

Today is March 22, 2019 - Day 17 of the Lenten Season

"May these words and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer." - Psalm 19:14

Thank you for joining me on my Lenten journey of faith. Any journey is an easier one when it is traveled with someone. Life can be lonely, and the way can be difficult at times. But through the Grace of God and wonderful family and friends, we will get there.

Suggested Readings: (OT) The Book of Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13, 17-18
(NT) The Gospel of Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46

For today's meditation, I have selected the reading from Genesis (RSV). This is the beginning of the story of Joseph.

"Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a long robe with sleeves. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him."

"Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, 'Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them.' And he said to him, 'Here I am.' So he said to him, 'Go now, see if it is well with your brothers, and with the flock; and bring me word again.' So he sent him from the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem."

"And the man said, 'They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.' So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan. They saw him from afar off, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him."

Don't you just love family dynamics! I am blessed to be part of a large family. I have four brothers and three sisters (yes, in that order). Chronologically, I am the oldest, the first-born. I am sure that there were times when any of us could be identified as "the favorite". Yet, I don't remember that we ever talked about it. If anyone asks where the "Schaefer Competitive Spirit" started, it was doing the dishes. We would play games with the winners exempted from doing the dishes. As we got older and more active in sports (especially baseball) Dad would exempt the boys from doing the dishes because it would make our hands softer, and that was not good for a baseball player. Our sisters did not enjoy the spring season. The older siblings were jealous of the freedoms that the younger ones enjoyed, and the younger ones always wondered, "How come I can't do that? Paul does."

In the story of Joseph, the older brothers were out working and tending to the family's business. Shepherding is hard work. "Baby" Joseph was allowed to stay back and hang around with Dad. His long robe was not practical for someone who would be working in the field. Of course, they were jealous. They saw their inheritance going to this young brat. So, they decided to get even.

We know the rest of the story. The brothers sold Joseph into slavery. Joseph becomes the right hand man for Pharaoh and all of Egypt. Joseph ends up saving Egypt AND also his family. Joseph was the instrument by which God saved the nation of Israel, but first Joseph had to suffer. Just as Jesus was to suffer and die, not for just Israel, but for the whole world.

We need to remember that each of us has our own talents, abilities and knowledge that are God-given. God has a plan for each of us. We don't need to be jealous of others. AND, we must always remember to give God the credit for what we have.

I pray that during this season of Lent our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, will lift you up and with the grace of the Holy Spirit bring you peace and the sure knowledge that you are loved. Amen.