

## Making Sense of Chaos

Genesis 45:1-11  
Matthew 15:1-11

August 20, 2017  
Faith Community

Genesis, the first book in the Old Testament, tells of things that happened a long time ago in faraway places, but the more you get into them, the more familiar they seem.

Read Genesis, friends. Read it again and again, and you'll find a persuasive relevance that not only will shake you up a bit but could very well save your life. That's because as you read the stories you'll find that those stories are reading you. You'll learn new ways to measure your growth, and ways to help keep you from crashing and burning.

Consider the story of Joseph; he had every right to be bitter and resentful.

His father's favorite son, he was singled out for special treatment, which pretty much guaranteed hard times at the hands of his siblings. Strike one.

His jealous brothers sold him to a bunch of traveling salesmen and then told their father that the joy of his heart had been killed by a wild animal. Strike two.

He ended up in Egypt, where his boss' wife took a romantic interest in him. When he rejected her advances, straight arrow that he was, she falsely accused him of sexual assault and got him thrown in jail. Strike three.

While there he helped other prisoners, at least one of whom promptly forgot him when he was released. Strike four.

Throughout his life Joseph climbed whatever ladder there was, only to be brought down every time.

He finally gained his freedom and was so good at what he did that in time became second in command of all Egypt. But what about his family? His brothers had been living a lie for at least twenty years. His father had lived just as long thinking that his favorite child was dead.

At long last, through a series of dramatic events, Joseph saved them all from certain death by starvation, and thanks to his leadership the ancestry of the Chosen People right up

through Jesus himself is kept intact through all the craziness of this convoluted family.

This is one intense story, friends. How do you suppose Joseph survived all that? How did he keep from wasting away in a desert of deceit and frustration? The same way you can. Watch this.

When they were finally reunited, his brothers had every reason to be afraid of what he might do to them. Instead, they heard Joseph say this:

***You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.*** (Genesis 50:20-21, TNIV)

Through all the ups and downs of his life, Joseph kept his vision clear. He knew what was at the center of his life and refused to allow competing forces or distractions to divert his attention.

This is how you make sense of chaos. This is how you find healing even in the midst of unspeakable tragedy. It's also how you can navigate your way through the craziness we're experiencing these days on the national level.

Friends, as Rick Warren says, it's not about you.

It's not about getting your way.

It's not about proving your point.

It's not about convincing others of the rightness of your cause.

Instead, it's about *your* transformation, *you* being changed, not the other way around, and then letting others see Jesus come alive in you. It's discipleship.

**Disciples are people who are becoming more like Jesus in their character and emotional and spiritual development.**

That's why you need to listen: let yourself be filled, equipped and empowered. Otherwise you'll set yourself up for burnout and bitterness. That's why discipleship is always

**Personal - becoming more like Christ myself, and  
Missional - helping others do the same.**

Friends, as long as you're drawing breath there is great hope for you.

- God can take the messes you've made and turn them into something beautiful.
- Failure is never final without your permission.
- Hope is a choice before it's anything else.

Remember the twin towers of hope from a few weeks ago:

**I am not defined by my past.**

**I will not put boundaries around my future.**