

**GOD'S CARING FATHERHAND.**  
(Evening service Clanwilliam 23-06-2013)

Read: Genesis 45:1-15

Text : Genesis 45:4,5  
Heidelberg Catechism Sunday 10

**TEXT**

**4 And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.**

**5 "But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.**

(Genesis 45:4,5)

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

**1. INTRODUCTION**

"...God sent me before you to preserve life."

It is as if we recognize Joseph as the author of our wonderful book of consolation, the Heidelberger: Under the providence of God we understand:

*"The almighty and everywhere present power of God; (a) whereby, as it were by his hand, he upholds and governs... And all things come, not by chance, but be his fatherly hand"*

Clearly to our minds stands the compelling history of this son of Jacob that we already as children have so much enjoyed.

**2. GOD'S CARING FATHERHAND IN THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS IN CANAAN**

Joseph was only seventeen when he, together with his stepbrothers, tended his father Jacob's flock in Canaan. (Comp. Genesis 37)

He brought a bad report about his brothers to his father.

As the apple of his father's eye Jacob made him a tunic of many colors.

*4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.*

And then the two dreams in which Joseph every time was the hero!

*6 So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed:*

7 *"There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."* (Genesis 37:6-7)  
He said, *"Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me."*(Genesis 37:9)

The end result of the dreams and the special gift to the favourite son of Jacob was that his brothers started to despise him and had no good words about him. (Compare verse 4 and 8)

At that stage, notwithstanding the proper explanation of Joseph's dreams, they were unable to perceive the caring Fatherhand of God.

8 *And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.* (Genesis 37:8)

Even his father seriously spoke to him about the clear revelation given to them by God:

10 *So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?"*(Genesis 37:10)

### **3. GOD'S CARING FATHERHAND AT THE WELL NEAR DOTHAN.**

Whilst at some time when the sons of Israel tended the flock near Shechem he sent Joseph from Hebron in the south to them – about 80 Km away – with the command:

*"Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me."* (Verse 14)

But they were no longer there and a stranger pointed him towards the road to Dothan – about another 20 Km further North.

From far away they saw him approaching.

They conspired against him to kill him and drop his body down a well... *and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"*

But they did not keep the Caring Fatherhand of God into mind.

The Lord disposed that Reuben, Jacob's eldest son, suggested that they rather cast him alive into the dry well and thus not become murderers. His plan was to rescue him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

The caring Fatherhand of God further disposed that, while they were eating and Reuben was not present, group of Ishmaelite traders from Gilead arrived. They were on their way to Egypt with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh.

At the suggestion of Judah they sold Joseph to the Midianite traders (Verse 28) and dipped the tunic in the blood of a goat sending it with a message to their father:

*We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?"*(Verse 32)

#### **4. GOD'S CARING FATHERHAND IN THE HOUSE OF POTIPHAR AND THE JAIL.**

The Ishmaelite traders sold Joseph to Potiphar, an Egyptian by birth and official of the Pharaoh and head of the bodyguard,

There, under the caring Fatherhand of God, everything went well for Joseph. He became head of Potiphar's household.

The caring Fatherhand of God allows that he, under the most difficult imaginable circumstances, innocently gets thrown into jail until the cupbearer of the Pharaoh eventually remembered about the prisoner in jail who explained his dreams as well as the dreams of the royal baker exactly how it came to pass.

The end result of all these events led to that Joseph's dreams became true when he was appointed as second –In charge of Egypt.

#### **5. GOD'S CARING FATHERHAND IN THE LIVES OF ALL HIS CHILDREN.**

This deeply touching history of Joseph lets us see the Lord Jesus Christ in a prophetic perspective.

Jesus Christ is the only Son of God but hated by the leaders of the children of God.

Joseph was hated by his brothers, Jesus by His fellowmen, elders and chief priests.

The death of Joseph was planned but it turned out completely different to what his brothers expected.

Jesus' death is planned "but not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people." God disposed it to happen during the feast because Jesus is our Passover Lamb.

Joseph landed innocently in prison on the grounds of the false testimony of the wife of Potiphar. Jesus is crucified after many false witnesses were sought.

Personally Joseph suffered a lot of misery. Jesus suffered the misery of the wrath of God against the sin of the entire mankind.

Joseph was sold to the traders for twenty silver coins. Jesus for thirty pieces of silver to the leaders and chief priests by Judas Iscariot.

Why?

*"I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. "But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life."*

We are the adopted children of God

We must share in the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ to be able to partake in His glory.

We must learn to see the Caring Fatherhand of our Lord in our lives. – a life that at times can go via inexplicable winding and twisting roads. If we are patient we will later see what purpose the Lord had in mind by the things that happen to us, like in the life of Joseph and his brothers.

## **6. END**

Now we can with conviction confess the providence of the caring Fatherhand of the Lord as the “the almighty and everywhere present power of God; (a) whereby, as it were by his hand, he upholds and governs b) heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, (c) fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, (d) riches and poverty, (e) yea, and all things come, not by chance, but be his fatherly hand. (f)”

Consoled we can state:

That in all miseries we can be patient (a) and in prosperity thankful (b). Further we can also have a solid trust for the future in our faithful God and Father (c) that no creature can separate us from His love (d) seeing that all creatures are so in His hand that they cannot move or do anything without His will.

Man proposes but God disposes.

In Your hands I am safe – Your Caring Fatherhands.

**AMEN**

Rev. F. Lessing.