

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL Lesson

By HAROLD L. LINDQUIST, D. D. Of The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. (Classified by Western Newspaper Union.)

Lesson for September 27

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JOSEPH: AN EXAMPLE OF FORGIVENESS

LESSON TEXT—Genesis 4:1-13, 47:11, 12. GOLDEN TEXT—Be ye kind one to another, understanding, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you—Ephesians 4:32.

Forgiveness, opening the way for the restoration of fellowship and the showing of kindness, brought the story of Joseph and his brethren to a happy ending. Under the good hand of God the story which began with tragedy is brought to a conclusion of blessing.

Following the earnest plea of Judah, the heart of Joseph could no longer withhold itself from the full expression of affection and devotion to his family.

I. Love Overcomes Fear (vv. 1-4).

Joseph tenderly shielded the family troubles from the eyes and ears of strangers by sending out the Egyptians. It was the first step of consideration which paved the way for reconciliation. How often just the opposite is done—airing family affairs before the world, and humbling those who may be in the wrong, thus making it difficult for them to admit their guilt.

Then, too, this was a moment too tender and delicate to be seen by outsiders. The tears of a strong man like Joseph mean a deep movement of spirit—a solemn and often a sacred moment.

It should also be noted that the brothers were afraid, and well they might be, because of their sin against Joseph. After almost 50 years these unrepentant men found themselves face to face with the one whom they had supposed they had disposed of, and they knew their sin had found them out. It always does, sooner or later, but inevitably.

How great and noble was the forgiving love of Joseph; an example to us, especially appropriate and needed in a world of hate and bitterness.

II. Grace Overrides Sin (vv. 5-8).

The guilt of these men was none the less and Joseph could not remove it, but he encouraged them by showing how God had used their evil devices to work out His own good pleasure. He can make the wrath of man to praise Him (Ps. 76:10).

It is worth stressing again that in the very hour when the prospects for Joseph's future usefulness seemed ruined, God was opening the door to the greatest experiences of his life and was preparing him to serve the thousands whose lives were saved by his wisdom and ability in the years of famine.

Nothing is more important in the life of a child of God than to be yielded to His will, unmoved by circumstances, abiding His time, responding to His guidance whether it be by the opening or closing of doors, prosperity or adversity. And herein lies the marvel of it all—even sin may be overruled by God's grace for His own glory. That does not invite anyone to sin that grace may abound (Rom. 6:1, 2), but it does offer encouragement to the one who has fallen, that God can redeem the years that the locust have eaten (Joel 2:25).

Our lesson also sets us an example of how true forgiveness acts something we need. So often when forgiveness is asked or granted there is an "I can forgive but I can't forget" attitude, which means that while hostilities have ceased, at least temporarily, there is no real friendship or the disposition to show kindness. Is there any real forgiveness at all in such an attitude of heart and mind? We fear not.

III. Kindness Provides the Best (vv. 9-15; 47:11, 12).

It might have been easy to send food and a kind greeting with the brothers to their own land, but love does not seek the minimum expression of its feeling. It asks not how little, but how much can I give to do.

Bringing his aged father and brothers into the land of plenty was not enough, Joseph also gave to them the "best of the land" (47:11). His thoughtful consideration in sending for his father (Gen. 46:5-7) was part of the same piece of kindness.

Joseph puts to shame the modern "hard-boiled" attitude toward needy and aged members of the family. In their eager and relentless pursuit of fame or riches, many ignore or trample upon the members of their own families. Often they are ashamed of the broken bodies, the humble apparel, the broken or undecorated speech of their parents. They fear lest their new-found friends in the circle of wealth and supposed "position" will think them strange or ridiculous. God pity the man or woman who is ashamed of a humble or aged father and mother!

Joseph, who really had an exalted position gained by merit and by the blessing of God, never forgot his place before God as a son in the family and as a brother. Let us consider him and do likewise.

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Lesson for October 4

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FAITH IN CHRIST AS OUR PERSONAL SAVIOUR

LESSON TEXT—Acts 16:13-15; Romans 8:11. GOLDEN TEXT—Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 8:11.

Salvation through Christ is the way, and the only way, into the Christian life; therefore, there could be no other subject more suitable than that of our lesson to begin our brief series of "Studies in the Christ Life."

Our lesson for today tells us first how one comes into a personal saving faith, and then gives Paul's statement of the result of saving faith in the changed life of the believer.

