

Sermon Title: The Scars we keep: It's not okay—but it can be.
Scripture Reading: Genesis 50:15-21

Growing in **forgiveness**—receiving, giving, & walking in it.

The greatest challenge of forgiveness is not getting over it, **it's overcoming me.**

*What's happened to **Joseph & his brothers:***

*The **brothers:***

Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him.⁴ **When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.**
Genesis 36:3

Don't make your kids have to clean up after your mess.

They are sinning against their brother because of **their unresolved issues.**

His brothers said to him, “Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?” **And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.**
Genesis 36:8

When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, “What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?” ¹¹**His brothers were jealous of him,** but his father kept the matter in mind.
Genesis 36:10-11

They are sinning against their brother because of **their personal issues.**

Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.
Genesis 36:2

Someone else's sin **doesn't excuse me of my own or **empower me** to do the same.**

Joseph:

Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? ²⁷ Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.” His brothers agreed.²⁸ **So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.**
Genesis 36:26-28

When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, “This is how your slave treated me,” he burned with anger. ²⁰**Joseph’s master took him and put him in prison**, the place where the king’s prisoners were confined.

Genesis 39:19-20

But when all goes well with you, **remember me and show me kindness**; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison. ¹⁵ I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon.”... ²³ The chief cupbearer, however, **did not remember Joseph; he forgot him**.

Genesis 40:14-15, 23

Joseph is experiencing ongoing relational betrayal at every level.

Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from Pharaoh’s presence and traveled throughout Egypt. ⁴⁷ During the seven years of abundance the land produced plentifully. ⁴⁸ Joseph collected all the food produced in those seven years of abundance in Egypt and stored it in the cities. In each city he put the food grown in the fields surrounding it. ⁴⁹ Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure. ⁵⁰ Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On. ⁵¹ Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh and said, “It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father’s household.” ⁵² The second son he named Ephraim and said, “It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering.”

Genesis 41:46-52

God remembers who & what we tend to forget.

God will disrupt our peace to bring a better version of it.

**What’s happening in their hearts & his brothers:
Joseph is working through his wounded heart.**

As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, **but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them**. “Where do you come from?” he asked. “From the land of Canaan,” they replied, “to buy food.” ⁸ Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him. ⁹ Then he remembered his dreams about them and said to them, “You are spies! You have come to see where our land is unprotected.”

Genesis 42:7-9

On the third day, Joseph said to them, “Do this and you will live, for I fear God: ¹⁹ If you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay here in prison, while the rest of you go and take grain back for your starving households. ²⁰ But you must bring your youngest brother to me, so that your words may be verified and that you may not die.” This they proceeded to do. ²¹ They said to one another, “Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen; that’s why this distress has come on us.” ²² Reuben replied, “Didn’t I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn’t

listen! Now we must give an accounting for his blood.” ²³**They did not realize that Joseph could understand them, since he was using an interpreter.** ²⁴**He turned away from them and began to weep, but then came back and spoke to them again.** He had Simeon taken from them and bound before their eyes. ²⁵ Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, to put each man’s silver back in his sack, and to give them provisions for their journey. After this was done for them, ²⁶ they loaded their grain on their donkeys and left.
Genesis 42:18-26

As he looked about and saw his brother Benjamin, his own mother’s son, he asked, “Is this your youngest brother, the one you told me about?” And he said, “God be gracious to you, my son.” ³⁰**Deeply moved at the sight of his brother, Joseph hurried out and looked for a place to weep. He went into his private room and wept there.**
Genesis 43:29-30

Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, “Have everyone leave my presence!” So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. ² And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh’s household heard about it. ³ Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still living?” But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence. ⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come close to me.” When they had done so, he said, “I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! ⁵ And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. ⁶ For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. ⁷**But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.** ⁸**“So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God.**
Genesis 45:1-8

Betrayal doesn’t break people, but **what we do with it might.**

Growing in forgiveness **requires believing & living the gospel.**

Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and asked, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?” **So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver.**
Matthew 26:14

Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”
Luke 23:34

“Come now, let us settle the matter,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.
Isaiah 1:18

Forgiveness with God is only received, **never earned.**

What happens at the end:

When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?"¹⁶ So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "**Your father left these instructions before he died: ¹⁷'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father.**" When their message came to him, Joseph wept.¹⁸ His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said.¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God?²⁰ You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.²¹ So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.
Genesis 50:15-21

I can't receive or walk in forgiveness when I'm still trying to manipulate the outcomes.

I can't give or walk in forgiveness without fighting the false choice of forgiving or forgetting.

Closing considerations:

Perspective:

But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God?²⁰ **You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.**²¹ So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.
Genesis 50:19-21

A healthy view of the providence of God recognizes God's power, God's goodness, & human responsibility.

"What if we're so stuck on what wasn't ideal, we miss what is still possible."

-Seth Day. I'll See You Tomorrow

It's not okay—but it can be.

Posture:

When their message came to him, Joseph wept.
Genesis 50:17

Remain soft hearted & emotionally resilient.

Praise the Lord, my soul, and **forget not all his benefits—³who forgives all your sins** and heals all your diseases,⁴ who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
Psalm 103:2-5

Practice:

But Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God?
Genesis 50:19

Release people