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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1814 ~ Jacob Comes to Live in Egypt.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

Many years ago, an older man had been faithfully attending his local church services and taking part in the music ministry. Although he'd been in good health, he died suddenly and following normal routine practice, police officers checked his house for signs of theft and violence. What they found instead, was piles of pornographic magazines. He'd presented himself as a Christian on Sundays but during the rest of the week, this man fed his lusts. As he had lived alone, there was no one else he thought he was accountable to or would urge him to rid himself of his secret but consuming addiction. This man had lived a lie for many years.

Do you understand that phrase 'living a lie'? It's used when someone is basically pretending to live one sort of life while actually, they are living quite another kind of life. That is what many people in the world are doing today. Many are pretending to care about people, equality and justice for all. Yet in reality, they remain most concerned about themselves and staying rich and powerful. They're really living a lie for their own anticipated gains.

When He lived on earth, Jesus Christ did not live a lie. He came to seek and save the lost, and reveal who God the Father is. Everything Jesus did worked towards that goal. He didn't compromise His Father's truth in order to get along with the powerful, rich or famous. He showed His love by not changing His message, even though it took Him to the cross under false accusation and terrible ill-treatment. He certainly didn't bow down to the views of the politicians and religious leaders of the day.

Christians should not live a lie either. We don't need to pretend to be sympathetic to the evil that the world calls “Good”. If something was sin in God’s sight in the days of Jesus' life, then it’s still a sin today and we shouldn’t compromise.

Joseph’s 10 step-brothers had lived a lie for 22 years by pretending that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. Yet when Joseph tested them to see if they had changed in character, he saw that they had repented of the evil they’d done to him so many years before. Joseph wept for joy and he was reconciled to them. But the brothers still had to go home to their father in Canaan and tell him of their sin and cover-up.

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Have you ever moved house to settle at least 400 km or 250 miles away? The entire family of Jacob had to pack up all their belongings and walk their flocks and herds that distance before they could settle in Egypt. It would have taken quite some time to get there. Jacob was 130 years old by this time, but he was anxious to see Joseph. From Genesis, Chapter 49, we learn that Leah, Jacob’s 1st wife, had already died before the start of this journey, as Jacob had buried her in the same burial cave as his forefathers Abraham, Isaac and their wives.

Although an old man, Jacob stopped at Beersheba to worship God, as his father and grandfather had done when they were travelling that way. God spoke to Jacob in a vision and confirmed that he should go down to Egypt. God repeated to Jacob His earlier promise that He would always be with Jacob and would bring him back to Canaan again one day, which was the Promised Land God was giving Jacob and his descendants. However, Jacob didn’t return to Canaan alive. He would die in Egypt and afterwards, Joseph and his brothers took Jacob’s embalmed body back to Canaan to be placed with his ancestors’ bones.

Pharaoh commanded Joseph to settle his father and family in the best of Egypt, which was the land in Goshen, a fertile delta region of the Nile River. Joseph met Jacob there and what a joyful reunion it was! Jacob felt ready to die in peace then. Altogether, there were 70 direct descendants of Jacob's who had now come to live in Egypt.

What can we learn from Joseph's life? He was faithful to the task God had called him to do. He didn't go back to being a shepherd when his brothers had their flocks grazing peacefully in Goshen. He dealt fairly with starving people and their need to survive until the famine passed. Pharaoh certainly appreciated what Joseph did, for he came to own all the land in Egypt, except for the land owned by the priests. The priests had always been allocated food by Pharaoh, so they had no need to sell their lands.

If Joseph had looked back over his life, would he've been thankful for the years of distress and hardship of his youth? Certainly he worked hard and made the best of every situation under God's favour. He didn't try to undermine or make trouble for the masters over him, either as a slave or a prisoner. He actually helped them to prosper. They in turn, recognized his talents and blessings. If you don't work hard through your adversity, others may never see your true abilities.

We all have trials and troubles in life, but rather than to say, "Why me?" we need to remember the Bible verse that says, "You will keep Him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You." Only then can we move forward despite the trial we may be facing. But not everyone is prepared to do this. Some get angry with their circumstances and lash out at anyone who might be within range at the time when they're most frustrated. Joseph could have grown angry, resentful and stubborn. Instead, he developed good character traits that enabled him to come out of his trials a better person.

