



*Be still, my soul; the Lord is on thy side;  
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;  
Leave to thy God to order and provide;  
In every change He faithful will remain.*

*Be still, my soul; thy best, thy heavenly, Friend      Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.*

### TLH 651 "Be Still, My Soul"

On March 31, the church remembers Joseph, Patriarch, son of Jacob; one who carried patiently his cross of grief and pain. Before Joseph held high position in Egypt, his life was difficult. God spoke to Joseph through dreams foretelling one day his family would bow down to him. Joseph was close to his father, for this, his brothers hated him and sold him into slavery. Then, in the worst cruelty, they took the coat of many colors that Jacob had given Joseph, dipped it in blood and told their father an animal had killed Joseph. Joseph's life in slavery was not easy and over time he faced many temptations. Over time, by God's design, Joseph gained the trust of Egyptian rulers and worked his way up in positions of authority: God's grace is clear.

If you were to set this story within our unforgiving culture today, many would see no reason for Joseph to forgive his brothers for all they had inflicted on him. But the story of Joseph and his brothers is among the most touching and emotional portions of Scripture (**Genesis 42:24; Genesis 45:1-28**) and teaches forgiveness which comes from Christ and His cross.

As the famine grew worse in Palestine, Joseph's brothers came to him to buy food yet failed to recognize him. Joseph tested them to see if they had repented. As the story continues, (**Genesis: chapters 42-45**) Joseph witnesses their sorrow and repentance over their past sins toward him and their father. The story of Joseph testing his brothers moves us to sorrow and a desire for forgiveness. When Joseph can stand it no longer, he weeps again and reveals himself to his brothers (**Genesis 45:1-3**). This is a very touching and emotional scene of love and forgiveness. Joseph truly forgives his brothers and reveals his great love toward them, a love which flows from God's love toward him. Showing his brothers the love of God and giving them comfort, Joseph assures them when he says, "**And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, 'for God sent me before you to preserve life' Genesis 45:5.** God gives us life in Christ our Savior. Indeed, what Joseph says is true as stated by St. Paul when he says, "**for those who love God, all things work together for good**" **Romans 8:28.**

This Biblical account teaches Joseph as a "type" of Christ, that is, a picture of Christ as he forgives his brothers. Joseph's story points us to Christ alone who is rejected as was Joseph, falsely accused and then punished. The will of God is that His Son, Jesus, die for the sins of the world. Salvation is God's Divine will as Jesus rises triumphant over death and the grave that first Easter morning! Joseph can forgive through God's grace that forgave him, for he was a sinner as well. When Christ is put on the cross, He forgives; "**Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do**" **St. Luke 23:34.** The will of God is carried out in Christ and His death and resurrection.

We begin Lent on March 6, Ash Wednesday and are reminded of Christ's sacrifice and we sorrow over our sin. We come to Lenten service and church in sorrow and contrition over our sin, yet we receive the grace of God in Christ our Savior. We read the story of Joseph and think of our sin against others and learn forgiveness from him, but especially our Savior who forgives from His cross and willingly dies in our place. The church observes Lent, a time of repentance joined with great joy for our sins have been forgiven in Christ and like Joseph and his brothers, we are reunited with the God who loves us in Christ.

Read the story of Joseph and his brothers (**Genesis chapters 42-45**) during Lent (**better yet, all of Genesis**) and see the need for a Savior, the promise given and continued through the lives of God's people pointing to Christ and His death on the cross, giving forgiveness to Joseph, his parents, brothers indeed to all; this is God's grace in Christ! Throughout Lent, we sorrow over sin but rejoice in God's grace! Even though tribulations are numerous, we bear patiently the cross of grief and pain as we await the return of Christ. As we lament our sin and struggle with this world and its difficulties, the hymn writer gives comfort in the last words of the first stanza.

**"Be still my soul; thy best, thy heavenly, Friend,  
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end!"**

**TLH 651 last words of verse 1**

In Christ, Pastor