March 11th, 2018

ICA Sunday Pulpit Message

**The Resolution that Joseph Made (Genesis 37:1-11)**

<Intro> At least me…

Over the past 8 weeks we have seen the Biblical figures who made resolutions.

Today is the story regarding Joseph. The title of today’s message is “The Resolution that Joseph Made.” As we live our lives we face many different kinds of situations. Sometimes we feel as if we are pressed from all sides. There are times we cannot do anything about our problems. At that time, some people may become discouraged and give up on the situation. Also, there are others who pray upon the situation and make a resolution. Young Joseph was in this kind of situation. There was an event that occurred to Joseph that was outside of his control. Joseph had one father and four mothers. Unfortunately, his biological mother passed away. He had ten additional half-brothers. Joseph was the youngest among them. Because his father favored Joseph, his brothers were jealous of him. So his brothers isolated him. It wasn’t a stranger who did that; it was his own family members who did that to him. There’s nothing more stressful than disharmony and disaccord within the family. Home is where one gets rest and encouragement after a stressful day outside. That is why everyone seeks peace, rest, and comfort from home. I’m sure Joseph sought the same thing at home although his mother passed away when he was young. He must have been very lonely. However, based on the faith he received from his father, he could deeply pray to God. And he dreamed two dreams given by God. Because he had those abnormal and strange dreams, he told about them to his family. Hearing about Joseph’s dreams, the brothers became furious. “Are you saying we are going to be your slaves?” The brothers rebuked Joseph. Joseph tried to improve the relationship by honestly telling them the story, but it only made the matters worse. Joseph began to contemplate. “Don’t we all believe in the same Jehovah God? How can they act that way?” Just because the father favored Joseph a bit more, is it rightful that the brothers mock and mistreat Joseph? Although they are half-brothers, is it rightful that they scheme against Joseph? Joseph who prayed consistently was sensitive to this matter. “Before God, all of this is wrong. Even if it is just for me, I will stand before God. Even if it is just for me, I will have faith in God.” This was Joseph’s resolution. Even though he was young, he could come to this resolution and overcome difficult circumstances.

1. The resolution that Joseph made
2. God who is good (Ps. 145:9, Na. 1:7)
3. God who is mighty (Ps. 50:1, Zeph. 3:17)
4. God who is complete (Ps. 18:30,32, 19:7)

Many problems arose in Joseph’s life. Every time he remembered the resolution he made. “In whatever situation I face, I will look up to God. I will believe in God. The God of my ancestor is good, mighty, and complete. God who is good is guiding me to the good path. God who is Almighty is capable of overturning all things. God who is complete makes His history complete. The God of my ancestors is my God as well. Jehovah God is the Creator of this world. He is sovereign over everything. He is Almighty and surpasses our thoughts. And that God treats me in a good way. Almighty God is watching over me. The work He entrusted to me is complete.” This is what Joseph realized. Even now the Bible proclaims to us. Psalms 145:9 says, “The Lord is good to all, and His mercy is over all that He has made.” Nahum 1:7 says, “The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; He knows those who take refuge in Him.” The Lord who is good has mercy on you.

God is Almighty. Psalms 50:1 says, “The Mighty One, God the Lord, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.” It means that God has a full control over the earth and He looks over everything He summoned. Believe that God is Almighty. Zephaniah 3:17 says, “The Lord your God is in your midst, a Mighty One who will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness; He will quiet you by His love; He will exult over you with loud singing.” God who is mighty loves you. He rejoices over you. That is our mighty God.

God is complete. Psalms 18:30, 32 says, “This God – His way is perfect; the Word of the Lord proves true; He is a shield for all those who take refuge in Him. The God who equipped me with strength and made my way blameless.” “Even if people surrounding me do no know God, I will stand correctly before God.” This is the realistic resolution Joseph made. Joseph’s life is closely recorded in Genesis.

1. The problems that Joseph faced
2. He was sold as a slave (Gen. 37:28,36)
3. He was falsely accused (Gen. 39:7-20)
4. He was neglected (Gen. 40:23)

Joseph’s resolutions can be found within the problem he faced. We are already quite familiar with the story of Joseph. Let’s look at the three important incidences. Joseph’s brothers hated him so much that they tried to kill him. They threw Joseph into the well to drown him, however, there was no water in the well. One of the brothers, who had some sympathy, suggested to sell Joseph instead. So they sold Joseph for some silver to a merchant on the way to Midian. Joseph was sold by his own family members. Think about this. I have three children. My two daughters and beautiful, but my youngest son is a troublemaker. What happens if I decide to sell him away? Then, I’m pretty sure none of you will stay here. However, Joseph’s brothers who also believe in God did such thing to Joseph. How would we feel if we were in Joseph’s shoe? It probably would become an unforgettable scar. What is truly surprising is that Joseph never tried to fight back when he was thrown into the well or when he was sold as a slave. It wasn’t because he was lacking and stupid. It was because he entrusted everything to God. If this happens to other people, they probably will not stay still and say, “How can you do that to your own brother? What did I do so wrong? How can you treat me like this? Do you think you will be able to live well even after this? You will be cursed and punished. One day, I will revenge.” This is what average people would say. Instead, Joseph believed that God is watching over every situation. He thought, “God is guiding me to the good path, and I will follow it.”

Joseph worked diligently as a slave. However, he was falsely imprisoned because of Potiphar’s wife who didn’t get what she wanted. Had Joseph honestly told Potiphar the truth, Potiphar probably would have believed Joseph because he knew how good of a man Joseph was. However, if Joseph did so, then Potiphar’s family will surely be destroyed. So didn’t say anything and was imprisoned. Even at that time, Joseph stood still. Joseph did something that average people cannot do. In the midst of that, Joseph believed that God is good, God is mighty, and God is complete. These are the facts he knew and enjoyed. However, not many people can do this. Sometimes we come to conclusions so hastily that we don’t give God time to interfere. We don’t’ let God overturn the problem. Starting from today, I hope we can learn Joseph’s faith. Even if we make a mistake, God is watching over us.