Joseph knew the Lord would bless him because of his dreams as a child. So he endured his trials of slavery and imprisonment with patience, knowing that blessings would come. With such patience, Joseph also sought solutions. After correctly interpreting the dreams of Pharaoh's baker and butler, Joseph asked the butler to tell Pharaoh about his case. Although the butler forgot about Joseph for some time, Joseph continued to work hard in the prison, trusting in the Lord's timetable. Remembering the blessings the Lord promises to His followers will help each of us to patiently endure our troubles. Christ's followers live in the future light of eternity while waiting for that blessed day when we'll be in heaven with Him.

Joseph stayed true to God's moral code when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him. Even when there were times when no one was around to witness any inappropriate behaviour, Joseph knew he must stay true to His Lord to receive His blessings. Our integrity in Christ will be tested at times too, and especially in times of trouble.

Joseph also displayed a humble attitude with his brothers when they sought his forgiveness. Also when Joseph was called suddenly from prison to interpret Pharaoh's dream, he could have taken the credit for his dream-interpreting gift. Instead, he immediately gave credit to the Lord when he said in Genesis, Chapter 41, "It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Joseph had learned through all his trials that it was the Lord who was blessing and helping him. He didn't take the credit for himself. And for us too, after coming through a trial or even a joyful time, we need to recognize who brought us through. It is the Lord, and we should gratefully thank Him!

Joseph could have maintained a vengeful attitude towards those who had wronged him, and watched for any opportunity to get even with them. In sheer nastiness, he could have withheld his gifts and abilities from saving people's lives during the famine, but he didn't. Instead, he used God's gifts to bless others. He truly lived as Christ taught in Matthew, Chapter 5, when He said, "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you." Being able to let go of the need for revenge enables us to truly learn from our trials.

We can also learn about forgiveness from Joseph. In Genesis, Chapter 45, when Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers, he told them, “Now do not be upset or blame yourselves because you sold me here. It was really God who sent me ahead of you to save people’s lives.” Joseph knew that his prior seasons of struggle were past and had been part of God’s bigger plan, so he freely forgave his brothers.

Not all things needing forgiveness have the same level of suffering attached to them. After the horrors of living in a concentration camp and seeing her sister slowly die there, Corrie ten Boom had quite a struggle to forgive those who had committed so many evil acts against human beings in World War II.

A couple of years after the war had finished, Corrie came face-to-face with a prison guard from the concentration camp that she had been in. She had just spoken at a church meeting and after the service, he came up to her. He said that he’d become a Christian and knew that God had forgiven him for all the cruel things that he had done as a soldier there. He then asked Corrie if she would forgive him too.

In her own mind, Corrie thought that this was the hardest thing that she ever had to do. How could all the bad memories be wiped away simply for the asking? She hesitated. She knew that she had to forgive this man, because God has a condition on forgiveness of sin. It’s found in Matthew Chapter 6 in the section that we call ‘The Lord’s Prayer’ and goes like this:

‘Our Father in heaven; May your holy name be honoured; may your kingdom come; may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today the food we need. Forgive us the wrongs we have done, **as we forgive the wrongs that others have done to us.**’

Following the end of ‘The Lord’s Prayer’ Jesus repeated the point about forgiveness: “If you forgive others the wrongs they have done to you, your Father in heaven will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive the wrongs you have done.”

But Corrie felt unable to forgive the former guard in her natural self. She realised that giving another person forgiveness is an act of the will and not of the feelings. Her will could forgive, even if her feelings didn’t agree. She silently prayed for Jesus to help her, before sticking out her hand to meet the former guard’s hand. As she cried out, “I forgive you, brother! With all my heart!” a healing warmth spread over her, and she’d never known God’s love so intensely before as she did then. With Corrie’s willingness to forgive came God’s power to forgive her former enemy.

When we forgive, we let go of all the bitterness and anger that can keep us from progressing in our spiritual life. You too can know the same forgiveness and salvation that transformed Corrie and the former guard. In Romans, Chapter 10, it says: “If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised Him from death, you will be saved.”

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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