I. The Opened Heart (Acts 16: 13-15).

Paul and his companions on their important errand for the Master, bearing the news of the gospel, had first known His guidance by hindrance, by the closed door; and then by the direction of the Spirit into the open door, revealed in the vision of the man of Macedonia. Here in Philippi they found not only an open door, but an open heart, one which the Holy Spirit had made ready for the preaching of the Word of God. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

Note that while Lydia was a woman of ability and culture, and a worshiper of God, yet she needed the message of redemption through faith in Christ.

Lydia evidenced the truth of her profession of faith by open testimony and by a desire for fellowship in putting forward the work of God (v. 15). Salvation is by faith apart from works, but a saving faith is always one which works.

II. The Transformed Life (Rom. 8:1-11).

This is one of the great passages of Scripture, rich in doctrinal instruction, presenting through Paul an illuminating discussion of justification by faith.

This lesson affords an opportunity for teachers to learn and present to classes much needed truth along the line of Bible doctrine. There is not enough teaching of this type. People seem to prefer a little devotional study, or the discussion of current events, possibly in the light of prophecy. These are good, but it is of first importance that Christians be informed regarding doctrine.

We find in this Scripture the glorious transformation of life which comes to the one who takes Christ as Saviour, as we note the seven results of God's justifying grace.

1. Peace (v. 1). The human heart craves spiritual peace and knows that it can be found only when sin has been dealt with and put away. For sin cannot be condoned or ignored. There must be justification, and that can come only through Jesus Christ our Lord.

2. Grace (v. 2). A peace with God brings the peace of God into our hearts. We have that peace because we have by faith come into the place of God's favor. No longer strangers or outsiders, we have come in ("have access") to His place of grace and favor.

3. Hope (vv. 2b, 5a). Our faith not only brings present peace, but causes us to see future glory. Such hope puts us in a right attitude toward God, and the things of life, including tribulations (v. 3), are rightly valued and understood. Even our troubles become evidences of His love in which we may glory.

4. Love (vv. 5b-8). God's love which gave His Son to die for our sins becomes the "shed abroad" portion of every believer in Him. It was an unmeasurably great love, and it all centers in Calvary.

5. Saved From Wrath (v. 9). The wrath of God is minimized or denied in much modern theology, but it is nonetheless a very "real and awful affection of the divine nature." But the Christ who died for sinners will surely deliver the saints from the wrath of God against sin.

6. Reconciled (v. 10). The death of Christ, which justified man has accepted by faith, brought reconciliation. Atonement had been made for sin, and the One who died is alive again, a living Saviour.

7. Joy (v. 11). And why not? Such a revelation of what our redemption includes should make every believer in Christ rejoice in God. The One who is the sinner's Judge is the believer's joy! That is the glorious transformation which takes place when one believes.

Some unbeliever who has read these lines thus far must by now be eager to have these things true in his life. Well, why not? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). Then read again those majestic and joyful words in Romans 8:1: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have"—yes, I have "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."



The DIM LANTERN

by TEMPLE BAILEY.

"Oh, I can get away at four. We'll have tea at the old inn." "Heavenly. Ricky, I have a new blue hat."

She told him all the spicy gossip. Frederick, like most men, ostensibly scorned scandal, but lent a willing ear. What Eloise had said, what Benny had said, what all the world was saying about Del's marriage.

"And they were married here today. I didn't dream it until Eloise called me up just before lunch. Edith was here!"

"Yes, and young Barnes." "She stopped there and poured the tea. She did it gracefully, but Frederick's thoughts swept back to Jane behind her battlements of silver."

"Four lumps, Ricky?" "Um—yes." "A penny for your thoughts." "They're not worth a penny, Adelaide. Lots of lemon, please. And no cakes. I am trying to keep my lovely figure."

"Oh, why worry? I like big men." "That's nice of you." "Martha's little sponge cakes were light as a feather. Adelaide broke one and ate daintily. Then she said, 'How's little Jane Barnes?'"

Frederick was immediately self-conscious. "She's still in Chicago." "Sister better?" "Much."

"When is she coming back?" "Jane? As soon as Mrs. Heming can be brought home. In a few weeks, I hope."

Adelaide drank a cup of tea almost at a draught. She was aware of an impending disclosure. When the blow came, she took it without the flicker of an eyelash.

"I am going to marry Jane Barnes, Adelaide. The engagement isn't to be announced until it returns to Washington. But I want my friends to know."

