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GENESIS 47:1-12

Series: Understanding Your Roots

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...is positioning his family well. Not only they'll have the best land, but they'll be kept separate from everything else that's going on. So they won't be embraced into the culture of the Egyptians, all the religious festivals, all the things that are going on there. They'll be separate. And so we talked about that separateness.

So now Joseph gave the instructions, he laid out the plan. In chapter 47, we see that plan implemented. Look with me at Genesis 47:1. It says there – *So Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, “My father and my brothers, with their flocks and herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan.”* So this is his presentation before Pharaoh. *“They are now in the land of Goshen.” And from among his brothers he took five men and presented them to Pharaoh.* I don't know why he only took five of his brothers. And I don't know which ones he chose. I just think back in the last verses of 46 where it says that shepherds were detestable. And I'm thinking, well, what did he do? Maybe he took the ugliest five guys in there before Pharaoh. I don't know. Maybe he took the ones that could keep their mouths shut, who wouldn't be running off at the mouth? I'm not sure. But he chose five of his guys, his brothers and they're going into Pharaoh. Watch the wise appeal unfold here in this passage.

Pharaoh said to his brothers, “What is your occupation?” Kind of a kind way to say, “Okay, you're coming in. How can we help you? What do you do for a living?” That's what was expected. *And they said to Pharaoh, “Your servants are shepherds, as our fathers were.” They said to Pharaoh, “We have come to sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. And now, please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen.”*

On your paper, I want you to write one, two, and three, because there are three parts to the wise appeal that you want to know.

The first part of the wise appeal, you can write this. It says to the authority, “I understand you want me to because...” Write that down. “I understand you want me to because...” The first goal that you have in your appeal is to help the authority feel like they're being understood or feel like they're not threatened. Sometimes when children bring requests to their parents, it's like, “[grumbling] You never do....” And they feel threatened. So what do you think parents want to say? “No.” Right? Same thing with bosses. Same thing with teachers. It's the presentation that's so important. So when you come to your parent, you have a request, then you want to present it in a way that uses, I would suggest even using those exact words, and filling in the blank. “I

understand you want me to because..." You might say, "Mom, I understand you want me to not have a snack right now because we're eating dinner in a half hour and sometimes I don't eat my dinner." Now you haven't presented your request yet, but you're preparing the way and the authority is feeling like they're being understood.

Let's see how it takes place in our passage in Genesis 47. *And they said to Pharaoh* (this is in verse 3), *"Your servants are shepherds, as our fathers were." They said to Pharaoh, "We have come to sojourn in the land."*

There's two things they say. One, we're shepherds. Pharaoh's asking them, "What do you do?" Now if they would have said, "We're an army," I think he might have felt a little threatened. If they're executives and they want to take over the land, I think he would feel... Do you think he felt threatened by them being shepherds? No, he's not threatened by them at all.

The second thing they say is, *"We've come to sojourn in the land."* The New International Version says *"We've come to stay for a little while in the land."* So now as the authority, he doesn't have to say, "These guys are coming in and they're now going to live here forever." You know, whenever you have visitors over, it's good for them to know when to leave. And these guys are already saying we're only staying here for a little while and then we're leaving. Again, setting the stage for the request that's about to come.

The first part of the wise appeal is strategic because it prepares the way. It sets the person at ease in preparation for the request that's coming. The second part of the wise appeal... You can write these words down, young people. Write it down. Get ready. The second part of the wise appeal is to say "I have a problem with that because..." "I have a problem with that because..." "Mom, I have a problem with that because I didn't eat any lunch today and I'm really hungry." Now you're expressing your presentation of your problem in a respectful way. Not just whining, complaining, and blaming the problem to other people, but you're doing it in a way that's respectful. "I have a problem with that because..."

Let's look in the passage and see what their what they said. *"We have come to sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan."* That's our problem, we don't have what we need in order to live so that's why we've come here. We're asking you for something. This is our problem that we're experiencing. Very important to understand that part of the wise appeal.

