

Dartmouth

Bible Notes



Notes From the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church

Series: Forgiveness (lesson 6)

Scripture: Genesis 50:15-21

Speaker: Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M., D.Min.

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What if They Really, Really Don't Deserve My Forgiveness Because I've Been Really, Really Hurt?

Genesis 50:12-20 (NASB)

¹² And thus his [Israel's] sons did for him as he had charged them; ¹³ for his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre, which Abraham had bought along with the field for a burial site from Ephron the Hittite. ¹⁴ And after he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers, and all who had gone up with him to bury his father. ¹⁵ When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph should bear a grudge against us and pay us back in full for all the wrong which we did to him!" ¹⁶ So they sent *a message* to Joseph, saying, "Your father charged before he died, saying, ¹⁷ Thus you shall say to Joseph, "Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, for they did you wrong." And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸ Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? ²⁰ "And as for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

Introduction There are two great Josephs in the Bible. One is the carpenter from Nazareth, who was Jesus' earthly father. He is the more famous of the two Josephs even though we really know very little about that Joseph. The other Joseph comes from the very first book in the Bible, Genesis, and his story dominates the last quarter of the book. He was the second youngest of 13 children; twelve brothers and one sister, born to their father Jacob (who is renamed "Israel" in [Genesis 32:28](#) after "striving" or wrestling with God), by four different women (Leah, Bilhah, Zilpah and Rachel—*talk about a "blended family!"*) The story of Joseph is fascinating. It takes place in the nineteenth century before Christ, and includes all kinds of interesting treachery, drama, adventure, environmental disasters, sexual scandal and finally vindication (all the stuff of a great Hollywood production!) concluding with the promise, "Now boys, I want you to carry my bones up from here in Egypt to the Promised Land, and bury them there!"

In addition to the story itself, Joseph has been thought by some Bible interpreters to be a kind of "**TYPE OF CHRIST.**" A "type of Christ" is a person or

thing which, by appointment of God, PREFIGURED an aspect, or aspects, of Christ or of His church; a type was "a shadow of good things to come".¹ For instance,

- There is nothing bad (sinful) mentioned about Joseph or Jesus in scripture.
- Both were loved by their father.
- Both rejected by their brothers.
- Both Joseph and Christ were unjustly tried, Joseph was unjustly charged with trying to rape Potiphar's wife (Gen 39:1-20).
- Both were unjustly sold (Chilton) see Gen 37:28 and Matt. 26:15.
- Both suffered--Joseph in prison and Jesus on the cross.
- Both were later crowned with glory and honour (Gen 41:39-45, Heb 2:9).
- Both delivered men from death [See chart at the end.]²

BUT THE THING WE WANT TO SEE TODAY IS JOSEPH'S DECISION TO FORGIVE HIS BROTHERS OF GREAT CRIME AGAINST HIM. The story of Joseph begins in Genesis 37. We read that his Dad loved him more than any of his eleven brothers—he gave him a special coat. For this the brothers really resented their younger brother. Then, we read in verse 5 that **Joseph had a dream and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more**. He was 17 years old. The rest of the paragraph is interesting:

And he said to them, "Please listen to this dream which I have had; ⁷ for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf."⁸ Then his brothers said to him, "Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. ⁹ Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, "Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."¹⁰ And he related it to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?" ¹¹ And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind. (Genesis 37:6-11)

You are I might assess this and say well, they just didn't *like* their younger brother—he was being obnoxious, as little brothers can be. BUT WHAT DID THEY DO? Verse 18 says they started working on how to *kill him!* The oldest brother Reuben thinks better of this and says, "No, let's just throw him into a cistern." Then brother #4 (Judah) says, "Let's sell him to that bunch of Ishmaelite

¹ <http://www.apocalipsis.org/Joseph.htm> The term *tupos* is translated as, for example, "figure" (Rom. 5:14), "example" (1 Cor. 10:11), and "pattern" (Heb. 8:5).

² <http://pages.sbcglobal.net/clocks/josephhttp.html>

vendors,” and they did and got about \$129 for him (**twenty shekels of silver** = about 8 ounces, or)³.

I don't know if you've ever felt ganged up upon by two or three people. How would it feel to have ten or eleven brothers turn on you, just because you had a couple of dreams, and your Dad kind of liked you best? We're sure the brothers felt justified in getting rid of their nerdy young brother. So I want to ask you, do you suppose he felt hurt? He didn't ask his Dad for the coat did he? He didn't ask to have the dream. Its true, he had ratted some of the brothers out to their Dad at some point—an infraction ALWAYS an irritation to the “rattees” (Gen.37:2.)

Chapter after chapter of Genesis rolls by as the years, and we come to the climax of the story, reading again near the end of Moses' account.

Genesis 50:15 *When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph should bear a grudge against us and pay us back in full for all the wrong which we did to him!"* ¹⁶ *So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father charged before he died, saying,* ¹⁷ *'Thus you shall say to Joseph, "Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, for they did you wrong."'* *And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father."* *And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.* ¹⁸ *Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants."* ¹⁹ *But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place?"* ²⁰ *"And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.*

Joseph's brothers admitted they had **done wrong**, they had **sinned** against him. They had abused him, sold him, abandoned him and forgot about him. It was God's gracious hand of providence that took care of Joseph, preserved his life. Paul tells us that **God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose** (Romans 8:28) and Joseph endured long years, including the plot of Potiphar's wife—to get to the place of authority and power that he had when his brothers stumbled back to him. He had seen things work together for good. He loved His God while waiting, and he didn't give in to his own bitterness or to anything else which might derail his walk with God. And as we read in Genesis 50:20 Joseph was “called according to His purpose” which included the rescue of **many people**.

