

Joseph: Forgiveness

Main Text: Genesis 50:15–21

Key Verse: Genesis 50:20

“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good...”

Main Idea

Forgiveness is possible when we trust who God is.

Key Passage Overview

Joseph’s brothers feared that after their father Jacob died, Joseph would finally take revenge on them for selling him into slavery years earlier. Instead, Joseph responded with mercy, reassurance, and forgiveness.

Rather than holding a grudge, Joseph trusted God with the pain, the injustice, and the outcome.

Three Essentials for Forgiveness

1. Trust God’s Justice

Joseph said:

“Am I in the place of God?”

Joseph understood that justice ultimately belongs to God, not to us.

Key Truth

Forgiveness does not minimize wrong actions.
It releases the need for personal revenge.

Important Principle

- Wanting justice is natural
- Taking vengeance into our own hands is dangerous

- God sees every wrong and will deal with sin rightly

Supporting Scripture

- Romans 12:17-19 — “It is mine to avenge; I will repay, says the Lord.”

Discussion Questions

- Why is it difficult to release justice to God?
- What happens when bitterness takes root?
- How does trusting God’s justice help us forgive?

2. Trust God’s Sovereignty

Joseph told his brothers:

“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good...”

Key Truth

People may hurt us, but they do not have the final say over our lives—God does.

Joseph recognized:

- Their actions were evil
- God was still in control
- God could work through painful circumstances

Important Principle

Forgiveness grows when we believe God is bigger than what happened to us.

Discussion Questions

- Have you ever struggled to believe God was still in control during hardship?
- Why is it important to remember that forgiveness does not excuse evil?
- How can believing in God’s sovereignty bring peace?

3. Trust God’s Goodness

Joseph believed God could bring good even from painful experiences.

Key Truth

God not only works through suffering—He works for our good through it.

Supporting Scriptures

- Ecclesiastes 3:11 — God makes everything beautiful in its time
- Ephesians 4:32 — Forgive as God forgave you

Important Principles

- Focusing only on pain leads to bitterness
- Focusing on God’s goodness frees our hearts toward forgiveness

Quote Shared in the Sermon

“Unforgiveness is a leash that keeps snapping us back painfully to the past.” - Tony Evans

Discussion Questions

- How have you seen God bring good from difficulty?
- What does focusing on God’s goodness practically look like?
- What bitterness might God be asking you to release?

The Cross and Forgiveness

The sermon pointed us ultimately to the cross of Jesus Christ.

At the cross we see:

- **God’s Justice** — sin was punished
- **God’s Sovereignty** — God’s plan was fulfilled
- **God’s Goodness** — salvation was provided

Key Truth

The forgiveness we receive from Christ becomes the motivation for forgiving others.

Big Takeaways

- Forgiveness is often a process, not a moment
- Forgiveness does not excuse sin
- Trusting God frees us from carrying bitterness
- The cross reminds us how deeply we have been forgiven

Personal Reflection

- Is there someone I need to forgive?
- Am I trying to hold onto control or revenge?
- Which truth do I most need to trust today:
 - God's Justice?
 - God's Sovereignty?
 - God's Goodness?

Prayer Prompts

Ask God to:

- Help you release bitterness
- Strengthen your trust in His justice
- Remind you of His sovereignty
- Help you focus on His goodness
- Give you grace to forgive as you've been forgiven