

Weekly Thoughts: *Biblical Principles in our Everyday Lives*

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Romans 10:9-10 states the foundational verse for our Christian lives:

[9] That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. [10] For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

When we proclaimed that Jesus is our Lord for the first time, we all had some preconceptions of what that really means. Very often, however, it is not exactly what God has planned for us. As He slowly starts working in our lives, we discover that things not always work the way we planned. We then usually start pushing it 'our own way' and become first surprised then annoyed when it does not work. As a result we start blaming God, other people and ourselves.

The Bible, however, has a simple answer to it. When you proclaim Jesus as a Lord of your life, you mean exactly what you say: **He is now the Lord of your life.** In other words, He can do with your life whatever suits Him. And this is not what you necessarily planned or hoped for - however wonderful your plan and ideas might sound! Let us look at the example of Joseph.

GE 37:2 This is the account of Jacob.

Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.

GE 37:3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made a richly ornamented robe for him. [4] When

his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

God in fact had a wonderful plan for Joseph's life. He also showed Joseph a glimpse of his wonderful future.

GE 37:5 Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. [6] He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: [7] We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."

GE 37:8 His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

GE 37:9 Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

GE 37:10 When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" [11] His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

However, Joseph was not yet ready to take on such a privilege and the associated responsibility - he needed 20 more years to understand that it was not he himself who was going to shape his own success. He needed to learn - painfully - that it is God who was in control of his life. Then - and only then - he was able to confess the following truths:

*GE 45:4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! [5] And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that **God sent me** ahead of you. [6] For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five*

years there will not be plowing and reaping.
[7] But **God sent** me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

GE 45:8 "So then, **it was not you who sent me here, but God.** He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. [9] Now hurry back to my father and say to him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: **God has made me** lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don't delay.

Think about this: if there was a better 'self-made-man', a 'prince-from-rags' story. Joseph was smart, intelligent, not afraid of making quick decisions and very consequent in work, diligent and hard working. **Yet, in these 6 verses he uses God's name four times, and attributes everything he has ever achieved to God.**

Adam Kleczkowski, Cambridge, March 19, 1999

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Have you ever been prosecuted unjustly? Has anybody ever accused you of something you haven't done? Have you been thrown to jail without any reason? Have you ever lost your family, your friends? Has anybody close to you wronged you? Have you been left to die by your closest friends? Have you done some good to somebody yet this person never helped you? Have you been forgotten?

If any or all of these happened to you, would you still say, 'the LORD is with me'? Yet, all of these happened to Joseph. He was betrayed and left to die by his own brothers, then sold to Egypt. He did not see his family and friends for more than 20 years. He subsequently was betrayed again, accused unjustly and thrown into an Egyptian jail. Then, somebody he had helped, forgotten completely to repay the debt. Yet, in the passages that describe his fate in Egypt (Gen. 39), three times it is said 'The LORD was with him' (verses: 3, 21, 23). How could this be? When we are blessed in our lives, we usually thank God for all He has done for us. It is, however, not easy to thank God if things do not work in our lives. Would you say with Habakkuk:

HAB 3:17-18 *Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food,*

though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. ?

Yet, this is exactly what we are told to do:

RO 5:1 *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, [2] through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. [3] Not only so, but **we also rejoice in our sufferings**, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; [4] perseverance, character; and character, hope. [5] And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*

Think of this, **we have peace with God !**

Therefore, we can rejoice – even in the midst of sufferings:

PHP 4:4 *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! [5] Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. [6] Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. [7] And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

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[Adam Kleczkowski is from Krakow, Poland. He currently lives and works in Cambridge, England together with his wife Marta and their three (soon to be four) children. Adam also designed and administers our web-site which we invite you to visit at: www.unity-of-spirit.org]