

Rev. Janet R Doyle
Elmer Presbyterian Church
Sunday, September 13, 2026
16th Sunday after Pentecost
Scripture Lesson: Genesis 45: 1-28
Sermon: But God...Makes Everything Beautiful in His Time

There is a song called "Beautiful in His Time" by singer/song writer Rebecca St. James. The words are:

“Grant me serenity to accept things
The things I cannot change
Grant me the courage, Lord, to change what I can
Wisdom to know the difference
In my weakness You can shine
In Your strength I can fly and
You make everything, everything beautiful
You make everything, everything new
You make everything, everything beautiful
In its time, in Your time, it's beautiful
Grant me serenity, Lord, and patience
For things will take time
Grant me freedom to walk a new path
And let me feel Your love
In my weakness You can shine
In Your strength I can fly and
You make everything, everything beautiful
You make everything, everything new
You make everything, everything beautiful
In its time, in Your time, it's beautiful
Lifting open hands to You my Savior
Beautify my soul
Knowing You redeem my pain and failure
Purify my soul
Beautify my soul

You make everything, everything beautiful
You make everything, everything new
You make everything, everything beautiful
In its time, in Your time, it's beautiful"

It is a beautiful song of love and hope and forgiveness, recreation and redemption.

Last Sunday in worship we talked about Joseph the Dreamer and his time in the PIT, the PRISON, and ending up in the PALACE working for Pharaoh.

Pharaoh has troubling dreams that none of his wise men and magicians can interpret for him. Remember the reputation Joseph built in prison for being a good dream interpreter? Joseph is called to Pharaoh and correctly interprets Pharaoh's dreams and counsels Pharaoh to prepare for the future.

Dream #1- Egypt will have 7 years of bountiful harvests

Dream #2- Egypt will have 7 years of famine.

Joseph, now in charge under Pharaoh, is put in charge of carrying out a plan to prepare for the years of famine, and this puts Joseph exactly where he needs to be in God's plan of redemption. Joseph is promoted to Deputy Pharaoh in Egypt at age 30.

The famine hits Canaan, where Jacob and his other sons still live. Joseph's brothers come to Egypt to ask for food, and they do bow down to Joseph. Joseph is now 39. It's been 22 years from the time of his initial dream to its fulfillment.

This is the moment we've all been waiting for in Joseph's story. Now he can take revenge on his brothers for selling him into slavery. It's only fair. The only question left is, how will he do it? How will Joseph pay back his brothers for the 22 years of suffering they have caused him?

Joseph is a person we can identify with almost on a daily basis. Not that we have experienced the same circumstances of life but we may have experienced times in despair and feelings of betrayal. Times in the **PIT** and darkness of life. Feeling alone and abandoned. Maybe we have had times of feeling in **PRISON**. Imprisoned by life, circumstances, relationships, and sin. We have experienced times of being in a **PALACE** and working and feeling good about life and feeling trusted and valued.

Like Joseph we can feel and know God's presence in our life. He doesn't leave us and He desires to bless his children and he desires to draw closer and closer to us as we walk with him in the days of struggle and the easy days of life.

So this morning we are looking to the Scriptures and see the next portion of Joseph's life as he serves the nation of Egypt and comes face to face with his brothers.

So we know that Jacob, Joseph's father, is still living in the land of Canaan with his 11 sons. Famine has come upon the world, and it is so bad that people are looking for options whereby they could sustain their families, flocks and herds. And Jacob learned there was grain for sale in Egypt. Jacob instructs his sons, 10 of them. He isn't willing to send Benjamin, the last son of Rachel for fear something might happen to him like Joseph. So those 10 sons set out for Egypt to buy grain for their family.

Now Joseph was governor of the land of Egypt, remember he is second in control of the whole land of Egypt. One day those 10 sons of Jacob enter the land and appear before Joseph.

These 10 sons bow down to the governor, who is Joseph. But they did not recognize him. Joseph had no reason to trust them when they appeared before him that day, whether they recognized him or not. There is one brother missing, his brother Benjamin, the only other child born to Rachel, Joseph's closest brother.

(Genesis 42:6–8 ESV)

6 Now Joseph was governor over the land. He was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground. 7 Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke roughly to them. "Where do you come from?" he said. They said, "From the land of Canaan, to buy food. 8 And Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him."

The brothers have traveled on the word of their father, Jacob, to buy grain to sustain their family and they appear before Joseph who was the overseer of the land and the process of selling grain to other people groups outside of Egypt.

Now the brothers bowed before Joseph not recognizing him, and the passage says he treats them roughly.

Now as you read through the text he accused them of being spies, and they revealed to him who they were, they were the sons of one man, one remained with their father and one was no more they said. But Joseph, treating them roughly, continued to accuse them of being spies. and finally incarcerated them for 3 days.

Now if you look at verse 18, Joseph gives them a plan of action. If you are indeed honest with me, let one remain here and the rest return home with grain and bring back your youngest brother so that he might see him, then this one can go free.

