



Sermon Title: What To Do When Your Family Hurts You

Series: When Life Doesn't Make Sense

Passages: Genesis 42-50

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Drawing near to Jesus is the best thing you can do on your worst day.

What should you do when family hurts you?

1. Joseph Withheld Revenge

Genesis 42:1-26 (CSB)

¹When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, “Why do you keep looking at each other?”

²Listen,” he went on, “I have heard there is grain in Egypt. Go down there and buy some for us so that we will live and not die.”

³So ten of Joseph’s brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt.

⁴But Jacob did not send Joseph’s brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he thought, “Something might happen to him.”

⁵The sons of Israel were among those who came to buy grain, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

⁶Joseph was in charge of the country; he sold grain to all its people. His brothers came and bowed down before him with their faces to the ground.

⁷When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke harshly to them. “Where do you come from?” he asked. “From the land of Canaan to buy food,” they replied.

⁸Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him.

⁹Joseph remembered his dreams about them and said to them, “You are spies. You have come to see the weakness of the land.”

¹⁰“No, my lord. Your servants have come to buy food,” they said.

¹¹“We are all sons of one man. We are honest; your servants are not spies.”

¹²“No,” he said to them. “You have come to see the weakness of the land.”

¹³But they replied, “We, your servants, were twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan. The youngest is now with our father, and one is no longer living.”

¹⁴Then Joseph said to them, “I have spoken: ‘You are spies!’

¹⁵This is how you will be tested: As surely as Pharaoh lives, you will not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here.

¹⁶Send one from among you to get your brother. The rest of you will be imprisoned so that your words can be tested to see if they are true. If they are not, then as surely as Pharaoh lives, you are spies!”

¹⁷So Joseph imprisoned them together for three days.

¹⁸On the third day Joseph said to them, “I fear God—do this and you will live.

¹⁹If you are honest, let one of you be confined to the guardhouse, while the rest of you go and take grain to relieve the hunger of your households.

²⁰Bring your youngest brother to me so that your words can be confirmed; then you won’t die.” And they consented to this.

²¹Then they said to each other, “Obviously, we are being punished for what we did to our brother. We saw his deep distress when he pleaded with us, but we would not listen. That is why this trouble has come to us.”

²²But Reuben replied, “Didn’t I tell you not to harm the boy? But you wouldn’t listen. Now we must account for his blood!”

²³They did not realize that Joseph understood them, since there was an interpreter between them.

²⁴He turned away from them and wept. When he turned back and spoke to them, he took Simeon from them and had him bound before their eyes.

²⁵Joseph then gave orders to fill their containers with grain, return each man’s silver to his sack, and give them provisions for their journey. This order was carried out.

²⁶They loaded the grain on their donkeys and left there.

2. Joseph Discerned If His Family Was Trustworthy

Genesis 44:1–34 (CSB)

¹Joseph commanded his steward, “Fill the men’s bags with as much food as they can carry, and put each one’s silver at the top of his bag.

²Put my cup, the silver one, at the top of the youngest one’s bag, along with the silver for his grain.” So he did as Joseph told him.

³At morning light, the men were sent off with their donkeys.

⁴They had not gone very far from the city when Joseph said to his steward, “Get up. Pursue the men, and when you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid evil for good?’

⁵Isn’t this the cup that my master drinks from and uses for divination? What you have done is wrong!’ ”

⁶When he overtook them, he said these words to them.

⁷They said to him, “Why does my lord say these things? Your servants could not possibly do such a thing.

⁸We even brought back to you from the land of Canaan the silver we found at the top of our bags. How could we steal silver or gold from your master’s house?

⁹If it is found with one of us, your servants, he must die, and the rest of us will become my lord’s slaves.”

¹⁰The steward replied, “What you have said is right, but only the one who is found to have it will be my slave, and the rest of you will be blameless.”

¹¹So each one quickly lowered his sack to the ground and opened it.

¹²The steward searched, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest, and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack.

¹³Then they tore their clothes, and each one loaded his donkey and returned to the city.

¹⁴When Judah and his brothers reached Joseph’s house, he was still there. They fell to the ground before him.

¹⁵“What have you done?” Joseph said to them. “Didn’t you know that a man like me could uncover the truth by divination?”

¹⁶“What can we say to my lord?” Judah replied. “How can we plead? How can we justify ourselves? God has exposed your servants’ iniquity. We are now my lord’s slaves—both we and the one in whose possession the cup was found.”

¹⁷Then Joseph said, “I swear that I will not do this. The man in whose possession the cup was found will be my slave. The rest of you can go in peace to your father.”

¹⁸But Judah approached him and said, “My lord, please let your servant speak personally to my lord. Do not be angry with your servant, for you are like Pharaoh.

