

2019-08-04 ... 6.30pm Evensong ... Revd Canon Judy Hunt

Genesis 50: 4 – end

'Family Patterns'

Introduction ...

Can you think of a Family pattern – a way of doing things – that you have inherited? It might be support of a certain Charity – or indeed an unwillingness to support a certain Charity. It might be your view of a particular political party ... or your view of local or national politicians in general ... it might be customs at certain times of year.

Earlier on this year, in our Lent Course, we looked at how our childhood experience of the ways in which tension or conflict were handled continues to have an effect on us as adults.

End of Genesis ...

In tonight's Old Testament reading we heard the end of the Book of Genesis and as such it's also, in a sense, the end of the story of the Patriarchs ... Abraham to Isaac to Jacob ... Genesis ends with the death of Jacob.

And we heard the Family pattern that had been created.

One Old Testament writer, Jorge Maldonado calls it:

The Legacy of Deception ...

In the earlier chapters of Genesis – there are quite a few incidents of deception ... and Jacob's attitudes seem to be influenced by these ... and he takes deception to a whole new level when he cons his Father to get his brother, Esau's birthright.

This kind of deception leads to a tendency to deep distrust.

Remember the story of the sons of Jacob – the favouritism shown to Joseph, the jealousy of the others who then sell Joseph as a slave – taken captive into Egypt ... but God redeems the situation eventually and Joseph rises high in Egyptian society – entrusted with responsibility for sorting out food in advance of famine.

There's a reconciliation when the brothers arrive to beg for food ... though Joseph engages in a bit of deception too at that time ...

But the nagging worry – the distrust does not vanish as we heard tonight:

Realising that their Father was dead, Joseph's brothers said: "What if Joseph still

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bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong we did to him?” and they revert to lies and deception:

So they approached Joseph saying: ‘Your Father gave this instruction before he died: “say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers” ... and so on.

Freedom from harmful legacy ...

If this was serialised – I’m sure that would be where the penultimate episode ended ...

What would Joseph do?

Well, he showed that – with God’s help – it is possible to break free from whatever harmful legacy may have been passed on to us.

He stands clear at this point of revenge, of manipulation, of deceit ... and he aligns himself with God’s good purposes.

Here, he foreshadows the **freedom** Christ brings to us ... not bound by sin – but free to serve him without fear. We are inheritors of that from Christ – which can overcome any negative human inheritance.