

Christ Community Covenant Church
Beginnings: The Transformed 'Winner' - Genesis 41:37-46
Pastor Dave Scherrer - June 19, 2016

What do you think of good losers?

Joseph was a good loser. I actually don't think that is a great analogy. We have a soft spot for the underdog, but we are not too keen on a 'loser'. We like our home teams to win or we tend to turn on them pretty quick.

- Show me a good loser and I'll show you a loser. Vince Lombardi
- Show me a good loser and I'll show you an idiot. Leo Durocher
- You must never be satisfied with losing. You must get angry, terribly angry, about losing. But the mark of the good loser is that he takes his anger out on himself and not his victorious opponents or on his teammates. Richard M. Nixon
- Show me a good loser and I'll show you someone playing golf with their boss.

Here is another quote I like.

"Only losers call someone a 'loser'."
DL Scherrer

Humanity has a habit of keeping score; of gauging my own capacity and worth by evaluating me against your performance and appearance. We treat life as if it were a game that you must win or lose. If I am taller than you I am better than you. If I am more influential in my business or social status, I am better than you. If I am better at clarinet, ping pong, calculus, water colors, baking brownies or plumbing a sink, then I am better than you.

[Actually if you can plumb a sink you are better than me so that one doesn't work but you get the point.]

In Genesis one of the games they seemed to play was "If I bear more male children than you then I am better than you." It seems like a silly game in today's world, but in the first recordings of human history, regardless of culture it seems according to historians and archeologists, it was a pretty real game. You remember how the first born male was considered to be the owner of the birthright, carrying the right to inherit their father's entire estate and wealth. The wife the second brother, any sisters – they all were at the first son's mercy. You remember the hot competition between Leah and Rachael to provide Jacob with children.

It is interesting that in this Genesis account, God breaks with human traditions. God chooses Able rather than Cain, and He chooses Isaac to bless, Abraham's second born, rather than Ishmael, the first born. God chooses Jacob rather than Esau. God seems to be saying to humanity in this narrative, "I am in charge here. Your human traditions and sensitivities are of no consideration to me." We have learned in our study this spring that God is sovereign and God has a plan that he is working. It is a plan of redemption and restoration.

For a while it looked like Joseph was one of those helpless recipients of God's willingness to have people suffer if it meets his purpose. Joseph was honest; he got thrown in a pit. He was favored by his father but hated by his brothers and sold to slave traders. He had integrity and was faithful and was falsely accused for it and thrown in prison. We could say he was a loser but that wouldn't fit.

Joseph did not compete in the game of life for his first 30 years. He would have been a loser, but then at age 30 he becomes a winner. In fact, He becomes arguably the second most powerful person in the known world at that time.

Joseph has shown us what a 'good loser' looks like . . . Now we need to know what a 'good winner' looks like! Let's look at these videos to jump start our thinking . . .

Peyton Manning and Richard Sherman

Joseph on the other hand God thinks is a winner . . .

Genesis 49:22-25

²² “Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring;
his branches run over the wall.

²³ The archers bitterly attacked him, shot at him, and harassed him severely,

²⁴ yet his bow remained unmoved;

his arms were made agile by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob

(from there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel), ²⁵ by the God of your father who will help you,

by the Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that crouches
beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb.

Let's review the story of Joseph being raised to prominence in Egypt;

- Dreams of the two servants of the King Joseph is remembered finally and Joseph is called from prison to give counsel to the King regarding his dreams,
- Joseph testifies that he is a servant of God Almighty (v¹⁶ *Joseph answered Pharaoh, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.”*)
- Joseph not only interprets the dreams by the power of God but he goes on to give expert advice on how to address the crisis that is predicted by the king's dreams,

Genesis 41:37-46a

This proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants. ³⁸ And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?” ³⁹ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. ⁴⁰ You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you.” ⁴¹ And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.” ⁴² Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck.

⁴³ And he made him ride in his second chariot. And they called out before him, “Bow the knee!” Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁴ Moreover, Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no one shall lift up hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.” ⁴⁵ And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphenath-paneah. And he gave him in marriage Asenath, the daughter of Potiphra priest of On. So Joseph went out over the land of Egypt.