She put her elbow on the table, clasped her hands and rested her chin on them looking at him with steady eyes. "So that's the end of it, Ricky?"

"The end of what?" "Our friendship." "Why should it be?" "Oh, do you think that your little Jane is going to let you philander? I shan't want to philander. If that's the way you put it."

"So you think you're in—love with her?" "I know I am," the red came up in his cheeks, but he stuck to it manfully. "It's different from anything—ever that I've felt before."

"They all say that, don't they, every time?" "Don't be so—cynical." She shrugged her shoulders. "I'm not. Well, I shall miss you, Ricky, dear."

That was all, just that plaintive note. But Adelaide's plaintiveness was always effective. Jane was home again. Judy was better. Philomet sang. The world was a lovely place.

other end of the great table, Cousin Annabel weighed her in the balance. Jane knew she was being weighed, Cousin Annabel was so blue-blooded that it showed in the veins of her hands and nose—and her hair was dressed with a gray transformation which quite overpowered her thin little face with its thin little nose.

As a matter of fact, Cousin Annabel felt that Frederick had taken leave of his senses. What could he see in this short-haired girl—who hadn't a jewel, except the one he had given her?

Jane wore Towne's ring, hidden, on a ribbon around her neck. "Some day I'll let everybody see it," she had said, "but not now."

"You act as if you were ashamed of it." "I'm not. But Cinderella must wait until the night of the ball."

It was while they were drinking their coffee in the drawing-room that the storm came up. It was one of those cyclonic winds that whip off the tops of the trees and blow the roofs from unsubstantial edifices. The thunder was a ceaseless reverberation—the lightning was pink and made the sky seem like a glistening inverted shell.

Cousin Annabel hated thunderstorms and said so. "I think I shall go to my room, Frederick."

"You are not a bit safer up there than here," Towne told her. But she went up and Baldy and Edith wandered across the hall to the library, where Edith insisted they could observe other aspects of the storm.

Jane and her lover were left alone, and presently Frederick was called to the telephone.

"I'm not sure that it's safe, sir, in this storm," Waldron warned. "Nonsense, Waldron," Towne said, and stepped quickly across the polished floor.

Thus it happened that Jane sat by herself in the great drawing-room of the Ice Palace, while the wind howled, and the rain streamed down the window glass, and all the evil things in the world seemed let loose.

And she was afraid! Not of the storm, but of the great house. She was so small and it was so big. Her own little cottage clasped her in its warm embrace.

This great mansion stood away from her—as the sky stands away from the desert. All the rest of her life she would be going up and down those great stairs, sitting in front of the great fireplace, presiding at the far end of Frederick's great table—dwarfed by it all, losing personality, individually, bidding good-bye forever to little Jane Barnes, becoming until death parted them the wife of Frederick Towne.

She sat huddled in her chair, panting a little, her eyes wide. "Silly," she said with a sob. The sound of her voice echoed and re-echoed, "Silly, silly, silly."

The noise without was deafening—the wind shook the walls. She stood up, her hands clenched, then ran swiftly into the hall. A thundering crash and the lights went out.

She heard Frederick calling. "Jane, Jane!" She called back, "I'm here," and saw the quick spurt of a match as he lighted it, holding it up and peering into the dark.

"There you are, my dearest." He lighted another match and came to ward her, as Waldron, with a brace of candles, appeared in one door and Baldy and Edith in another.

Frederick lifted Jane in his strong arms. "Why, you're crying," he said; "don't, my darling, don't." Then Baldy came up and demanded, "What's the matter, Kitten? You've never been afraid of storms."

At this moment Waldron reappeared to say that Briggs had pronounced the streets impassable—branches had been blown down—and there was other wreckage. "That settles it," Frederick said. "You two young things may as well stay here for the night. Jane's not fit to go out anyhow."



"Edith told me."

Baldy, that I should like life to go on just as it is. Just you and me, Baldy. But of course it can't."

"Of course it can, if you wish it. You mustn't marry Towne if you have the least doubt."

"I haven't any doubts. So don't worry." Briggs stood up and kissed him. "Briggs will come out for me—and we are all to see a play together afterward."

"Edith told me." "Baldy," she had held of the lapel of his coat, "how are things going with—Edith?"

"Do you mean, am I in love with her? I am." "Are you going to marry her?" "God knows."

She looked up at him in surprise. "What makes you say it that way? Has she told you she didn't care?"

"She has told me that she does care. But do you think, Jane, that I'm going to take her money?" He patted her on the cheek and was off.