Do you know we see the wise appeal in a number of places in the Bible. We see it with Nehemiah. Nehemiah wanted to go and leave the king. He was his cupbearer. He wanted to leave the king and go to Jerusalem and rebuild the city walls in Jerusalem. It turns out that the king is going say yes to him. But it all has to do with the way Nehemiah presented it. He presented the wise appeal and the king said, "Yes, you can go," and he says, "I'm going to give you a bunch of money and produce and everything you need, all the equipment and all of the products and resources you need to rebuild the walls in Jerusalem."

Another person who used the wise appeal in the Bible is Queen Esther. She had a problem. She knew she had to come to the king and bring the problem to the king in the right way. Because the

king didn't know that Haman had planned to kill all of her people, the Jews. So she brings a wise appeal and asks Haman and the king to come to her house for a special dinner. Her whole presentation is so valuable that she gets this positive response. And then the tables are turned. The king finds out that Haman wants to kill all of the family members, all the Jewish people. So what happens? The king is on Esther's side. It's because of a wise appeal that was presented.

Oh you remember the story of Daniel, right? Daniel was told by his trainer, who's getting him ready, "You have to eat these certain kinds of food." Daniel knew that eating those kinds of food was not acceptable according to Jewish law. And so he brought a wise appeal to the trainer and said, "Let's have a two-week trial. Could we do this? And if we have a two-week trial, let's see what happens." Not only after the two weeks do the trainers say, "Wow, you guys are doing great," but they changed the diet for everyone and eventually gave Daniel this great job within the kingdom.

I'm impressed with the wise appeals we see in the Bible. I would suggest, young people, if you use the wise appeal, you will position yourself well as you're bringing a request. Well, that's the second part of the wise appeal.

The third part of the wise appeal starts this way. "So could I please..." and you fill in the blank. Sometimes young people are demanding saying, "You owe me." "You should be giving this to me." "Look what you did to my brother. You didn't give me this." With that kind of an approach, what do parents want to say? "No." So you might say to Mom, "So Mom, could I please have half of an apple and I'll be sure to eat my dinner." You see the solution that you bring here has to be one that acknowledges the parent's concern or the authority's concern, the boss' concern, or the husband or wife's concern, while at the same time addressing your own concern and bringing a solution together.

You see, we as authorities (I'm an authority) are busy people. We got to plan that we know what we're doing. Somebody wants to interrupt our plan, our tendency is to say, "Don't get in my way. I want to keep going." But if you come to your authority, and you say, "I've got an idea, a way that we can have this come together," then it makes the job easier for the authority and in the authority's mind to be able to say, "Okay, I think we can do this." That's why it works. That's why it's worked so many different times. That's why it will work sometimes as you bring it to parents, or to a boss, or to someone else.

So let's see what they said in the passage. It says in verse 4, the end there – "*And now please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen.*" That's their request. But notice they didn't just come out and ask that. They started with the first two parts of the wise appeal before they came to the third part.

Notice the response in verse 5. *Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. The land of Egypt is before you. Settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land. Let them settle in the land of Goshen, and if you know any able men among them, put them in charge of my livestock."* Oh, wow, they get a job. They not only get what they want (permission to live in the land of Goshen), but they're given the job. What a privilege, I think in part because of the way they present the whole idea. And we call that the wise appeal.

Now, I've used the wise appeal many, many times. But my favorite story of the wise appeal actually takes place with my son who at seventeen years old went to Bible college at Calvary Chapel Bible College in Marietta, California. When he went there, he was only seventeen years old. After being there for a couple of months in about November in one of his phone calls home he says, "Dad, you're not going to believe these people here. They're not having the students go out and serve in the community. If Jesus was running this Bible college, He would have all of the people serving out in the community." I said to Josh, "Well Josh, it sounds like you have the ingredients for a wise appeal there. Maybe you ought to try and see what you can do." So Josh went up and wrote up a wise appeal, two pages long, and sent it to me. I edited his spelling and so on. Then I sent it back to him, so that he could take his wise appeal into the president. He made an appointment with the president of the Bible college, and he took it into the president. The president reads this wise appeal that Josh presented to him and the president says, "Wow, this is really interesting. I wonder if you would consider coming and talking to the faculty next week."