⁴⁶ Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

We are helped when we read scripture when we keep one great truth in mind – that truth is that God deserves all glory and God is right to demand all glory. God's glory is what all things exist to display. He created humanity and chose a family out of that humanity for His glory to be manifest.

Isaiah 43:7

But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel:

“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.

² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; When you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

⁷ **everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”**

I shared with you last week that our suffering, when done well releases supernatural power and gives testimony of God's majesty and glory. But Isaiah 48:10-11 makes it clear:

¹⁰ Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction.

¹¹ For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned?
My glory I will not give to another.

What an amazing text this is! How wonderfully un-modern and anti-21st-century this text is! How ugly and repulsive it must appear to the god of this age, the prince of the power of the air. But how full of comfort and strength this reality is to those who love God above all else.

Man was made to rely on God and give him glory. Instead man chose to rely on himself and seek his own glory—to make a name for himself. So God elected one small person and promised to achieve his purpose through that man and his descendants. He would make Abram's name great, so that he, and not man, would get the glory.

In other words, the goal of God in creating Israel, namely, for his glory, is not a goal that took effect only at that point in history. It is the goal that guided his creation and governance of man from the start. Man was created from the beginning *in God's image* that he might image forth *God's* glory. He was to multiply and fill the earth so that the knowledge of the glory of God would cover the sea. And ever since the fall of man into sin, people have refused to align themselves with this divine goal. But all *God's* acts have been aimed at seeing it through.

So it is not just Israel but we whom God created for his glory. This is why the New Testament again and again calls us to do all acts in a way that glorifies God. "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). "Let your light so shine among men that they may see your good deeds and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Mt. 5:16).

This is not an admonition to do God a favor. It is a command to align our lives with his eternal goal. *He* created us for *his* glory. God's great aim in creating and governing the world is that he be glorified. "I created you for my glory. I formed you, I made you." (**This reality is the secret of our purpose, of how we are to carry ourselves and how we are to strive to be.**) It is what makes us a winner. It is the secret of character.

The Secret of Character

It is our Godly character that delights God because it gives Him glory. When we choose obedience, it gives Him glory. When we do good deeds that all can see it glorifies our Father who is in heaven. When we radiate love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and self-control we glorify God. When we love sinners it gives glory to God because Jesus was a friend to sinners.

We are told that God looks at our hearts, at the inside not the outside.

1 Samuel 16:7

"Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."

When the god of the 21st century tempts us to keep score and to try and be a winner at the expense of someone else, we lose and God does not see that kind of success. The measure of a man is not the deepness of his wallet or the size of his hands (going by Trump's comparisons) but in the steadfastness of his faith and the quickness of his jump to obedience. The measure of a father is not how many he can conceive but how well he loves his children's mother and how well he demonstrates to his children the Glory of God through our character.

A type of Christ

Remember when I said that Joseph is a type of Christ? That there are many similarities and premonitions associated with Joseph's life story that reminds us of Jesus Christ. Here is the kicker - I believe that you are a type of Christ. We remember from early in Genesis that God made us in His image. That means He made an image of himself when he made you! Interestingly, the same word used to describe God making us in 'our' image is the same word he uses when he commands us not to make *graven images*, not to make idols. We are not to make idols of God because he already made something in His image. Us! You! God made us in His

image to display His glory. This Church/The Church is made in His image to display His glory. We are most satisfied in life when our character is like His character and when this church has it in her mind to glorify Christ we will be lifted up and glorified as well.

What's in a name?

Genesis 41:50-52

⁵⁰ Before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph. Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, bore them to him. ⁵¹ Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh. "For," he said, "God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house." ⁵² The name of the second he called Ephraim, "For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."

Zaphenath-paneah – "God speaks and He lives"

Manasseh – "Forgotten"

Ephraim – "Doubly Fruitful"

Joseph is reflecting on his life and he names his first son forgotten, not that his son is forgotten or ignored but that his past pain is forgotten. The betrayals, the hatred, the injustice, the years of imprisonment from being falsely accused - all forgotten. Because he has seen God's plan.

"Forgive and Forget" – Is that in the Bible?

Jeremiah 31:33-34

³³ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Philippians 3:13-14

¹³ Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.