



Joseph Forgives His Brothers

Genesis 41:37 – 46:7

The cabin door creaked open and Captain Billy peeked into the room. The candlelight flickered, Ripply looked up from his Bible as the Captain called his name. "Ripply! I've been lookin' everywhere for you. I see you're still readin' the ole Bible. Can't get enough of those exciting stories, eh?"

"Yes sir," Ripply answered thoughtfully. "I've been reading about Joseph and I can't believe how well he could hear from God."

Captain Billy smiled and sat down on a chair next to Ripply. "Well, God is 'the God who speaks.' We just need to learn how to be the people who listen."

"Amen to that!" said Ripply. "I just wish I could understand how Joseph kept trusting and obeying God even when he went through so many tough times!"

"God had spoken to him and promised him a great future," said the Captain.

Ripply shook his head. "I know, but, it's hard to see the future when bad things are happening all around you."

The captain leaned back in his chair. "Those bad things were good things in Joseph's life!" He laughed.

Ripply waved his hand and laughed in disbelief. "You're talking kooky talk! How can bad things be good things?"

"It's just one of the amazing ways that God works in our lives." Captain Billy answered. "Some times God uses bad situations to bring a greater good, for His glory. Here let me see yer Traysure Map."

Ripply handed his open Bible to the Captain. "Remember how Joseph's brothers threw him in the well and then sold him to the Ishmaelites? Well, they sold him to a rich feller named Potiphar."

"But, those are all bad things!" Ripply protested.

"True, but Joseph did such a good job that Potiphar put him in charge of all of his servants."

"O.K., well, THAT's good." Ripply agreed.

"Aye, but Mrs. Potiphar tricked Joseph and lied about him." The captain continued.

"That's bad. Did he get in trouble?" Ripply asked.

"He got thrown in jail!" Captain Billy answered.

Ripply looked shocked. "That's terrible! I thought God promised him a great future!"

"He did. God will work it out in His time." Captain Billy continued, "In prison, he met the king's chief cup bearer. He's the guy who always served the king of Egypt his fancy cup of wine. Anyway, this cup bearer guy had a dream that he told to Joseph."

"That's right! God spoke to Joseph through dreams." Ripply remembered.

"Did he tell the cup bearer what his dream meant?"

The captain nodded. "Aye, he did. The dream came true just as Joseph said it would. So, the cup bearer promised to remember to tell the king about Joseph. But, he forgot all about Joseph for 2 whole years, until one day when the king had a bad dream. Then suddenly the cup bearer remembered the man in jail who could explain his dream."

"Did the king let Joseph out of jail?" Ripply asked.

"He did and Joseph explained the king's dream. He told him that seven years of famine we're on the way and that the king should put lots of food away so that the people of Egypt would have plenty to eat during the lean years. The king followed Joseph's advice and that saved the people of Egypt from starving. Joseph did such a good job that the king made him second in command over all of Egypt!" Captain Billy finished proudly.

Ripply leaned forward with excitement. "That's excellent! I bet that made his brothers really jealous!"

The captain reached up and ran his hand through his beard. "Well, that's the thing; they didn't know! You see back home they hadn't stored up any food, so all of Joseph's family back in Israel were starving. So their father, Jacob sent them to Egypt to beg the Egyptians for food. And when they got there, guess who came out to meet them?"

"Umm...Hannah Montana?" Ripply guessed.

Captain pounded his fist on the table. "No! Joseph! Hannah Montana? What kind of an answer is that? It was their own brother, Joseph."

"Were they happy to see him?" Ripply asked.

The captain shook his head. "They didn't recognize him. But he knew who they were. Then, to make a long story short, after they went home and brought his little brother Benjamin back to Egypt, Joseph told them who he was. And in the very end, the brothers bowed down and begged Joseph to forgive them."

"Hey! They bowed down just like in Joseph's dream when he was a teenager!" Ripply announced, proud that he had figured out the connection.

Captain smiled knowingly. "How do you like that? Dreams really do come true...when they come from the Lord."

"So did Joseph get his brothers back for tossing him down the well and selling him to strangers?" Rusty asked.

"Nope, he forgave them." Captain replied.

Ripply was amazed. "What?! But, they was down right mean to him! I can't believe Joseph would forgive those scallywags!" he jumped up and pretended like he was fighting the brothers with a sword. "If I'd a'been Joseph, I'd shown me brothers a thing or two. I bet Joseph made 'em his slaves for life!"

Captain laughed at Ripply's swashbuckling. "Wrong. The Bible says in Genesis 50:20 'But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? 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.'"

Ripply stopped and sat down, out of breath from his pretend sword play. "Aye, Joseph would never have gotten to power and been able to save his whole family and his nation if his brothers hadn't sold him and if all of those bad things had not happened to him."

"Exactly!" the captain agreed. "Just like Joseph said, 'You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good ...' God used a bad situation to bring Himself glory. Sometimes, we go through tough times, but God can bring good from anything!"

"Just as He did with Joseph, God has a plan for our lives, too!" Ripply said thoughtfully.

Captain Billy stood up and patted Ripply on the back. "You keep reading that traysure map and God will show you his plan for your life...I guarantee it. Good night, Ripply." Captain Billy smiled as he walked back to his cabin.