



Forgive from the Heart

Community Group Study Guide: Genesis 50 – Week of August 20, 2023

1. A Father Celebrated

As Christians, we need to live with the mindset that the work of our lives does not end when we die. We serve an eternal God, who has promised that what we do today has ripples throughout eternity as part of God's ordained plan. This perspective should cause us to consider our actions in the moment. How will what I do affect the way I will be remembered? How will my choices be accounted for in eternity? How will God judge my deeds? We see here, at the passing of Jacob, that he was a man whose life was celebrated. Despite all the shortcomings, he is highly honored in his death. Jacob was embalmed, and returned to the tomb that was prepared for him. By God's grace, Jacob ended as a father who was celebrated.

2. A Family Reconciled

With their father dead, the brothers once again become concerned over what actions Joseph might take. They worry that Jacob is no longer with them; that Joseph would enact his vengeance on those who sold him into slavery. To preempt this action, the brothers send a message to Joseph, claiming that Jacob had instructed Joseph to forgive his brothers' debt. The brothers call themselves the servants of the God of their father, and place themselves under the authority of Joseph. In response, Joseph reinforces that he has already forgiven them; he has already applied mercy to their account. Then, he gives them grace. He tells them that even though they acted with evil intentions, God used their deeds for good. Furthermore, Joseph promises to care for his brothers and for their children. This kindness comforted his brothers. This reconciliation amongst the brothers stands in stark contrast to the rest of the book of Genesis. Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Esau and Jacob... all were unable to properly reconcile with one another. Yet, we see by the work of God through Joseph's life that this family was able to reconcile... and they did so by forgiveness and grace.

DISCUSSION GOALS

Head

What we do, matters. In the end, we must consider how we have acted. How we have loved, forgiven, or gifted kindness has ripple effects on what comes after us. We should view today through the lens of eternity, and make decisions with that in mind.

Heart

The correct eternal decisions (like kindness and forgiveness) are not easy to undertake. They often are costly. However, we should look to Jesus, who took on our sin and punishment, so that He might extend forgiveness and kindness to us. The Gospel should motivate our hearts to imitate Christ.

Hands

Seek to reconcile those who we have relationships with. Be quick to forgive and restore when possible. Live lives marked by the forgiveness and reconciliation that Christ has given to you.

3. A Promise Believed

The book of Genesis ends with the death of Joseph. After living to 110 years, he is embalmed and placed in a coffin. In his last moments, Joseph appeals to the promise of God... that one day they will be led to the promised land. Likewise, as Christians, we reflect on the words of Christ in John 14. Jesus makes a similar promise, telling us that He has gone and prepared a place for us, and He will return to take us to that promised land. Now, as we faithfully wait, we believe in that promise.

Read Genesis 50

1. What is the main theme or practical application we find in this passage?
2. **Read Revelation 14:13** How is it blessed to die in the Lord? How does this perspective change the way we look at life day to day?
3. How do we see the Gospel in this passage? How is this story similar or dissimilar to the story of Jesus?
4. **Read Verse 19-20** What is the meaning of this section? How does it effect the way we see the events in our lives?
5. What challenges are presented when we try to be unified as the body of Christ? How should we respond to those challenges?
6. What is forgiveness? Why is it so essential to unity? How is the Gospel the genesis of forgiveness?
7. Over the last few months, what has been one or two major areas of growth that you have experience in the study of the life of Joseph? What ways have you had your understanding or knowledge changed?