

Reflection Wednesday 18th November

Genesis 45:1-5

Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, 'Send everyone away from me.' So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers.² And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. ³ Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?' But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Come closer to me.' And they came closer. 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.

We know the story of Joseph from reading the Bible, attending Sunday School or a Musical which speak about a techni-coloured dreamcoat.

It is said that, "Hindsight is a wonderful thing." I wonder how long it took Joseph to realise that all that had gone on over the years was part of God's purpose; to recognise that his time of servitude and imprisonment were all part of a long-term plan for the preservation of his family and ultimately of a nation

There in front of Joseph are those responsible for his suffering; how would he treat them? What about you? Would you make them squirm in embarrassment and fear? You are in the position of power and you can choose what to do. What choices would you make?

How did the brothers feel standing in front of this powerful man? They then discover the truth of who he is as a person, not as a position; what then went through their minds?

Of course we cannot know what was going through the minds of each person present in this story. It can be an interesting exercise to put yourself in the position of one of the characters in many Biblical events to see how it can be brought to life. A number of years ago a group of which I was a part was taken through the events of the Last Supper with the story being halted and each person who was being a different character being asked how they felt at that moment.

It can also be of use to put ourselves in the shoes of another person in a daily situation to see how we might react before criticising another person for their behaviour.

When we feel that the checkout operative may not be being polite and attentive to us we do not know how a previous customer treated them or what may be on their mind due to home-life and family needs.

It might also be useful to put ourselves as the recipient of a letter, email before sending it or of a comment we are about to make before we open our mouth.

Let us return to Joseph and hindsight. Can you look back over your life and see how God has guided you, helped you, protected you at different points of your life. Can you see where you have been supported, strengthened and equipped for a situation?

You may find yourself wondering what could be ahead of you and what God is preparing you for through a current event. Do not spend too long on such pondering but trust God to be alongside you in each tomorrow having been with you through each yesterday. God knows best.