

Live By Faith Not By Fear
2017-01-23

Gen 43:1-15

8 And Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the boy with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones. 9 I will be a pledge of his safety. From my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. 10 If we had not delayed, we would now have returned twice." 11 Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this: take some of the choice fruits of the land in your bags, and carry a present down to the man, a little balm and a little honey, gum, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds. 12 Take double the money with you. Carry back with you the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks. Perhaps it was an oversight. 13 Take also your brother, and arise, go again to the man. 14 May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man, and may he send back your other brother and Benjamin. And as for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." 15 So the men took this present, and they took double the money with them, and Benjamin. They arose and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph.

Jacob was the original Eeyore.

- Seems he had a negative and pessimistic attitude about the past/future.
 - He was more governed by fear than faith. Gen 42:36-43:6

Directed by irrational fear of losing Benjamin, who was now 23 yrs old!

- Not irrational in the sense of being farfetched but because he was trying to protect his son from circumstances beyond his control.
 - Overprotection & irrational fears indicate you're not trusting Lord.

Jacob allows past trials to cause him to think that the circumstances are always against him.

- That fear caused Jacob to delay & then act in ridiculous, unbelieving ways.
 - Opts for starving the whole family & leaves Simeon in prison 2 yrs.
 - Uses Benjamin (children) to fulfill his needs not the Lord.
 - blames others for his problems & stubbornly refuses to take responsibility for his own failures.

God lovingly used persistent famine to force Jacob to change his previous position but Jacob puts his hope in human schemes rather than the grace of God. Gen 43:11-14

- Tries to manipulate things for his own advantage with a gift...like with Esau. 33:10-16
 - Irony: the gift they brought was the same that was sent with caravan that took Joseph to Egypt, including the silver!
- He gave the money he got back from 1st time, plus additional 2x for additional food.

Jacob's attempt to win Joseph's favor with gifts and money is like our futile attempts to appease God.

- Our efforts to save ourselves always lead to our ruin.
 - Favor with God is not earned by works/gifts.
 - Only saved when we accept God's provision. Jn 1:11-13, 14:6, 3:16-18

Jacob passively & reluctantly surrenders to his circumstances & finally runs to El Shaddai, but not necessarily in prayer. Gen 43:11a, 14, 42:36

- Not evidence of faith, but expression of fatalism...victim of cruel fate.
 - Yet in reality all these things were working for Jacob good/joy.

3 different responses to adversity in this life:

- Joseph: realizing that adversity purposefully comes from the loving hand of his sovereign God. Gen 45:5-9
- Bros: Believe it is punishment from an angry God getting even with me for my sin.
- Jacob: responded with fearful, unbelieving fatalism. Gen 42:36-38; 43:6, 14
 - It is easy to think worst about the future & run everything through a negative grid like Jacob.....an Eeyore Christian.

When it seems everything is against you do the opposite of the fearful, unbelieving Jacob:

- Trust sovereign, loving, kind God is for you. Heb. 11:6 Rom. 8:28, 2 Cor 5:7
 - A biblically positive attitude does not deny/gloss over problems but affirms God is sovereign/good & life under Jesus full of great joy.
- Look to the future with hope in Christ & believe that what seems to be against you is God's hand working for you. Maybe lovingly disciplining you.
 - The very thing Jacob thought would destroy him was a means of his salvation & great joy.
 - What wonderful blessings are we delaying because we live in fear rather than faith in God?