



Silverdale Baptist Church

Joseph - God Meant It For Good • Joseph Reveals His Heart • Genesis 45:1-15 • 07/15/2018

Main Point

Joseph's brothers' sin did not thwart God's plan, but was used by God in sending Joseph to Egypt in order to save his family.

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Why is it sometimes hard to understand that God may be sovereignly orchestrating our difficult situations for His good and perfect plan?

Have you ever told someone you forgave them, but still held onto anger? How did this affect how you acted around that person?

It is often a challenge to see God's hand and good plan when we face difficult circumstances. Joseph faced many trials in his life, but God was working through them all. In today's study, Joseph revealed his true identity to his brothers and expressed forgiveness toward them. Joseph stated that God sovereignly orchestrated his coming to Egypt in order to save his family.

Discussion

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about our topic.

| Have a volunteer read Genesis 45:1-8.

What led Joseph to reveal his identity?

How did the brothers respond to Joseph?

How did Joseph explain his journey from Canaan to Egypt?

What is your natural instinct when explaining difficult seasons of your life? Do you talk about them with bitterness or with hope?

With the final test of his brothers complete, Joseph was ready to reveal his true identity. Joseph's brothers had proven their character through their willingness to sacrifice their own freedom for the freedom and wellbeing of their brother Benjamin, their father's favorite son. As one might expect, Joseph was filled with emotion and asked for all but his brothers to leave the room.

It's important to remember that prior to this chapter, Joseph had told his brothers that he intended to keep Benjamin as his servant (Gen 44). Judah then pleaded with Joseph to take him instead, and at the conclusion of his speech, Joseph ordered everyone out of the room. The brothers were possibly expecting bad news. When Joseph told them his identity, his brothers were left speechless. Some translations even describe them as terrified. Knowing they had sold their brother into slavery, they likely thought he was dead, and they certainly would not have expected him to be lord over all of Egypt. They may have been confused about the kindness he had shown, the tests he had given them, and whether or not he was angry for their selling him into slavery.

Joseph clearly articulated that God sovereignly orchestrated his journey to Egypt for the purpose of bringing his family to Egypt and saving them from the famine. Joseph's faith affected his perspective on his situation. He could have held on to anger and bitterness against his brothers for what they had done to him; instead, he welcomed them and provided for their needs.

| Have a volunteer read Genesis 45:9-15.

What was the first command Joseph gave to his brothers after revealing his identity?

Is there any significance in the embrace Joseph shared with his brothers?

What are some ways you can physically express your forgiveness to someone who has sinned against you?

Joseph's first command was for his brothers to go quickly inform their father about his position and to bring him to Egypt. Joseph's continual concern for his father's wellbeing reminds us of his love for his father. Joseph recognized that his position enabled him to be part of God's plan to save and reunite his family.

Joseph's embrace with each of his brothers revealed his forgiveness toward them. It's one thing to speak forgiveness, but it's another thing entirely to show it. Here, Joseph fully expressed his love for his brothers and showed them he held no anger or bitterness toward them for the sin they committed against him.

Application

Identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to our lives.

How does Joseph’s understanding of God’s sovereignty over his situation encourage you to have faith in God’s sovereignty over your circumstances?

Joseph’s brothers did not do anything to deserve forgiveness from Joseph. How does that reflect how God forgives us, even as we are undeserving?

How can reflecting on difficult situations we’ve experienced and sharing God’s work through those situations be a testimony about God with others?

Prayer

As a group, pray the following prayer: God, thank You for Joseph’s strong faith and understanding of Your sovereignty in his life. Help us remember that You are with us and that You are sovereignly orchestrating our lives, even in the midst of difficult situations. May our lips be overflowing with Your praise; allow our lives to be a testimony of Your work. Amen.

Commentary

| Genesis 45:1-15

45:1-4 Joseph was overwhelmed by Judah’s words. Not wishing to lose his dignity before his Egyptian attendants, he ordered everyone but his brothers out of the room. Joseph then released more than 20 years of pent-up emotions, weeping so loudly that the Egyptians outside the room heard it. Joseph’s revelation of his true identity—undoubtedly spoken in Hebrew, not Egyptian—so terrified his brothers that they could not answer his question about his father’s well-being. Violating protocol, Joseph ordered the brothers to come near to him so he could speak to them more intimately, this time explicitly identifying himself.

45:5-8 These verses stand as the theological high point of the account of Joseph’s life (chaps. 37-50) and one of the most eloquent affirmations in the Bible regarding God’s sovereignty in human events. With amazing spiritual maturity Joseph confessed that God had worked beyond the foul intentions of his older brothers to accomplish two vital things: to preserve life through Joseph’s leadership leading up to and during the seven-year famine, and to establish Israel as a remnant “on the earth” (within the land). The word “remnant” is an important term used to refer to Israel as the people group who would pass along God’s blessings throughout the generations (Ezr 9:8; Isa 10:20; 28:5; Jer 23:3). Three times Joseph affirmed that it was God—not his brothers—who had sent him to Egypt. Therefore the brothers did not need to be worried or angry with themselves. Indeed, God had made Joseph a father—a top-level adviser—to Pharaoh, and a ruler over all the land of Egypt.

45:9-15 Joseph, who had once presented a plan to Pharaoh to save Egypt, now offered a plan to his brothers to save Israel’s clan by moving them to Egypt to live in Goshen during the five more years of famine that were to come. Goshen was a region in the eastern portion of Egypt’s Nile Delta and was also known as “the land of Rameses” (47:11). The brothers, who were still having trouble believing that Joseph was not only alive

but a ruler in Egypt, watched as Joseph threw his arms around Benjamin and wept. To their amazement, he also kissed each of his brothers who had once plotted to kill him.