

# **The Ministry of Reconciliation**

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**So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.**

**All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them.**

**And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation.**

**(2 Corinthians 5:16-19)**

**This is the account of Jacob's family line.**

**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.**

**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 an ornate 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.**

**(Gen 37:1-11)**

**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.”**

**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.**

**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.”**

**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. (Gen 37:1-11)**

**The problem of sibling rivalry... 6,2 fights per hour.**

**Jacob gave Joseph a robe, which became quite famous. The Hebrew word to describe it is a little uncertain. It's translated "ornate" in NIV Bible. The King James is the most famous: "the coat of many colours." (v. 3)**

**This robe was an open and visible expression of brutal favouritism.**

**Every time Joseph wears the robe, and he wears it a lot because it makes him feel special, every time he wears it, it's a reminder to his brothers that they will never be loved by their father the way that Joseph is loved.**

**Every time he wears the robe, and he wears it a lot, they die a little inside.**

**Thus that beautiful robe becomes a kind of death shroud for this family.**

**When the robe is handed out to only one child and withheld from the others as an act of favouritism, that sets in motion forces of hostility, jealousy and envy that will destroy the community, the most precious gift of God.**

**“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.”** (Gen 37:4)



**They don't get angry at their father, because they are not able to face up to the truth, which is that their father loves them with an inadequate kind of love.**

**Being the favourite damages the one favoured just as it damages those who are not favoured.**

**Verse 5, "Once Joseph had a dream and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more."**

**Verse 8, “His brothers said to him, ‘Are you, indeed, to reign over us? Are you, indeed, to have dominion over us?’ So they hated him even more because of his dreams and his words.”**

**Verse 11. “So his brothers were jealous of him.”**

**Jealousy and envy leads to resentment and hatred and they destroy families and any community.**

**Jealousy, envy and hatred are universal. It’s part of fallen humanity. Nobody is free from it.**

**“And while they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.” (Gen 4:8)**

**Verse 18: “They saw him from a distance...”**

**Verse 19: “They said to one another, ‘Here comes this dreamer...’”**

**Joseph’s brothers have a legitimate grievance, a very legitimate complaint. They have been denied a father’s undivided love. They have not received the kind of love from a father that they needed to receive, but their solution is to destroy Joseph.**

**Verse 20, “Come now, let’s kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we’ll see what comes of his dreams.”**

**Verse 23, “So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the ornate robe that he wore, and they took him and threw him into a pit.”**

**Verse 31, “Then they took Joseph’s robe, slaughtered a goat, and dipped the robe in the blood.”**

**“‘Look, this we have found. See now whether it is your son’s robe or not.’ He recognized it and said, ‘It is my son’s robe. A wild animal has devoured him. Joseph was without doubt torn to pieces.’ (v. 32. 33)**

**Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel was lovely in form and figure, and Jacob loved Rachel. (Genesis 29:17-18)**

**“Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. All his sons and all his daughters sought to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, ‘No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son mourning.’ Thus his father bewailed him.” (vs 33-34)**

**The ultimate tragedy/irony is that when the brothers got what they wanted, they’re no closer to it than when they first started. They haven’t won their father’s love at all. They’ve only lost their brother.**

**What they really wanted was for their father's eyes to light up for them like those eyes always lighted up for Joseph, but instead the light just died out altogether.**

**In the process they betrayed their father and they betrayed and lost their brother, just as their father betrayed his father and lost his brother...**

**The most important lesson:**

**All families are imperfect!**

**Now the Lord was with Joseph.**

**(Genesis 39:2)**

**How good and pleasant it is when  
brothers dwell together in unity.**

**(Psalm 133:1)**

You go back home, get your little brother, bring him here... the brother whom your father loves so much. When I see him, I will know you are telling the truth. Then I will feed you. In the meantime, leave one brother here as collateral, and the rest of you go back.



**Surely we are being punished because of our brother Joseph. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen. That's why this distress has come upon us. (Genesis 42:15)**

**Remember how he cried out to us, and our hearts were like stone? (Genesis 42:21)**

**When the portions were served to them from Joseph's table, Benjamin's portion was five times as much as anyone else's. (Gen 43:34)**

**But Benjamin is so young. It would kill my father. Let me take the place of the boy. I know the law must be upheld. I know the debt must be paid. I understand. Let me pay it. Let his punishment fall on me. I love him too much. I love my dad too much. I will pay. Take me instead. (Gen 44:30)**

**Come close to me. I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt. Do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves, for it was to save lives that God was sending me ahead of you. (Gen 45:4-5)**

Afterward, his brothers talked with him.  
(Genesis 45:15)

Your son Joseph is still alive. (Genesis 45:26)

When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?" (...) His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said. (Gen 50:15.18)

**But Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid. You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.**

**21 So then, don’t be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.” And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.**

**(Gen 50:20.21)**

**And God was in Christ reconciling the world - the whole world - to Himself. (2 Cor 5:19)**

**So from now on, we regard no one from a worldly point of view. (2 Corinthians 5:16)**

**Once we regarded Christ this way, but all this is from God who has reconciled us to Himself in Christ and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation. (2 Cor 5:18)**

- **Maybe you did not get to wear the robe in your family; maybe you never will in this life. But Revelation 3:18 talks about a white robe that God has for every one of his children.**
- The day is coming, when those robes will be handed out, and there'll be no jealousy, no envy, no division, because we all will have a robe.
- The day is coming, when you will wear the robe made for you by God that expresses the infinite amount of love and value that God has poured out on you and the prize he sees in you.

**The day is coming,  
when we all will know  
what it is to be loved and  
embraced and valued forever  
by our Heavenly Father  
because  
in God's family  
Everybody Wears a Robe,  
a beautiful robe.**