¹⁹My lord asked his servants, ‘Do you have a father or a brother?’

²⁰and we answered my lord, ‘We have an elderly father and a younger brother, the child of his old age. The boy’s brother is dead. He is the only one of his mother’s sons left, and his father loves him.’

²¹Then you said to your servants, ‘Bring him to me so that I can see him.’

²²But we said to my lord, ‘The boy cannot leave his father. If he were to leave, his father would die.’

²³Then you said to your servants, ‘If your younger brother does not come down with you, you will not see me again.’

²⁴“This is what happened when we went back to your servant my father: We reported to him the words of my lord.

²⁵But our father said, ‘Go again, and buy us a little food.’

²⁶We told him, ‘We cannot go down unless our younger brother goes with us. If our younger brother isn’t with us, we cannot see the man.’

²⁷Your servant my father said to us, ‘You know that my wife bore me two sons.

²⁸One is gone from me—I said he must have been torn to pieces—and I have never seen him again.

²⁹If you also take this one from me and anything happens to him, you will bring my gray hairs down to Sheol in sorrow.’

³⁰“So if I come to your servant my father and the boy is not with us—his life is wrapped up with the boy’s life—

³¹when he sees that the boy is not with us, he will die. Then your servants will have brought the gray hairs of your servant our father down to Sheol in sorrow.

³²Your servant became accountable to my father for the boy, saying, ‘If I do not return him to you, I will always bear the guilt for sinning against you, my father.’

³³Now please let your servant remain here as my lord’s slave, in place of the boy. Let him go back with his brothers.

³⁴For how can I go back to my father without the boy? I could not bear to see the grief that would overwhelm my father.”

3. Joseph Welcomed His Family Back Into His Life

Genesis 45:1–15 (CSB)

¹Joseph could no longer keep his composure in front of all his attendants, so he called out, “Send everyone away from me!” No one was with him when he revealed his identity to his brothers.

²But he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and also Pharaoh’s household heard it.

³Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still living?” But they could not answer him because they were terrified in his presence.

⁴Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Please, come near me,” and they came near. “I am Joseph, your brother,” he said, “the one you sold into Egypt.

⁵And now don’t be grieved or angry with yourselves for selling me here, because God sent me ahead of you to preserve life.

⁶For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there will be five more years without plowing or harvesting.

⁷God sent me ahead of you to establish you as a remnant within the land and to keep you alive by a great deliverance.

⁸Therefore it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household, and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

⁹“Return quickly to my father and say to him, ‘This is what your son Joseph says: “God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me without delay.

¹⁰You can settle in the land of Goshen and be near me—you, your children, and your grandchildren, your flocks, your herds, and all you have.

¹¹There I will sustain you, for there will be five more years of famine. Otherwise, you, your household, and everything you have will become destitute.” ’

¹²Look! Your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin can see that I’m the one speaking to you.

¹³Tell my father about all my glory in Egypt and about all you have seen. And bring my father here quickly.”

¹⁴Then Joseph threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin wept on his shoulder.

¹⁵Joseph kissed each of his brothers as he wept, and afterward his brothers talked with him.

4. Joseph Had Already Forgiven His Family

Genesis 50:15–21 (CSB)

¹⁵When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said to one another, “If Joseph is holding a grudge against us, he will certainly repay us for all the suffering we caused him.”

¹⁶So they sent this message to Joseph, “Before he died your father gave a command:

¹⁷‘Say this to Joseph: Please forgive your brothers’ transgression and their sin—the suffering they caused you.’ Therefore, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.” Joseph wept when their message came to him.

¹⁸His brothers also came to him, bowed down before him, and said, “We are your slaves!”

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

²⁰You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result—the survival of many people.

²¹Therefore don't be afraid. I will take care of you and your children." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Study Questions

- It took 22 years for Joseph and his family to be restored from the past pain. During that time Joseph had a chance to be bitter or to forgive. Is it hard for you to forgive someone who has wronged you? Why or why not?
- There were four steps that Joseph took to restore his ties with his family: he forgave his brothers, he withheld revenge, he discerned that they were trustworthy, and he welcomed them into his family. Is there a family or friend relationship in your life that needs restoration? Which step are you on today and how can you take the next step toward restoration?
- Restoration must be the goal for all of those involved in a conflict. Someone doesn't have to change in order for you to forgive them but there needs to be some change, repentance, and/or remorse from the person who has sinned in order to rebuild trust. Do you trust too quickly or are you skeptical for too long? Why or why not?
- Conflict, betrayal, and broken trust are difficult to heal from. If you need to talk to a counselor you can start a conversation by emailing counseling@fbcloganville.org FBCL wants to help families and individuals by providing free pastoral counseling and scholarships for professional counseling.

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