

## Genesis 50:15-26 Providence, Forgiveness, and Faith

### I. Joseph's Brothers Doubt His Forgiveness (15-18)

#### A. Joseph's Brothers Fear Justice (15)

1. Joseph's brothers worry that Joseph will avenge himself
  - a. Jacob is now dead – they think he was all that held Joseph back
    - i. They think Joseph will hate them (loathe them)
    - ii. They hated Joseph when he was a boy – and now they expect the same thing to be in Joseph's heart.
    - iii. they think his hatred will be poured out now that Jacob is dead
  - b. Their guilt still plagues their hearts & they can't believe Joseph has forgiven them
2. Notice the brothers fear justice not revenge
  - a. They readily admit that they have wronged him – done evil
  - b. This is the first time that the brothers acknowledge their guilt for what they did to Joseph.
    - i. In 45:5 Joseph told “And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.”
  - c. They aren't worried Joseph will punish them for something they didn't do
  - d. They know they are owed justice
3. What about the forgiveness Joseph offered in Genesis 45:15
  - a. It had been 17 years
  - b. They prospered and Joseph had taken care of them
  - c. Joseph had done nothing to incite suspicion
  - d. Their guilt was running rampant – gnawing at their hearts
  - e. They couldn't let it go so they believed Joseph couldn't either
5. They could not recognize or receive forgiveness

#### B. Joseph's Brothers Plead For Forgiveness (16-17)

1. The brothers send a message from Jacob
  - a. This is an obvious lie – why are they lying?
  - b. No hint that Jacob gave any such message or command
  - c. Jacob doesn't seem to have doubted Joseph's forgiveness
  - d. They are playing the only card they think they have – he loved Jacob richly
    - i. Call themselves the servants of the God of your father
    - ii. Notice they don't say “our father”
2. The brothers make confession of their wrong in the message
  - a. They call what they did “transgression, sin, and evil”
  - b. This was a cry from their guilt ridden hearts
  - c. Wanted to be free from justice they knew they deserved
  - d. With Jacob gone, there would be no one to protect them from Joseph's wrath
3. Joseph is deeply hurt by the brothers' assumption
  - a. For 17 years Joseph had forgiven them and loved them
  - b. This was too much for Joseph to take – he weeps for the 6<sup>th</sup> time
  - c. He can't believe the brothers are so suspicious of him
  - d. Like the whole ordeal with Joseph testing them had been in vain

#### C. Joseph's Brothers Humble Themselves Before Joseph (18)

1. The brothers offer themselves as Joseph's slaves
  - a. They “fall down” before Joseph – another fulfillment of his dreams
  - b. They don't call themselves the servants of your father's God – Just “your slaves”
  - c. They are not assuming themselves equal with Joseph
2. They are trying to save their lives and families

## II. Joseph Models The Heart of Forgiveness (19-21)

### A. Joseph Explains His Forgiveness (19-20)

NOTE: He comforts them and puts to rest their fears and their guilt.

#### HOW IS JOSEPH ABLE TO FORGIVE:

##### 1. He understands God's Role and His Own Role (19)

- a. He doesn't desire to play God over them – Vengeance belongs to Lord
  - i. He could have lorded over them as ruler of Egypt
  - ii. If he wanted them gone, he didn't have to play games
  - iii. He could snap his fingers and they would die
  - iv. No questions asked and life would go on
- b. He understands that God alone is the judge
  - i. Knows the judge of all the earth will do right
  - ii. Vengeance is mine says the Lord
- c. He understands that God is in control
  - i. So easy for us to play God in people's lives – to dispense what we think is justice
  - ii. We give no thought to what a perfect, holy God must see in us
  - iii. When take matters into our own hands:
    - think God isn't handling things rightly
    - think God isn't acting in our best interests
    - think God isn't concerned about justice
  - iv. Romans 12:19 - 19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."
- d. from human perspective, Joseph had all the power – But Joseph knows himself
  - i. He knows that he is just a man
  - ii. He knows that God is one who is in control
- e. Genesis begins with Adam and Eve trying to be like God – It ends with Joseph the savior of the family refusing to be in the place of God

##### 2. He understands God's Sovereignty (20)

- a. He understands God has a purpose and plan in all things – even the terrible things – even the wrong things
- b. Through the obvious sins of wicked men – God still working for good
  - i. Joseph doesn't deny or make light of their sin and wicked intent
  - ii. He acknowledges that they have indeed meant evil in their hearts
  - iii. Forgiveness doesn't make excuses for evil acts (e.g. "it was not big deal")
- c. God's intent in all of this was for good
  - i. The good of Joseph who lavished with power and riches
  - ii. The good of his chosen family, that they would be saved through the famine and come to Egypt – all their little ones
  - iii. The good of the people of Egypt and the greater region who's lives are saved by Joseph.
- d. 50:20 may be summary theme of all of Genesis
  - i. Life is never out of control – never outside his power
  - ii. Even when darkness seems like it is winning
  - iii. God works all things for good for those who love him
  - iv. Romans 8:31 – if God is for us who can be against us? – He rules over all
    - we will go through the fire but he refines us through it
    - not protected from suffering or hardship, but protected through it all
- e. We are able to forgive because we trust who God is – and know who we are.

### B. Joseph Demonstrates His Forgiveness (21)

1. He promises to provide for his family
  - a. Joseph assures them that he will provide all they need
  - b. Joseph's forgiveness is more than just releasing ill will – he gives them his love
2. He gives kind comfort to his brothers
  - a. Joseph convinces them that his forgiveness is real
  - b. Joseph comforts them by assuring that they are truly in right relationship with him.

Note: Our hearts can receive the grace of the true Joseph

### III. Joseph Finishes Well In Faith (22-26)

#### A. Joseph's Final Days are Blessed (22-23)

1. Joseph lived a long life
  - a. 93 of his 110 years were lived in Egypt
2. Joseph lived to see his grandchildren & great grandchildren
  - a. To see one's grandchildren is the crowning joy of a full life (Ps. 128:6; Prov. 17:6)
  - b. Just as Jacob adopted Joseph's sons, Joseph adopts his grandchildren
    - i. "counted as Joseph's own" = lit. born on Joseph's knees
    - ii. Machir means "one who is sold" (Makar is what happened to Joseph)

#### B. Joseph Dies Expressing His Faith in God (24-26)

1. Joseph believes in the promise of God (24)
  - a. His last words are filled with faith in the promise of God
  - b. He knew that God would honor his word to Abraham
  - c. He believed with all his heart that God would deliver them out of Egypt
  - d. Hebrews 11:22 - 22 By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

NOTE: Not a hint that Joseph has earned anything – God will do this because he promised

2. Joseph tells his family to bury him in the promised land under oath (25)
  - a. Wants his bones to be carried out with the people when they leave
  - b. He was looking in faith to the Exodus and wanted his bones to go with them
  - c. No grand funeral procession for Joseph
    - i. He probably had a funeral in Egypt
    - ii. He doesn't refer to it in any way
  - d. Joseph would remain in Egypt with his people and enter the land when they do
3. Joseph is placed in state in Egypt (26)
  - a. Genesis ends with Joseph's body held in Egypt waiting for the Exodus
  - b. 430 years later, God did visit the people and they came out
  - c. They honored the faith of Joseph and brought his bones out with them.