heaven, as deep as the oceans, and as warm and intimately satisfying as the nourishing love of one's mother” (Pastor Bill Harrell, *Bible Notes*. What more can be said? The words of Jacob point to the vastness of Divine love for His own. There is no measurement but it is employed in the Bible to try and gauge all that God is prepared to do for His people's good. In Psalm 36:5-6 as well, God's faithfulness is “sky-high,” and His righteousness is as clear and firm as the mountains. Even His inscrutable judgments, so “deep” that we cannot plumb the reasons behind them, are still the means by which He preserves “both man and beast” (Psalm 36:6). Such is the universal testimony of the Bible: “there is no speech or language” (Psalm 19) where the voice of God's wondrous care is not heard!

**Meditate and Pray:** Ask God to give you a *mercy-oriented* perspective on life. The world is fascinated with the machinations of evil men whom the Psalmist describes in all their unpleasantness in Psalm 36:1-4. Is it not a great privilege to look above and beyond such wickedness to the God described on every page of Scripture (Psalm 36:5-6) in terms of mercy, righteousness and judgment? Lord, please grant us many thoughts of your greatness each day, and much material from your Word by which to contemplate and cherish your mercy. Do not let us be swept up in the negative, sin-obsessed, critical spirit of our world, but instead, grant us to say with the Psalmist in Psalm 36:7, “How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings” (my translation).