

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (November 26, 2023)

For Personal or Group Study

Disagreements, harsh words, and even physical abuse have torn apart many families. The hurts can go beyond families. False rumors, bullying, cruel comments (behind your back and on line!). People are selfishly used, friendships broken, trust betrayed. Some of us bear scars from our past: bitterness, anger, or desire to get even somehow. How can we get past that? Is it even possible? The story of Joseph offers hope.

Genesis 50:15–21 reveals that Joseph's brothers are consumed with guilt and fear after their father's death. They worry Joseph has been waiting for Jacob to die before taking revenge. This would not be unexpected, as they cruelly sold Joseph into slavery as a teenager (Genesis 37:26–28). The brothers attempt to appease Joseph with a message, supposedly from Jacob, but he tells them not to be afraid. In one of Scripture's most pivotal remarks, Joseph explains his conviction that, though their intent was evil, God's good purposes were behind everything that had happened. Despite their bad intentions, God used their acts to save many lives. Joseph assures them he will not harm them.

Joseph is a wonderful picture of the Lord Jesus. Beloved of the Father, hated by His brethren, betrayed by those He knew and loved, only to be used of God to save His people from death and destruction before being placed in the highest position in the land, carrying out the will of the Father.

God uses all things to work together for good so that even when others intend things for evil, God will use it for good - not only for our eternal benefit, but for the benefit of others and to bring glory to His name.

Am I in the Place of God?

SERMON PASSAGE: Genesis 50:15-26

¹⁵ 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. ²² Joseph stayed in Egypt, along with all his father's family. He lived a hundred and ten years ²³ and saw the third generation of Ephraim's children. Also the children of Makir son of Manasseh were placed at birth on Joseph's knees. ²⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." ²⁵ And Joseph made the Israelites swear an oath and said, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place." ²⁶ So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. What do you make of the brother's fear as described here?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

1. How does Joseph's story reveal the truth of verses 19-21?
2. How is Joseph's last request, verse 25, tied to God's promises? To the precedent of his father, grandfather, and great grandfather? To the anticipation of the Exodus?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

1. What low lights or high lights come to mind when you apply versus 19-21 to your own life?
2. When in the last week, were you tempted to replace God in judging others? In judging yourself?
3. What outstanding characteristic of Joseph's life would you like to make a part of yours?
4. What does the "Book of Beginnings" teach you about your own roots? About the faith of your fathers? About your own faith? About God's promises to you and your children?

Notes: _____

Spend time in silence, praying (even if just for a moment or two). Prayer is simply a conversation with God. Be honest. If you don't know how or what to pray admit that and ask God to help you pray.

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