



Doing Life Well – Looking Back to go Forwards

Date: Sunday 14th January 2018

Speakers: Steve Philpott & Liz Gowan

Key Verses: Exodus 20, 4-6; John 9; Mark 3, 33-35; Genesis 37-45

Summary

- It's not possible to be spiritually healthy when emotionally immature
- Baggage from our family, upbringing and culture can hold back our emotional maturity
- To do life well we need to submit that baggage to Christ

Families are powerful things. We can't choose the family into which we are born, that is God's choice, the time, place, people and circumstances. God doesn't make mistakes about such things. Families come with baggage, sometimes 'obvious' things – illness, addictions, violent behaviour. At other times less obvious, choices, values and attitudes. We are not just talking about nuclear family – but generations past. See Exodus 20 4-6, 3-4 generations.

Family passes down DNA (nature) and nurture, it's like having 'Ten Commandments of your family', things that are hardwired into us; big topics where we have learnt attitudes and behaviours; e.g.:-

*Money – Conflict – Sex – Grief and Loss – Expressing Anger – The place of Family – Relationships
Attitudes towards different cultures – Success looks like... – Feelings and emotions*

Jesus said there is a choice between submitting to Him, or carrying around that family baggage; even to the extent of Jesus taking that family role – See Mark 3. 33-35

A couple of things we're not saying here:

- Not saying that we're better off without family, reflect on the 5th commandment, 'honour your father & mother'
- Not saying when bad things happen, it's the grandparents fault

In John 9 Jesus says that the man born blind was 'so that God's works could be seen in him'

Exodus 20 talks about 3-4 generations punishment, but a thousand generations of reward for those who love me and keep my commandments – the measure of grace!

The story of Joseph is a case study in how to overcome the baggage passed down. In Joseph's case from Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, to Joseph. A history of:

Lying – Favouritism – Brothers cut off from one another – Poor intimacy in marriages in each generation

Joseph's inheritance was messy, complex, not looking too hopeful and starts off badly – brothers plan to murder him due to his arrogance, sold as a slave, accused of rape, left in jail, dragged before Pharaoh to interpret a dream.

Joseph is described as 'walking with God', there are 4 ways we can see this in his story:

1. A profound sense of the bigness of God – whatever the circumstances, he trusted in God's purpose. To his brothers he said 'it was not you who sent me here, but God'.
2. Joseph admitted honestly the sadness and losses of his family – he didn't run away from hurt and pain, he wept at the sight of his brothers, forgave and blessed them, then took leadership and provided for his family.
3. He rewrote his life script according to scripture – chose the difficult but right route, e.g. a slave in the household of Potiphar, he was put in charge; a prisoner in jail, he was trusted with all the other prisoners 'God was with him; whatever he did God made sure it worked out for the best'
4. Joseph partnered with God to be a blessing – he told his brothers 'God sent me here ahead of you to save lives'

Questions for Small Groups

- A quote from Sunday, when we become a Christian, 'Jesus is in our heart, but grandpa is in our bones' – how do you respond to the thought that family, and the culture we grow up in is that powerful?
- What were some of the Commandments you grew up with that might be baggage from your family background?
- How did Jesus view earthly families? What does a healthy attitude look like?
- Thinking about the inheritance that Joseph received, and his response in life, what can we learn and apply from his approach?

Final Thoughts and Reflections

At the end of the talk Steve quoted a prayer from Emotionally Healthy Spirituality (Peter Scazzero), reflect and pray through these words:

"Lord, I believe you are a God with great purposes. You place me into my particular family in a particular place in a particular time in history. I don't see what you see, but I ask you to show me, Lord, the revelation and purposes you have for me in your decision. I don't want to betray or be ungrateful for what was given to me. Yet at the same time, help me discern what I need to let go of from my past and what my essential discipleship issues are in the present. Grant me courage; grant me wisdom to learn from the past but not be crippled by it. And may I, like Joseph, be a blessing to my earthly family, spiritual family, and the world at large. In Jesus' name, amen."

A positive step to make in order to do life well and help deal with inherited factors to bring freedom could be to make a Sozo appointment with our trained team members. If you would like to explore this, check out Sozo and sign up via our Website www.bvc.so/sozo. God has used many Sozo appointments to enable people to thrive, be free and make their best contribution.

These resources were linked last week, if you haven't already take a look:

- [Use this guide to try out the daily examen for yourself](#)
- [In this short youtube video Dan Wilt explains the daily examen in 5 steps](#)
- [To get a feel for the emotionally healthy spirituality day by day book, check out this PDF](#)