**Upside Down - 2** Feb 23, 2025 Lk 6:27-38, Gen 45:3-11, 15

* **Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you** – WOW, Is this possible?!
* Story in Genesis concerning Joseph is one of my favorite accounts in the Bible for several reasons:

1) We see irregular family dynamics (not necessarily healthy).

2) The story encompasses our fallen human nature.

3) We see good overtake evil.

4) Above all, in this story, we see God’s hand at work

* We are all familiar with the story of Joseph in the Bible, but good to kind of highlight it again. (Story time)
* Joseph, the one who had the coat of many colours.
* Remember Joseph was one of the 12 sons of Jacob. (12 tribes of Israel)
* The Bible tells us that Jacob favored Joseph, partly because he was the youngest but mostly because his mother was Rachel. (Other 10 were born of Leah)
* One of the ways that Jacob showed his favoritism for Joseph was by giving him a robe that the Bible described as being ‘richly ornamented’, or of many colours.
* Joseph was known as a dreamer not only because he had dreams in which God spoke to him, but also he could interpret dreams.
* Joseph’s story begins when he has two dreams – one where he and his 10 brothers (Benjamin not yet born) were binding sheaths of grain in the field and

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his sheath stood up while the other 10 sheaths bowed down to his sheath and the other dream was where the sun, moon and eleven stars were bowing down to him.

* The Bible tells us that Joseph’s brothers hated him and they were jealous of him. (Gen 37:4, 11)
* The story continues with Joseph’s brothers grazing their father’s flocks some distance away and Jacob sends Joseph to see how they are doing.
* When Joseph reached the brothers, they, initially in their hatred for Joseph, plotted to kill him.
* Two of the brothers (Reuben & Judah) protested and they ended up throwing Joseph in a cistern (well) and putting some animal blood on his robe to send back to Jacob with the story that a wild animal had killed him.
* The brothers ended up selling Joseph as a slave to a caravan of nomadic traders who were heading to Egypt.
* In Egypt Joseph ended up being sold to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh’s high officials and because Joseph excelled and was so successful in everything he did, Potiphar put him in charge of his entire household.
* Not to forget Joseph’s ability to interpret dreams, he eventually ended up interpreting two dreams for Pharaoh himself in which he said that both dreams meant the same thing in that there was going to be an abundance in the land that would last for seven

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years, but this abundance would be followed by a severe famine that would last for seven years.

* Need to highlight that Joseph never claimed his ability to interpret dreams as some special power he had personally, but he always gave the glory to God.
* When Joseph was brought before Pharaoh, Pharaoh said: “***I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.”***
* ***“I cannot do it,”*** *Joseph replied to Pharaoh****, “but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires.***” (Gen 41:15-16)
* In response to the pending famine, Joseph advised Pharaoh that he should appoint someone responsible for storing up the grain during the years of abundance in order to sustain the country during the famine.
* Here is Pharaoh’s response: “***Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.***’ ***So Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt***’” (Gen 41:39-41)
* Then we can pick up the story with Ann’s reading from Gen 45 where Joseph is revealing himself to

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his brothers.

* The famine was great even in Canaan and hearing that there was food in Eqypt, the brothers have travelled there to buy some food.
* Now the brothers did not recognize Joseph, but Joseph recognized them.
* Joseph is revealing himself to his brothers and his behavior and attitude are quite incredible.
* Overall this story about Joseph is a very important story, not only because it identifies the Jewish lineage from Abraham through Isaac, Jacob and the 12 tribes, but moreso because it highlights how it is God who provides the strength to do his will.
* In today’s gospel from Luke 6, we see almost a continuation of last week’s gospel where we read the Beatitudes and Jesus seems to be turning everything upside down.
* Today Jesus tells us: “***Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.***” (Lk 6:27-28)
* This is really upside down when we look at the world around us.
* Are such behaviors and attitudes even possible?
* Joseph however really fulfilled such requirements in how he treated his brothers after their intention, first of all to kill him, and then selling him off as a slave.
* The only way that Joseph could forgive and love

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his brothers was to do so in God’s strength – not his own. I believe it is the same for you and me.

* Our tendency would be to follow the way of the world around us, and it is only when we walk in God’s strength that we can fulfill what Jesus asks of us.
* A little further in the Genesis story is where Joseph sums it up when he says to his brothers; “***You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done***.” (Gen 50:20)
* An obvious theme in today’s worship music is to be still.
* We remain still before God as we seek his will in our lives and we can then walk in His strength.