People tell me, you don't know how bad I was hurt. And I agree. I don't know. No one else does, either.

- I can't imagine how it felt to watch your sister die at the cruel hands of the Nazis as Corrie ten Boom did in 1944.

³ Silver price on 2/25/2010 was \$16.15/oz.

- I can't imagine how it must feel to watch loved ones be abused and murdered as so many Chinese endured in Nanking in 1937. Something like 250,000 people were killed in six weeks in Nanking, China.
- I can't imagine how it must feel to have a child kidnapped and then murdered as more than I can remember have experienced.
- It is true—I don't know what it is like to be married but under constant suspicion by your spouse, hounded, and for years, never trusted, but constantly accused.
- It is true—I don't know what it is like to live in a place where the government officials confiscate all the medicines in the city and won't let the people have access to them, and then sell it on the black market for personal profit.

But for every hurt, deep or deeper that we must sometimes endure CAN BE understood by He who went to the cross for us. Sometimes I fear we talk about the cross so much and so casually, and it has become so familiar, that we forget what it was that Jesus actually endured. He didn't deserve it. The apostles tell us that the sins of the world were on Him. The judgment He willingly absorbed Himself, was unfair. It was incalculably painful and it was so far-reaching that there are strange Bible verses that attempt to say things about the cosmic importance of the cross that we don't even know what they really mean (i.e. Ephesians 4:8-10 and 1st Peter 3:18,19.)

As we have said, nowhere does the Bible minimize the pain you may have suffered and that is your chief evidence and argument NOT to forgive someone. But fundamental to our faith—indeed, at its very core—is the unfair and extreme suffering of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the lamb of God, the Rose of Sharon, the bread of life, the bright morning star. Yes, we may have been sinned against, perhaps multiple times in the same way and by the same person. Perhaps for a complicated set of reasons, our pain goes deep. Perhaps you have been REALLY, REALLY hurt. Take stock of that. Spend a season inventorying it. Then go to the cross of Jesus Christ and see if you can remain unforgiving for what you have endured.

I say again, if you are a Christian, you must forgive. You must not hold it against that person regardless of whether they acknowledge their sins. You must not make decisions as if you were remembering it. You must make decisions as if you were both standing at the foot of the cross. If you were really, really hurt you can practice tough love. You can adjust your relationship with the hurting one with common sense. God doesn't tell us to be stupid. But He tells us to consider every decision in light of the cross of His Son. It isn't always easy to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ. It doesn't always feel good to do so, but He will refresh us. He will give us a deeper joy than the pain of injury. He has promised to never leave us or forsake us. He will be with us while we seek to honor Him, even if we've been really, really hurt. He's acquainted with our sorrows, and offers His own as our redemption!

JOSEPH AS A TYPE OF CHRIST

Joseph	Jesus
Genesis 37:3 Now Israel loved Joseph	Matthew 3:17 "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."
Genesis 37:4 his brothers, they hated him	John 15:25 They hated me without a cause.
Genesis 37:8 His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us?... So they hated him even more because of his dreams and his words.	Luke 19:14 We do not want this man to rule over us.
Genesis 37:11 So his brothers were jealous of him,	Mark 15:10 it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over.
Genesis 37:18 They saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him.	Matthew 27:1 the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death.
Genesis 37:23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe	Matthew 27:28 They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him
Genesis 37:28 sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver.	Matthew 26:15 They paid him thirty pieces of silver.
Genesis 39:4 Joseph found favor in his sight ...he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had.	John 3:35 The Father loves the Son and has placed all things in his hands.
Genesis 40:2-3 Pharaoh was angry with his two officers ... and he put them ... in the prison where Joseph was confined.	Luke 23:32 Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him.
Genesis 40:13 Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office (to one, a message of life)	Luke 23:43 He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."
Genesis 40:15 I have done nothing that they should have put me into the dungeon."	Hebrews 4:15 one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.
Genesis 41:46 Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh	Luke 3:23 Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his work.
Genesis 41:55 Pharaoh said ... "Go to Joseph; what he says to you, do."	John 2:5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."
Genesis 45:1 Joseph made himself known to his brothers.	Luke 24:31 Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him
Genesis 45:7 God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors.	1 John 4:9 God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him.
Genesis 45:12 And now your eyes ... see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you.	Luke 24:39 Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself.
Genesis 45:18 Take your father and your households and come to me	Matthew 11:28 Come to me, all you that are weary ... and I will give you rest.
Genesis 45:26-28 26 And they told him, "Joseph is still alive! ... Israel said, "Enough! My son Joseph is still alive. I must go and see him before I die."	Luke 24:5 Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.
Genesis 46:30 Then Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, that you are still alive."	Luke 2:29 "Now Lord, Thou dost let Thy bond-servant depart in peace, according to Thy work; For my eyes have seen Thy salvation,
Genesis 47:23 Then Joseph said to the people, ...I have this day bought you	1 Corinthians 6:19-20 you are not your own? For you were bought with a price