

WHAT COMES OUT OF THE MOUTH PROCEEDS FROM THE SOUL

Matthew 15:10-28

Most of us have been in a situation where something was said or done against us that was hurtful, sometimes very deeply. Maybe this action caused real damage to relationships or our future prospects. It could have been in work, or family or even in church. This kind of hurt can be mixed in with so much pain, incredulity, grief, and feelings of rejection. Joseph was in such a situation, his own brothers beat him up, stripped him and threw him in a pit to die, but by chance slave traders came along and they sold him to get a quick buck. His own family treated him as a cheap bit of dirt. Then he suffered continued humiliation, isolation, and rejection in Egypt. He had the right to hate his brothers and why shouldn't he; but he chose not to.

What if a situation came up where you could expose the wrong done against you and bring shame upon the one who hurt you? Would you forgive them? Could you forgive them? Joseph had a perfect chance to pay back his brothers, and he demonstrated to them he had the power to wipe them off the face of the map. But he made a choice, He chose to forgive them. Only when he saw His brothers before him did he realise the answer to all his cries in the wind, Why Lord? what have I done to deserve all this? Before His brothers, the realisation came. He said God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive. So, it was not you who sent me here, but God. In slavery, the Lord was with Joseph and Potiphar saw that the Lord was with Him. In the gaol the Lord was with Joseph and the gaol warden saw that the Lord was with Him. In Joseph's affliction he remained faithful to the Lord. He acknowledged the Lord when Pharaoh asked him to interpret his dreams. Joseph said I cannot do it, but God will give you the answer.

Let me ask you, what if Joseph had given up, blamed others, blamed God for his suffering, would he have become second in charge of Egypt? If he did not forgive his brothers who became the future Kingdom of Israel, would we know God's love for us today? Joseph had choices to make, and not easy ones by a long shot. What helped him was that he remained faithful to God and all that God is, and he carried this faithfulness even through the pain he felt. Remember Job's wife, "Why don't you curse God and die," but Joseph didn't, he stayed faithful and that is why he could forgive.

Jesus tells the pharisees, what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart. Joseph chose to speak forgiveness because his heart was faithful to the righteous

things of God. Jesus first rebuked the Canaanite woman seeking deliverance for her daughter; but there was a reason behind this. He was not addressing her; he was addressing the pharisees' own conceitedness, for out of their conceitedness they called foreigners dogs. They saw the law only and believed they had the right to claim heaven as theirs because they practiced the law. Jesus saw their hearts and he saw corruption and the futility of their works. From what we allow our hearts to contain, come either the things of God or the things that bring corruption. So, Jesus turns to this Canaanite woman and says, "Woman, great is your faith".

Oh boy, I would have loved to see the faces of the Pharisees then. They believed their faith was attributed to their great works, and Jesus just showed them faith is attributed to trusting in Him.

Let us not forget that Jesus had preached to the Samaritan town of Sychar, a people who the Pharisees regarded that if you eat with them you ate with pigs. Because Jesus spoke to a woman at a well, many in the town of Sychar came to believe that Jesus was the Saviour of the "world", that they were included. In attending to the Canaanite woman, He showed the Pharisees that his grace was open to all who have faith in Him. In Luke, Jesus quotes about himself from Isaiah 61:

*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is on Me because the LORD has anointed Me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent Me to bind up the broken hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to the prisoners,
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour and the day when God rights
all wrongs,
to comfort all who mourn, to console the mourners in Zion—
to give them a crown of beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning,
and a garment of praise for a spirit of despair.
So, they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD,
that He may be glorified.*

It is not easy to walk through hurt and painful emotions, God understands this. And it is you He came for – to give you of himself for a purpose. What He is saying is, "Don't let me go, I am here and I've got you covered, I will walk through these times with you and in the end you will be my righteous gift, as strong as a mighty oak tree for many."