Joseph longed to make sure that Benjamin was truly alive and well.

Now it is interesting that the brothers confess to each other, not knowing that Joseph can understand them. They confess that all these troubles are upon them for the way they treated their brother so long ago

Look at verses 21-22 in Genesis 42.

21 Then they said to one another, "In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he begged us and we did not listen. That is why this distress has come upon us." 22 And Reuben answered them, "Did I not tell you not to sin against the boy? But you did not listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood."

Their hearts were not the same, the injustice they committed appears to bother them greatly. They are seeking to live honestly.

Joseph is broken in hearing their confession but the test remains, he would not reveal himself prematurely, he would wait for the right time. Joseph is seeing if they are honest now, if they are faithful.

So Joseph bound Simeon, and sent the others away, their packs full of grain. But each man's money was placed in the mouth of the sacks and they returned to their father with the grain and discovered the money. Joseph sought to test His brothers to see if his younger brother was still alive, but also to see after all these years were their hearts the same.

At times we are allowed to go through a test, but it is never meant to harm us, it removes the impurities to mold us and shape us more like Jesus.

When you hear the term reconciliation, what comes to mind?

We think of being restored, there is a relationship that is so strained, so problematic that the two parties are separated, distant and unwelcoming of one to the other. But then something happens and they are made right with each other. They are reconciled to each other and there is peace.

When I thought of this, I thought of Jacob, who is later called Israel by God. Remember Joseph's father Jacob, he had wronged his brother Esau. Jacob fled so His brother wouldn't harm him in any way and in truth Esau would have probably killed him. But many, many years later, after God has worked and changed Jacob's heart, he has a meeting with his brother Esau and their relationship was restored and there was forgiveness, and reconciliation. God made everything beautiful in His time.

God is at work in the lives of all who are involved in our scripture lesson today of heartache but also forgiveness and reconciliation. God is at work to save His people, this will come through reconciliation.

Joseph's brothers and Benjamin return to the land of Canaan and their fathers house. They tell Jacob all that has happened while they were gone and why Simeon is not with them.

Now Jacob, he doesn't like the idea of sending Benjamin, Rachel's only remaining son down with them. He is afraid the same tragedy might happen to him like Joseph.

But Jacob finally agrees. It is the only way to secure the return of the one son and also get the much-needed grain for their family.

They head out with double the money, extra gifts from the land in Canaan and the youngest son, Benjamin.

Now when they finally arrive in Egypt, the 11 appear before Joseph and Joseph sees His younger brother and inside he is excited and happy and instructs his servant to prepare a meal for them.

Now there is a lot that happens, upon appearing before Joseph again, Simeon is freed, Joseph is blessed to see his brother is alive. He is happy that nothing has happened to Benjamin.

The next day as all 11 are preparing to return to Canaan, Joseph sets them up for failure, having a silver cup hidden in Benjamin's sack in the hopes of detaining them longer, especially Benjamin..

As they are journeying home, Joseph's men ride after them accusing them of theft, of greed. They go through the sacks of grain and find the silver

chalice in the top of Benjamin's bag and they are astonished, frightened and sad.

When the accusation is made, the brothers are afraid that Benjamin might be killed, that he might be separated from his family and they might have to bring the saddest news to their father Jacob.

And as they tell Joseph of the effect it will have on Jacob if Benjamin doesn't return to his father, Joseph can't contain his emotions any longer and he reveals himself to them.

(Genesis 45:1–5 ESV)

1 Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him. He cried, "Make everyone leave me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. 2 And he wept aloud, so that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. 3 And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were shocked at his presence.

4 So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, please." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. 5 And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.

Genesis 45:14–15 ESV

14 Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. 15 And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them. After that his brothers talked with him.

Joseph understood completely that God was at work in his life, and the work of God was meant to save the people, but also Jacob's own family through this famine. What others meant for evil God turned it into good.

An invitation is given for them to bring their father and their families to the land of Egypt not only to reunite Jacob with Joseph, but to save all their people. Also God allows us to see love, forgiveness and restoration. God makes everything beautiful in His time.

Joseph had no bitterness or anger, no hatred, instead he wept with them and kissed them. Instead of silence and punishment, there were kisses and conversation and forgiveness.

That is the blessing of reconciliation and God making all things beautiful in His time. Orchestrating of all these relationships into God's timing, where love and healing could take place

Let me ask you a question, have you ever been so estranged from a person, you couldn't stand them, talk to them or help them? I think we have been there at one point or another in our lifetime.

But what a joy when the hurtful act is removed and love overflows as God intended it.

We received the best reconciliation ever, Jesus restored us to the Father by Jesus' death on the cross and rose again from the grave to give us eternal life.

Do you have a relationship close to you that needs reconciliation? I would encourage you to reach out in prayer and not only to pray for those in that relationship, but speak to them and confess your wrongs and seek forgiveness

Reconciliation is the model that we have enjoyed in Christ, and it is the model we are to embrace with those around us.

But God...Makes Everything Beautiful in His Time.