The Background

In many ways, the book of Genesis impacts the rest of the Bible. In Genesis 1 and 2 God creates a good and orderly world. In Genesis 3-11 that good and orderly world comes apart. Four stories - Genesis 3: Adam and Eve, Genesis 4: Cain and Abel, Genesis 6-9: Noah and the Ark, Genesis 11: the Tower of Babel - show how sin spread from the garden, to the fields, to the world, to the entire cosmos. At the end of chapter 11 God’s good world is a mess. Then in chapter 12 God calls and uses Moses and his family to put the world back together. The rest of Genesis – indeed, the rest of the Bible! – is that attempt, which involves 3 interwoven themes:

1. A human family and its struggles and failures
2. The challenges and opportunities of life
3. The faithfulness of God who is at work in that world through that family

Genesis reads like a present day soap opera!! God promises Abraham and Sarah many children but they are barren (Gen. 15-18), Abraham and Sarah laugh at the promises of God (Gen. 18), God and Abraham dicker over the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18), Sarah finally gives birth to a son and God wants him sacrificed (Gen. 21-22), One of Isaac’s sons Jacob tricks the other son, Esau, out of the family birthright (Gen. 25), Jacob wrestles all night with God (Gen. 32), Joseph is sold into slavery by his brothers and winds up in a position of power in Egypt (Gen. 37-45).

Through all of this humanness, God’s faithfulness, both to God’s people and to the promise God made to those people, is fulfilled.

The Text

Chapter 45 is the reunion of Joseph and his brothers. They had tried to kill him out of jealousy and thought he was dead. By the faithfulness of God, Joseph ended up in Egypt as a valuable assistant to the Egyptian king. By that same faithfulness, Joseph actually provides for his brothers during a terrible famine. Joseph’s father, Jacob, actually travels to Egypt and is reunited with the son he thought was dead (Genesis 46: 28-34). Through all the intrigue, failures, lies, etc., God keeps His promises, blesses His people, and reunites Joseph with his family.

Notice some of the verses of this text in Genesis 45:5-8, 50:20. Even when His people are not faithful to Him, God is faithful to them!!

The Questions

Why do you think God picked this family to restore His creation?

If God can work miracles through them, do you think He can work them through your family?

What evidence is there of God’s activity in and through your family?