

ORDINARY TIME: EXTRA-ORDINARY DAYS

"READ THE FINE PRINT"

Genesis 50:15-21

- i. How many of us actually read the fine print?
- ii. In order to understand this profoundly deep and nuanced text we need to read the fine print.
- iii. The only way to get anything out of this story and teaching is context and fine print.
- iv. Three fine print questions lead to one way forward...

I. WHAT HAPPENED IN THE PAST...?

- a. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph.
- b. Jacob has many sons.
- c. Throw Joseph in a hole and sell him to Egypt.
- d. The sons tell Jacob that Joseph has died.
- e. Joseph, a big wig in the Egyptian Imperial guard, recognizes his brothers who are on a search and rescue mission and holds one brother hostage.
- f. Jacob dies.

II. WHAT HAPPENS IN THE FUTURE...?

- a. Jacob becomes the father of the nation Israel.
- b. They are captives in Egypt and released through the Exodus.
- c. The irony is that Egypt was first a place of refuge and then it becomes a place of enslavement.
- d. Israel exits Egypt.

III. WHO HOLDS IT TOGETHER...?

- a. It is difficult to tell if the brothers are really sorry or if they are just trying to stay alive.
- b. The threefold appeal: appeal to their dead father as a common point of contact, appeal to the same God they worship, turn themselves in as slaves.
- c. It is difficult to tell if Joseph has compassion even though it says they all weep. We do not know the motivation for the weeping. It's a mess.
- d. The curious response of Joseph in verse 19, "Do not fear, Am I in the place of God?" there are more questions than answers.
- e. WHICH IS THE WHOLE POINT OF THE STORY. No one can know the mysterious sovereignty of God at work in a mess.
- f. None of this really matters because of verse 20.
- g. Everything turned out fine for this family and for Israel-eventually, not because Jacob had good sons but because God was good to God's word.
- h. God is the shining star in this story about twisted Netflix family life and the community of Israel as a whole.

IV. TAKEAWAYS:

1. We do not know how God is involved in this or that, we can only trust that God is at work.
2. Warning: Please do not hear that God orchestrates every event in history, even the most horrendous: like slavery, apartheid, mass shootings, war, famine, holocaust, etc.
3. “[**God**] **works (in) all things together for good.**” Romans 8:28
4. How this informs the world.
5. How this informs faith communities.
6. How this informs ideology.