Another problem arose. Joseph was enjoying God’s presence even in the prison, so he had many people around him. Many prisoners went to Joseph to receive counseling and among them were two government officials. Joseph gave one of them a dreadful prophecy and the other a good prophecy. The prophecies came true. The government official who got released from the prison as Joseph prophesized forgot about Joseph. Joseph was neglected. Average man will be resentful toward that person, but Joseph was not shaken. Even though these unfortunate events occurred to Joseph, he wasn’t shaken. He trusted in God and entrusted all things unto His hand. During this long period, he had faith in God.

1. The blessings that Joseph found
2. God who was with him – Spiritual Summit (Gen. 39:2-3)
3. God who made him prosperous – Skill Summit (Gen. 39:3-5)
4. God who saves everyone – Cultural Summit (Gen. 45:5)

Seeing this faith from Joseph God blessed Joseph. God with His mighty power, He overturned Joseph’s situation into blessings. Joseph found these answers as he followed God. God made him prosperous when he was a slave. God was with Joseph all the time. Joseph was satisfied with and delighted by God alone. Joseph was placed in the seat of Summit. When you truly enjoy God’s presence, you become truly happy. When you are truly happy, you consider others beautiful. When you are happy because of God, you can see God’s plan in every situation. I hope you will become like this. Couples, pray that your spouse will look beautiful within God. God who has control over all our lives is with you and He is on your side. Even when Joseph was a slave, he was prosperous. Even when he was in prison, Joseph saved other people. Even when he was reunited with his brothers, he forgave them and embraced them. Seeing Joseph, the brothers were in shock. His brothers thought they were in a big trouble, but Joseph said, “Do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.” Eventually, Joseph changed everything into God’s prosperous blessing. Things started out harshly but ultimately Joseph became prosperous. That is called skill summit. There are people who tried really hard to devote themselves, but later they fell into a trial and left church. I hope we will not be like that but quietly and secretly, yet constantly devote ourselves to God. There is something more important. It’s not just you receiving this blessing and being satisfied, but you must save people around you, even your enemies. Then the atmosphere of your field will be changed. That is called culture summit because you are changing the culture. Joseph became a spiritual summit, cultural summit, and skill summit by making a resolution in faith. When everyone else falls into unbelief, at least I will believe and follow God. I bless you in the name of Jesus Christ that you will receive this blessing of summit.

<Conc> Through one man Joseph, God… (Jer. 5:1)

God saved the entire nation through one man Joseph. As we read in the Scripture passage today, the dreams Joseph dreamed when he was young came true. Even thought situations were very difficult, God who is good led Joseph is a good path. And Joseph enjoyed that. Regardless of his difficulty, God who is mighty overturned Joseph’s situation. God who is complete made Joseph completely victorious. God was delighted in Joseph’s faith and his resolution and blessed him greatly. I hope you will make such confession and live like Joseph.

Does that mean we have to become slaves? No, that is not it. There could arise some problems when you need much healing. We must confirm how God had called us. Like the life story of Joseph, Joseph was sold by his own brothers and he was falsely accused. Although he helped so many people, the people who received Joseph’s help forgot about him. He brought prosperity in the Potiphar’s household, but he was rejected. He suffered for sins he did not commit. Can you think of anything from this? He was sold, suffered, and rejected by his own people. Joseph’s life is parallel to Jesus’ life later on. Jesus was sold for some silver coins by His people. Even though He had no sin, He was persecuted and nailed on the Cross. Jesus healed many diseased people. He also fed 5,000 and 7,000 people. He saved a dead person. He shared the Word of God, but the Israelites rejected Him and said, “save Barnabas instead!” Joseph’s life resembles Christ’s life. Jesus became a governor of Egypt. As the evidence that Jesus is God’s Son, He resurrected from death. Just like people went to Joseph to receive some grain, people went to Jesus to receive eternal life. Do you think Joseph knew about the life of Messiah who came later? He knew that the Messiah is coming, but he didn’t know how the Messiah would live. What does this mean? God through the Holy Spirit went into Joseph and carried out the life of Christ. Through one man Joseph, He showed Jesus Christ. It is Christ who lived inside Joseph. Even if your life is hard, when the Christ in you is revealed, you will be seated at the place of summit. When Christ is in our lives, God’s blessings are bound to be revealed. Then, you can find the blessings of spiritual, skill, and cultural summit and save other people. Today’s conclusion is Christ. Do you think you know who Christ is? I don’t think we understand Christ more than a speck of dust. However, if you know Christ as much as a speck of dust, the forces of darkness will crumble down. Even if our faith is the size of a mustard seed, God will bless us. I hope you will make that resolution in front of God. Help us know more about Christ. Help us live inside the knowledge of Christ. Please carry out our lives.

<Prayer>

Although we know God, we lack in the knowledge of God. We are unfamiliar with God who has started and will end everything. Give us wisdom and revelation so that we can know more about You. We want to genuinely know You like Joseph did. Almighty God, we believe that You sent Christ for us. We confess that the Lord who is greater than the whole universe came to this earth. You came for our sake. Even before we knew You, You forgave our sin on the Cross. Thank You for solving all our problems and calling us as Your children. We believe that the universe was created by You. We were created by Christ, because of Christ, and for Christ. Help us to meditate upon the Word of God and fill our heart with Christ’s salvation. Help us to live according to the knowledge of Christ. Because of the mystery of the Christ within me, may all the people that I meet be saved. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.