Jane picked a spray of princess-pine and stuck it in her blouse. Oh, what an adorable world! Her world. Could there be anything better than Frederick Towne could give her?

Baldy's words rang in her ears—"Do you think I am going to take her money?" Yet she was taking Frederick Towne's money. She wished it had not been necessary. Each day it seemed to her that the thought burned deeper: she was under obligations to her lover that could be repaid only by marriage. And they were to be married in June.

She went back to her own little house, and found a great box of roses, waiting. She spent an hour filling vases and bowls with them. Old Sophy coming in from the kitchen said, "Looks lak dat Mitchu Towne's jes' fascinated with you, Miss Janey."

"Aren't the roses lovely, Sophy?" Jane wanted to tell Sophy that Mr. Towne would some day be her husband. But she still deferred the announcement of her engagement. "I've told one or two people," Frederick had said.

"Would you want to manage—Baldy?" Edith snatched. "That's different," she evaded.

"Not different. You know you wouldn't go through life with him, pulling wires, making a puppet of him—of yourself—you want coo-radeship—understanding. You'd flare up now and then. Baldy and I do. But—oh, we love each other." Jane's voice shook.

Edith looked at her thoughtfully. "Jane, are you happy?" "I ought to be."

"But are you?" "I'm tired I think. I don't know. Ever since I came home I've been nervous. Perhaps it is the reaction."

"Jane, I'm going to say something. Don't marry Uncle Fred unless you're—sure. I went through all that with Del. And you see how little I know of what I had in my heart to give—"

"She stopped, her lovely face suffused with blushes. 'I've learned—since then. And you mustn't make my mistake. And, Jane dear,' she leaned over the younger girl like some splendid angel, 'don't worry about material things. Baldy and I will want you always with us—'

Jane sat up. "Are you going to marry Baldy?" "I am," sighing a little, "some day, when his ship comes in. He isn't willing to share my cargo—yet."

In the morning Towne had gone when Jane came down. She and Edith had had breakfast in their rooms—and there had been a great rose on Jane's tray, with a note twisted about the stem—"To my golden girl." Her lover had called her up by the house telephone, and had told her he was leaving for New York at noon. "A telegram has just come. I'll see you the moment I get back."

Jane had a sense of relief. She would have three days to herself. Briggs took her out at noon, and Sophy came in to say, "Mr. Evans called you all up. He's back from New York. He says he'll come over tonight."

That was news indeed! Old Evans! Jane got into the frock of faded lilac gingham and went about the house singing. Three days! Of freedom!

It was after lunch that she told the old woman, "I'm going down to the Glen—there should be wild honeysuckle—Sophy."

There were bees in the Glen and butterflies, and a cool silence. On the other side of the creek were pasture, and cattle grazing. But no human creature was in sight. Jane, walking along the narrow path, had a sense of utter peace. Here was familiar ground. She felt the welcome of inanimate things—the old willows, the singing stream, the great gray rocks that stuck their heads above the edges of the bank.

And now, around the turn of the path, came suddenly a man and two boys. They carried fishing-rods and stopped at a jutting rock to bait their hooks. One of the boys went out on the bridge and cast his line. His voice came to Jane clearly.

"Mr. Follette, there's a thing I hate to do, and that's to bait my hook with a worm. I'd much rather put on something that won't alive. Why is it that everything eats up something else?"

Jane peered down at the man poised on the rock. It was Evans! He was winding his reel against a taut line. "I've caught a snag," he said. "Look out! Sandy, there's something on your hook."

As they landed the small catch with much excitement, Jane was aware of the strong swing of Evans' figure, the brown of his cheeks, the brightness of his glance as he spoke to the boys.

"It is dreadful," Evans sat down on the rock and looked across at the boy on the bridge. "But there are more dreadful things than death— injustice, and cruelty, and hate. And more than all—fear. And you must think of this, Arthur, that what we call a violent death is sometimes the easiest. An old animal with teeth gone, trying to exist. That's dreadfulness. Or an old person racked by pains of a long life. He had always had that quick and vivid voice, but this certainty of phrase was a resurrection. He spoke without hesitation. Sure of himself. Sure of the things he was about to say.

"You boys needn't think that I don't know what I am talking about. I do. When I came back from France there was something wrong. I was afraid of everything. I lived for months in dread of my shadow; it was awful. Nothing can be worse. Then, one night I came to see that God's greatest gift to man is—strength to endure."