

Bringing it Home

For Sunday, August 16, 2026

By Allison de Kanel



In today's Old Testament story we heard about some brothers who had treated each other very badly . They finally forgave each other, and their family was healed.

This is the end of the story of Joseph and his brothers. We heard the beginning of the story last week. When Joseph was young, he was his father's favorite, and everybody knew it. Also, Joseph had dreams about the future. In the dreams, his brothers bowed to him. Did he keep these dreams to himself? No, he did not. Naturally his brothers resented him.

One day his father sent him to check up on his brothers and the flocks they were taking care of. The brothers were planning to kill him but decided to sell him into slavery instead. Joseph wound up in Egypt and eventually was put in prison for something he didn't do.

When the Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, needed someone to explain his dreams, Joseph was able to do it. There was going to be a great famine in the whole region. Pharaoh was so impressed he put Joseph in charge of preparing for the famine.

Back home, Joseph's father and family suffered because of the famine. So, his brothers went to Egypt to buy food. They didn't recognize Joseph, but he recognized them right away.

At first Joseph treated his brothers well, but then he had his servants put a valuable cup in their baggage. It looked like one of them was a thief! Maybe he was testing them to see if they loved each other or would abandon their brother in Egypt. Or maybe he was paying them back for

what they did to him. In the end, as we heard today, he told them who he was. He forgave them and told them God had intended all along to have Joseph in Egypt to save his family from starvation.

This story makes me ask some hard questions. Was Joseph's father fair when he treated Joseph better than his brothers? Should Joseph have told his brothers that they would bow to him? Does any of that give his brothers the right to sell him, let alone plan to kill him? And finally, was Joseph kind to frame one of his brothers as a thief?

Joseph and his family were not perfect heroes. But God used these imperfect people, with their mistakes and bad choices, to bring Joseph's family to safety in Egypt.

Let's pray. Dear God, I know I am not perfect. Please teach me and help me to make wise choices. And when I fail, please forgive me and teach me to do better. Amen.

Today's Bible Reading: Genesis 45:1-15

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. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. 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.

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. And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. 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. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. 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. 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. 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. 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.' And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you. 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." Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

Illustration from: <https://sundayschool.works/lessons/joseph-and-gods-plan-genesis-451-15-5019-21-childrens-sermon-lesson-for-kids/>