

Jason Huffman
Genesis 50
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Discussion Questions

1. How did Joseph honor both Jacob and Pharaoh? What do you think of when you think of honoring someone?
2. The only thing the family owned in the Promise Land was a gravesite. What do you think this teaches us about the path for obtaining God's promises?
3. Have you ever struggled with guilt? Are there other reasons people have a hard time with guilt if they know God's promises?
4. How can you process someone's bad behavior against you and God's purpose for you like Joseph did?
5. What can we learn from Joseph's response in v. 21?

Teaching Notes

This is it...Genesis 50.
The book of beginnings has come to an end.

We have seen so many beginnings.

creation, marriage, family, sin, blood, sacrifice, atonement, angels, love, prayer, judgment, covenant, sickness, death, burial

Israel, pronounced blessings on his sons and then passed away.
Some were actual blessings and others were predictions.

We saw their choices had impacted their future.

It is an interesting dynamic between the prophetic word and human choice.

We often think in terms that are polarized: ...
..."either or", but sometimes but it is "both and".

It is not either God is sovereign and we are puppets...
...or God is not sovereign at all and we have free will.

I would propose what we see in Scripture is...
...**both** God is sovereign **and** we have choices to make.

Jacob knew the future and predicted it.

But new choices were made that both changed the curse...
...and fulfilled the prediction...

The Levites were scattered, but they were also blessed by God.

God will do His part, and we are responsible to do our part.

So after the blessing Jacob passes away.

Then Joseph fell on his father's face and wept over him, and kissed him. **2** And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel. **3** Forty days were required for him, for such are the days required for those who are embalmed; and the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.

This is quite an interesting thing that the Egyptians would actually mourn for Joseph's father.

And 72 is a royal time frame.

It could just be Joseph's high position, but...

...I wonder if it also speaks to the impact that Joseph made and the love that they had for him and therefore his family.

You have heard that hurt people hurt people...

...but I also think loved people love people.

4 Now when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak in the hearing of Pharaoh, saying, **5** 'My father made me swear, saying, "Behold, I am dying; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me." Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father, and I will come back.' "

Joseph is high ranking but here he doesn't even talk to Pharaoh, but his family.

He does begin his request with relational and professional favor.

A man's gifts will bring him before kings.

Favor is something that we typically earn.

Joseph is an honorable man that honors others.

He is honoring his father's wishes and he is honoring the Pharaoh's position.

Honoring is a biblical idea we see into the New Testament.

Honoring parents is something spoken of in the NT.
Submitting to the authorities is also spoken of.

Some might say, Joseph may or may not respect the Pharaoh but he still shows him honor as a person in that role.

Again, we often get back what we give out.
Honorable people are often honored.
Those that give no honor to others, rarely get it back.
Joseph gives honor and he gets it back.

6 And Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear." **7** So Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, **8** as well as all the house of Joseph, his brothers, and his father's house. Only their little ones, their flocks, and their herds they left in the land of Goshen. **9** And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen, and it was a very great gathering.

This is a giant procession!
Jacob thru Joseph has created quite a following.

10 Then they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which *is* beyond the Jordan, and they mourned there with a great and very solemn lamentation. He observed seven days of mourning for his father. **11** And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This *is* a deep mourning of the Egyptians." Therefore its name was called Abel Mizraim, which *is* beyond the Jordan.

They don't understand it, but they see that it means something.

It is interesting that Jacob was thought to be an Egyptian when he was actually more closely related to these Canaanites and would one day take over their land.

12 So his sons did for him just as he had commanded 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 bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite as property for a burial place.

It is interesting how things like this bring us together or drive us apart and for this family, they did what their father wanted.

This cave is the only thing that belongs to the family.
Burial place of Sarah ([Genesis 23:19](#)), of Abraham ([Genesis 25:9](#)), and of Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah.

It is an interesting irony, that the only thing the family owned was a gravesite.

Could it refer to the idea that the only way to have a life with God is to die to ourselves?

It is not in triumph, it is not a great city or an impressive house, or even a spiritual location...

It is actually a site where bones are buried...

...they had to die to be in the land.

Along with that is what we said before...

... to put your bones in a land...

...that you don't own yet is a step of faith.

Where are we putting our lives or legacy or future hope?

Egypt is a type of the world and though they were in the world, their hope and future was "beyond."

We are in the same way, citizens of heaven.

We are pilgrims looking for a city made by God.

We put our life and legacy beyond this world.

14 And after he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers and all who went up with him to bury his father. 15 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him."

So this is what guilt looks like.

They are still afraid of Joseph giving them what they deserve.

It is 17 years in Egypt and they still aren't free or feeling forgiven.

They know what they deserve, and they still think they will get it.

And sometimes so do we...we know what we deserve.

They knew what justice looked like and they hadn't gotten it.

We know we haven't gotten it yet...but maybe we will.

There may be natural consequences for our actions...

...But the consequences of condemnation and judgment...

...were paid for at the cross.

Romans 8:1

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

I John 1:7

But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

I John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Psalm 103:12

As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

16 So they sent *messengers* to Joseph, saying, “Before your father died he commanded, saying, **17** ‘Thus you shall say to Joseph: “I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you.” ’ Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father.” And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

This broke the heart of Joseph.

For one, this is probably a lie.

This doesn't sound like their dad.

But more importantly, Joseph had shown them nothing but grace.

They bring their view of God down to their level of maturity.

Why would they misunderstand or misjudge him?

They would probably do this, so they think Joseph will.

Plus, their own guilt, their own issues are deep and dark.

And Joseph is like Christ in that He has done everything He can, but we have to receive it and believe it to experience it.

To receive and rest in forgiveness is a choice that we make.

18 Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, “Behold, we *are* your servants.”

This is a healthy sign of repentance.

A servant's heart is a great sign of transformation.

Just like the prodigal son that returned, he didn't come entitled, he came humbled asking to serve.

19 Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for *am* I in the place of God?"

Many people would say, yes he was!
But the key is Joseph knew he wasn't!

You and I need to leave the judgment with the Lord.
Judge not lest you be judged is a strong statement.

I can't and should not judge motives, and I don't give out punishment.

It is not my place to punish someone for their sin.
We may need to discipline, but discipline is different.

Discipline is for growth and development.
Punishment is for pain and payment.

20 But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive.

This is one of the most powerful statements in the Bible.

After everything that has happened, Joseph has the eye of faith.
He sees that this was God's plan of salvation.

Just like Jesus said, Father forgive them, they don't know what they are doing.

Those who crucified Him meant evil, just like the brothers.
But God had a different purpose.

And there are so many times when these two intersect.

We have to trust Him when man's evil purpose and God's good purpose align under His providence.

We can love, we can forgive, we can serve those who have hurt us when we see God's design in spite of their malice.

21 Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

What a beautiful picture that he isn't angry for doubting him.
He is put out by their lack of understanding or offended that they bring him down to their level.

He tells them not to fear, that he will provide for them and their little ones, he comforts them and speaks kindly to them.

This is just like the Lord.

22 So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's household. And Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. **23** Joseph saw Ephraim's children to the third *generation*. The children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were also brought up on Joseph's knees. **24** And Joseph said to his brethren, "I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." **25** Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely [e](#)visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here." **26** So Joseph died, *being* one hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

Joseph followed in his father's footsteps.

The faith of his father was passed down to him and he too looked to God's promises to be fulfilled.

God loves His people. God keeps His word.

You and I need to believe it and receive it for ourselves...

...And always keep looking to that great beyond.