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No Ordinary Joe, Part 15

Staring and Sharing

Text: Genesis 42:1-3

*Good* news travels quickly. So does *bad*.

Upon hearing that while there was famine in Canaan, there was food in Egypt, Jacob dispatches his sons to go get food. I want to spend time on the question Jacob poses to his sons in verse 1.

*Why do you look at one another?* (NKJV)

*Why do you just keep looking at each other?* (NIV)

*Why don’t you do something?* (GNT- Good News Translation)

*Why are standing around looking at one another?* (TLB- The Living Bible)

It is a question about inertia. It is a direct assault on a lack of energy and initiative. There is a type of person who hears news that could be literally life-changing, and that person does nothing!

2 Kings 7:3-4 tells the story of four leprous men at a gate in Samaria. They said to one another, “Why are we sitting here until we die?”

At least examine and entertain the available options, but don't just sit there. Inertia and lack of motivation and laziness will ruin you if not addressed... and contained... and rebuked.

**Illus.**

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| An old mountaineer and his wife were sitting in front of the fireplace one evening just whiling away the time.  After a long silence, the wife said: "Jed, I think it's raining. Get up and go outside and see."  The old mountaineer continued to gaze into the fire for a second, sighed, then said, "Aw, Ma, why don't we just call in the dog and see if he's wet." |

Now that’s lazy!!!!!

The inference of this text is that Jacob is not the *only* one to have heard the news that there was now food in Egypt. Jacob’s *sons* heard about it as well and, apparently, did nothing in response. I would like to think that if I were in a famine and even heard a *rumor* that there was food to be had somewhere, I would make immediate plans to get there.

Why didn’t these sons of Jacob move faster? Why didn’t they initiate? Why were they not more action-oriented? What would make them remain complacent in Canaan when people are eating in Egypt?

Listen to the question of verse 1 again. It is an indictment in the form of a question. It is a father’s kick in the seat of the pants for his sons. It is a query to the non-motivated. Perhaps Jacob is trying to get his sons beyond the point of simply talking. He wants them to act. In farming communities, they speak of people who are “all cackle and no eggs”. In Texas, they talk about a person who is “all hat and no cattle”. You know the type.

All sizzle and no steak.

All talk and no action.

All shot, no powder

**You know the type.**

All wax and no wick

All bark, no bite

All bluff, no bluster

**You know the type.**

All crown, no filling

All rocket booster, no payload

All foam, no beer

**You know the type.**

All hammer, no nail

All icing, no cake

All lime and salt, no tequila

The question in verse one is a question that dares the sons of Jacob to act! Don’t just stare at the problem, sons of Jacob. Start out on a journey to Egypt, where there is life... and hope... and food.

Sometimes life hands us situations that seemingly paralyze us. That’s the sons of Jacob. “What do we do now?”, they ask. “Where do we go?”

Their father tells them to go to buy grain in Egypt. This is a matter of life and death. If they stay in Canaan, in the famine, they will die. If they listen to their father and move and act, they will live. I’m preaching to someone today who is in a similar situation. You are dying and staring at the problem. Listen to you father, who dares you to stop simply staring and start out on the journey to Egypt, the journey to life. “So, Joseph’s ten brothers went”, says our text. They listened to their father. What could happen for us if we’d listen to our father, as the Father dares us to get moving? This text says nothing about Joseph but says volumes about his hater-brothers. They who wanted their brother dead now have to go to Egypt in order not to die themselves! What stops you and me from going to the place where there is life? Why sit around and stare in Canaan when we start out on a journey that will allow us to eat in Egypt?

I call us all to listen to the father who stirs us; the father who calls us; the father who challenges us; the One who enables and empowers us and dares us to leave our places of complacency and rise up to go where there is food...and growth...and nurture. Let us stop our mere staring at the problem and let us start sharing the journey towards...who knows?

Amen