So the next week, Josh comes in and he talks to the faculty and he shares his idea about the school doing community service. Two of the faculty members said, "Nah, we've never done it that way before." I'm glad that they had those couple in there, because there's always those kind of people around that rely on tradition instead of innovation. But Josh comes in, and there are several of them that are really encouraged by this. They like this. So he gets a positive response.

Josh ends up coming home for a Christmas break and when he comes back to school in the next term they ask him to speak to the whole student body about community service. Then he comes home during the summer break and they ask him to come back two weeks early to school so he could set up a trial version of some kind of community service program that the school could use voluntarily in the next year. Nothing required, but students could come. So he went back, he created this card file. He had a card file that contained jobs that you could do in community service. If you liked working with people, you could go to the rest home or you could go work at the pregnancy center. There were a number of people kinds of tasks. And there were if you don't like people, then you want to work with things. You could pick up trash on the road, or you could paint this and that. So there were all of these different jobs he had in these card files and people could volunteer to serve. And it started to grow in this ministry.

When Josh ended up graduating from the Bible college, they hired him on to be part of the faculty staff. He developed this program of community service where every senior graduating was required to take on some kind of a community service and to use that as part of their senior project and senior work that they were doing.

I'm excited about that story because it started with a wise appeal. And I just want to give you a vision for that. Because I think we tend to try to change people's minds by complaining, harping on them, we start badgering people. There's a way to present this. We call it a wise appeal. We see it right here in this passage. It's a beautiful story. I didn't want to miss it because it's just a great example of the wise appeal in scripture. I encourage you to use it, whether you're a young person or an adult.

Well now we're going to switch gears completely to a second meeting. Joseph has one meeting where he brings in five of his brothers and they use this wise appeal and they get a positive response. But now I want to take you into another meeting that's going to take place.

So let's go to our next slide, which starts at verse 7 in your text. It says there – *Then Joseph brought in Jacob his father and stood him before Pharaoh*. Now this is a second meeting. So now this is the meeting between Jacob (Joseph's dad) and Pharaoh. What's going to happen in this meeting? The first thing that happens, notice in verse 7, is that *Jacob blesses Pharaoh*. I was surprised by that, because usually what happens if you're going to receive a blessing, it comes from the person who is wealthy or powerful or prestigious, and they bless the person who's weaker, so to speak. But that's not what happens here. Or maybe it is. Because Jacob realizes that he has power. He may not have a lot of wealth of this point, but he has a lot of power. And he has something to give that he's going to share.

I first thought maybe this was just a greeting. He just blessed him as a greeting. But he's going to do it again here, which leads me to believe there's something else going on in this passage. Jacob is blessing Pharaoh. It's not going the other way around. A blessing that's taking place.

I think Pharaoh might have been a little surprised. Notice his next words. He says to Jacob, “*How many are the days of the years of your life?*” How old are you anyway? he says. Maybe he's surprised that the blessing that's being offered to him. And so he says, “How old are you?” Jacob's response is very interesting. He says – *The days of the years of my sojourning...* I like the word *sojourning*. I'm just a pilgrim here on Earth. You know the older you get, the more you realize we're just pilgrims here in this world. We're passing through, sojourning. He says – “*The days of the years of my sojourning are 130 years. Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their sojourning.*” Abraham, Isaac were his father, grandfather. They sojourned too through this. They're gone now. And Jacob's saying my days aren't as long and my days are evil. Isn't that interesting that he says that.

Verse 10. *And Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from the presence of Pharaoh*. So he blesses them again. But don't you find it interesting the way Jacob kind of refers to his life. My years are short. He had 130 of them. But he says my years are short and they are evil. What he means by evil is that they've been challenging. I've had a hard life, is what he's saying. Maybe some of you can identify with the hard life that Jacob experienced.

