

Word notes Sunday 19/6/2011 Roy Wheeler
God's favoured sons

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Text: Genesis 37:1-4

Jacob was a man with a chequered history, a trickster who gained the birthright of his brother and his father's blessings by devious means. Perhaps then it's no wonder that he was a less-than-perfect father himself. He had a favourite son Joseph, who was tenth "in-line" and who used to tell tales on his brothers. You can read on and see the story of this rather dysfunctional family; suffice it to say that God was able to use Joseph, as he was obedient to him even after being sold to slavery in a foreign land.

Being a favoured son or daughter in a natural family is not good – and certainly causes upset if not animosity from any other siblings. Some of us may have experienced that leaving us with a poor image of "fathering". God our heavenly father is not like that, thankfully He is a perfect father and treats us all as first-borns like Jesus - favoured without this being at the expense of any others. Roy made 3 points about what it's like for us to be "favoured sons" – men and women alike.

1, As born-again-Christians we are ALL favoured and not at the expense of anyone else. What's more this is completely undeserved and not dependent on earthly parents, education or abilities but solely on Jesus. Our identity is "in Christ" the only and first-born Son in whom God is pleased Lk 3:22. Gal 3:26, 27.

2, Joseph received the "double portion" of a first-born even though he wasn't. In Christ we receive every blessing (2 Cor 9:8 RSV) which the Father has "lavished" on us (Eph 1:7,8) and not recklessly but with wisdom and understanding.

3 Like Joseph we too have a special garment – not a physical coat or robe but a spiritual one, which no moth will destroy (Is 51:8), a garment fit for royalty for that is what we are (1 Pet 2:9) and a garment of righteousness (2 Cor 5:21). Even if that gets soiled – if we fall short in some way or sin – God will always be ready to take it off and put a clean one as we repent and turn back to Him.

Application (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

How did you choose your clothes this morning? [*eg clean, fits, looked nice, was in the drawer etc etc*]. What does God have in His wardrobe for us – do the same words apply? Does He have a selection – different robes for different people or "one-fits-all"?

What had Jesus done to earn the Father's favour in Lk 3:22? [*Answer: On one level – nothing! He loved Jesus just because he was His Son. On another level – simple obedience*]

How does this compare with us? Why are we favoured?

A first-born son was entitled to a double portion of the inheritance simply because he was first. To what are we "entitled", what do we "deserve" – a) before making Jesus Lord and b) after? Why is "entitled" a better word to describe what Jesus bought for us than "deserve"?

Read Eph 1:3-8

What have we been blessed with through Jesus?
What "riches of Grace" has God "lavished" this on you?

How will you live tomorrow knowing these things?

Witness (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

Nehemiah Week 1 was about prayer: the starting point for all our service.

Nehemiah Week 2 was about developing a vision and a plan.

This Week: Continue discussions on how to "go into all the world".