

This week we begin reading about Joseph. One of my teacher's found hints within his story (and I agree with her wholeheartedly) that he was among the "gifted and talented." Which is to say, he was seldom understood by others, and quite honestly, for most of his life, he either did not understand them, or understood them all too well.

Within the first few verses, the text relates how he "brought negative word of his brothers" to their father. The wording is similar to that used during the affair of the spies during the wilderness journey. There is one slight difference. The spies "took out" the negative things they found, which implies, in the Hebrew, that the things they found could have been found by anybody who was searching for problems. Joseph saw connections that others weren't making, and brought the negative ramifications of those connections to their father, and he did not quite get how that might not be considered a good thing by everyone involved.

No matter what kind of situation he finds himself in, he is competent enough to be left practically in charge. He learns shepherding and probably wealth management from Jacob. He becomes a property manager for Potiphar. He graduates to assistant jailkeeper, and then to fiscal management of a country.

Most people would not have been able to make all those changes, which might be enough to indicate how precocious he is.

What clinches it for me, however, is that he "gets it." Nobody else seems to. Everyone else gets reassured by God that things will get worse before they get better, and that the good days will arrive. Joseph, on his own, intuits and informs his brothers when they are reunited that everything they endured was meant by God for good results.

When life throws us for a loop, look at Joseph for inspiration. He is called Joseph the Righteous, not because he could manage property well, but because despite the fact that he never meshed well with other people, he kept connected with them and kept trying to do the proper thing. As he kept on in his weakest area despite all setbacks, I believe we can keep trying in our own lives.

May this season of lights shed some light on our lives.