When I think back through Jacob's life, I think about the hard life that he had really came from three different sources. One of the reasons his life was hard because he made some mistakes. In other words, it's self-inflicted pain. He caused his own problems by making bad decisions. You remember that. He did grow up in a home where his parents were bickering and there was favoritism going on. But Jacob at one point stole the birthright from his brother, stole the blessing from the father to his brother. He made some decisions that were unwise. He did the wrong thing. He consequently had to run for his life and head off to Paddan Aram and get out of there. You know, I think one of the categories of things that make our lives challenging and hard is the mistakes that we make. We all make mistakes. Of course God forgives us, family forgives

us, other people forgive us. But there are consequences often that we live with because of the mistakes we've made in the past. It's sad.

In fact, it's one of my missions to communicate to young people how you can be more successful and avoid some of those pitfalls. I can see ahead in some of the young people's lives. This is headed somewhere bad. I wish that I could come in and help them to prevent some of their self-inflicted pain that I know is going to happen in their lives.

Well, that's one category of pain, I think, that Jacob experienced that made his life challenging was problems that he inflicted on himself. But there's another whole category of things he's experienced, and those are things that were inflicted on him by the brokenness of other people.

I think particularly, he was marked by his uncle Laban that he went to work with. When he was getting ready to leave Laban's presence, he says to Laban, "You changed my wages ten times." In other words, you were unfair to me. You were cheating me. Always looking for a way to get ahead and take advantage of me. When Jacob wanted his wife, he worked for her for seven years, lovely Rachel. And on the wedding night, Laban switched them up. So he got he got a different wife than he was expecting. All of these things happened to him. He ended up with four wives. He ended up with twelve boys that became the twelve tribes of Israel. But in the midst of all of this, there was pain inflicted in his life because of someone else, other people's brokenness.

I can imagine that some of you experienced that. You might look back on your life and you say, "You know, there were other people who created damage in my life." For whatever reason. That's a whole second category of challenges in our life. We look back and we say our life was challenging. It's one of those things that takes place in our lives that other people are broken and that affects us.

The third category of pain doesn't have to do with people necessarily. It has to do with the fact that we live in a broken world.

After Jacob left Paddan Aram and he's coming back, his wife died. His wife that he loved so much, she died in childbirth. It wasn't anybody's fault in particular, but she passed away there and oh that grieved his heart so much. Sometimes that happens in our lives. Life just happens and sometimes bad things, challenging things take place.

Three categories of challenging things. Self-inflicted pain that we experience. The brokenness of others that hurts us. Just life, living in a broken world sometimes brings pain into our lives with disease or sickness or loss. That's really hard.

So Jacob's reflecting back on the pain of his life. But notice, that does not stop him from blessing Pharaoh. I want to pause there just for a moment because I don't want you to think just because your life has been hard, as most of our lives have been difficult, challenging in various ways, don't think that that disqualifies you from giving the blessing out. You have something that other people need, and that's bigger than anything. Jacob had his eyes focused on God, not focused on people. When you have your eyes focused on God, you see this amazing blessing that you have

that you can pass on no matter what challenges you've experienced in your life. Do not let the challenges of your life hinder you from passing on the blessing that God has given to you.

That is such a powerful message. I want to take it into the New Testament. I want you to look with me at 2 Corinthians 4. Because if we look at 2 Corinthians 4 we see these words that amplify this idea that we have a blessing. It says in verse 7 – *But we have this treasure.... This treasure refers to Jesus Christ. We have this treasure in jars of clay. We are just jars of clay. That's all we are. We're the common jars. There's some people who want to be the ornamental china. You know, they want to be the real nice looking stuff on the outside. There's all kinds of things that we do in order to make ourselves look great, so that we feel good about ourselves. And so we're the china that's out there. The problem with china is it gets set up on the shelf there because you never want to use it. What Paul is saying here is you're the common jar. You're just a clay jar. That's all you are. But you know what makes you valuable is what's inside of the jar and that's the treasure of Jesus Christ.*

No matter what hardships you've experienced, no matter how much you've been used as a clay jar in life, it's the treasure inside that makes you valuable. That's the beauty of all of this. I think sometimes parents make the mistake of trying to get their kids on the best soccer team, or the best baseball team, or the best football team so they can get into a D1 school, and they're on a track. There's nothing wrong with that, necessarily. But if they are just ornamenting the outside of the china, we are in trouble. If you get you try to get your kid in the best preschool so that they can get into the best private school so they get into the best college somewhere, you may be focusing on the wrong thing. You might have a great ornamental picture on the outside. But the inside is missing something very important. It's what's on the inside that makes a person valuable. It's the treasure in jars of clay. But we have this treasure and jars of clay to show us the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. Wow.

You may experience some of this in your own heart. I hope this encourages you. It says – *We are afflicted in every way but not crushed.* You know in my life I'm a pretty positive person. I can go on pretty well except when I'm afflicted on all sides. If I get one problem, I can deal with it. I got two problems, maybe I can deal with those. It's just when all the problems are all around me then I start to feel discouraged. *We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.* I'm just telling you if you feel today that you've been struck down, you are not destroyed. It is the treasure inside of this clay pot that allows you to bless the world and share with them because that's where the power comes from. Not from you. It comes from inside the pot.

Finishing the passage in verse 10 it says – *always carrying in the in the body, the death of Christ, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies, for we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our mortal flesh.*

You have something very special inside when you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. We invite Him to come into our lives. What that means is that you ask Him to come in and reveal His power inside of you. This is really big. This isn't just a decision you make when you're

a child and you accept Jesus in your life. This is something that's happening continually. That this treasure that we have is really Jesus Christ.

So Jacob goes before Pharaoh. He knows he has something. He has the presence of God. When Jacob was coming down to Egypt, he stopped when he saw the signs that said "leaving Canaan" and he worshiped the Lord. It says there that God came to him in those moments and said, "I'm going with you down to Egypt." Jacob knew that God was with him, that God wasn't just back there in Canaan. God was with him and he was coming into the presence of the king of Egypt. He comes into that presence of the king of Egypt and he blesses Pharaoh.

Jacob has something to offer just like you and I have something to offer when we meet anyone in our lives. We live in a broken world – people who are crushed, people who are persecuted, people who are struck down, all those words that are there. People are feeling that, but they don't have what we have. You have the ability to bless other people continually. It may not even be someone you know. You might just meet someone in a grocery store or on the side of the road somewhere in life someplace, but you have something to offer. You have a blessing that you can give. That is the picture here. Of course, if we take this into the family, all of us have a blessing that we can be sharing with each other in a powerful way.

Well let's just go back and finish our passage down to verse 12, picking it up in verse 11. *Then Joseph settled his father and his brothers and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. And Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with food, according to the number of their descendants.*

They were there for a purpose. I'm not sure they knew fully what God was going to do in their lives over the next 430 years. But they were there for a purpose. But while they're there in the midst of this, they're a blessing. They're going to take care of Pharaoh's livestock. There's just going to be this opportunity for them to bless other people.

I hope you take that seriously in your life. I hope that when you come to church here, you're able to get excited, you're able to enjoy this planned hour and a half so that God will do something inside of you so you can go out and minister to the world. That is our goal. Our goal is not to come and be separate. Our goal is to be out there. We are separate so that we can go out and we can be in the world. I hope that the strength that comes from being at church to being with God's people, being in your own quiet time at home, can provide you then with the ability to bless other people in a world of people that are waiting. Amen.

Alright. Every week we're going to flash this next slide, aren't we? Because Scott always forgets to dismiss the fourteen-year olds. Before the rest of us do business, you guys can go out with your teacher back there. Rose is going to take you. You can go that direction right out into the Barn with Rose. The rest of us have an opportunity to just do business with the Lord here.

Who is it that God wants you to bless? Maybe they live in your home. Who is it that God wants you to bless? Maybe it's somebody at work. Maybe you need to have a wise appeal somewhere in the course of what you need to do. Maybe today you're sitting here saying, "You know what?"

My jar is empty. I've been working on the outside, but I need the treasure inside.” If you've never accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, I'd love to pray with you. I'd love to help you get to know Jesus Christ in a very personal way. That's who we are. We have this treasure inside.