

## Joseph, Sermon #16

Genesis 45 – Back in the summer, we started a series on the life of Joseph.

Today we are coming to a crescendo

One of the most moving scenes in all of history—when Joseph reveals himself to his brothers

Everyone, who tries to describe, fails to describe this indescribable scene.

Perhaps the most dramatic confrontation and reunion of all literature but, folks, this is far more than literature.

- This was the event which finally established the miracle nation of Israel.

The time had now come for Joseph to reveal himself to his brothers.

I've entitled today's message "I Am Joseph"

Genesis 45:1

Let us stand for the reading of the Holy Scriptures.

Genesis 45:1-15

Let us pray.

You may be seated.

## I Am Joseph

After Judah volunteers to take Benjamin's place,  
After Judah pleads on the behalf of his father, Jacob,  
Joseph is so charged with emotion that he can't contain himself.

It is difficult to imagine the reaction of the brothers when Joseph began to cry, weeping uncontrollably before them.

Joseph is a man of God who cries—there is nothing wrong with tears.

The Bible says in verse 2 that his weeping was loud.  
This is the third time Joseph wept because of his brothers, but this is the first time publicly.

Joseph has his entourage leave the room.

**In verse 3**, Joseph was standing before them  
Surely they had fallen into the lion's den themselves!

They had been dealing with Joseph all this time!

- If you think they were afraid before, they were terrified now.
- They are so shocked and frightened, they can't even speak.
- They stood hopeless and helpless in his presence.

The simple statement "I am Joseph," spoken in Hebrew, exploded like a thunderclap in their ears and brought terror to their souls.

In verse 4, he spoke to them again and not only identified himself as Joseph but also told them and reminded them of what they had done to him!

The secret was a secret no more.

Since Joseph could see his brothers' faces of fear, he encouraged them with words that came from a loving and forgiving heart (vs. 5).

God overruled the brothers' hateful attitude and cruel actions and worked it all out for good.

Genesis 50:20, *"But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive."*

This is a truth we desperately need to see—that God moves behind the scenes to accomplish His purpose in our lives.

The thing that Joseph could see in all of this was that God had permitted it for a purpose—God was moving in his life.

If you and I could see the hand of God in our lives, would we become angry and seek revenge? I don't think we would.

Again, Joseph gives the glory to God.

Joseph was precise in his understanding of why God had sent him to Egypt: "God did send me before you to preserve life" (Gen. 45:5).

#### **Vs. 7**

God had a plan for Joseph but it was not for Joseph's sake alone that God had sent him to Egypt.

It was to accomplish God's purpose of bringing Jacob's family to Egypt where they might become a great nation and later be able to return to the Promised Land.

#### **Vs. 8**

The story of Joseph and his brothers encourages us to recognize the sovereignty of God in the affairs of life and to trust His promises no matter how dark the day may be.

- Finally, there was no longer any remaining doubt as to his identity or his intentions (vs. 14).
- Joseph and Benjamin embraced each other, weeping (vs. 15).
- Then, one after the other, Joseph kissed and wept over each of his other brothers.

“He kissed all his brethren”—those who had tied his hands and had mocked at his cries.

- These are honest expressions of love and forgiveness.
- After this expression of his love, “his brethren talked with him.”

This is a simple sentence that speaks volumes in what it doesn't report.

- When Joseph was a teenager at home, his brothers so hated him that they couldn't even speak peaceably to him (37:4), but now that they've been reconciled and forgiven, communication is possible.
- The tears flowed freely and there was joy of communion.

Joseph didn't put his brothers on probation; he freely forgave them and welcomed them into his heart and his home.

Now, let me add to what I talked about last Sunday.

True forgiveness in the body of Christ would heal many of our wounds  
Hateful/bitter feelings/anger/hostility

In the household of faith, there are people, God's people, who do not speak to one another, who avoid the presence of one another.

True forgiveness is the balm that would salve those wounds and unify the body that it might efficiently do the work of God.

True forgiveness is never cheap—to forgive is costly.

All too often, we do not place a proper weight, or value, upon the offenses we give to the brethren.

Proverbs 18:19, *“A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city . . .”*

Forgiving someone when they have legitimately offended us is one of the costliest of all actions because it is one of the most selfless of all actions.

Let me ask a question: At this point in time, is there a breach between you and another Christian?

At this time, is there any break in relationship between you and any other believer?

Between . . . you and your spouse?

you and your dad?

you and your mom?

you and your teenage child?

you and your pastor?

you and your deacon?

you and your neighbor?

you and your teacher?

Is there any breach in relationship between you and any other believer?

Is that breach your fault or their fault?

If it is his fault, who is responsible to heal the breach?

Does it lie on his shoulders or on your shoulders?

The answer to that is, yes.

For true forgiveness to be possible, there is a demand of both the offender and the offended one.

- Certain scripture places the first move on the shoulders of the offended one.
- True forgiveness demands that both parties be involved.

Many times, the breach remains for years, because the one who has been offended will not exercise his responsibility.

Now, what are these demands?

The first demand is on the offended person.

What is his responsibility?

Look at Joseph

- Genesis 42:21-24
- Genesis 43:29-30
- Genesis 45:1-2

The first thing he does in their presence is weep!

What are these verses indicating?

The first thing for one who has been offended is a heartfelt grief over the broken relationship.

Have you ever noticed what our first inclination is emotionally when we have a break with a brother?

Hostility, anger, sin

A Godly person's reaction is not hatred but grief—a broken heart over a broken relationship.

There are two reasons that there is even a break between people.

Proverbs 13:10 names one of them.

Proverbs 13:10, *"Only by pride cometh contention . . ."*

That's one cause of contention. The other cause of contention is principle.

Sometimes, there are breaks over principle and those are God-demanded breaches.

However, most of our breaches come over pride.

Is there hatred, unrighteous anger, hostility, bitterness? Then there is obviously a great deal of pride involved?

What is the underlying emotion of our heart over that breach (break)?

Joseph expresses this.

This is a grief.

#1 – He was willing to forget personal injury

- Joseph could have avenged himself on his brothers.

Joseph forgets personal injury (vs. 5-8).

What is it that makes him forget his personal injury?

- It is his understanding of the sovereign working of God in his life.
- God can bring good out of it and glory to Himself with it.

What do we do when we suffer an injury unjustly?

#1 – see the sovereignty of God that allows that and let us rest our case with the Lord.

- We need to trust that God will bring some good out of it.

#2 – to actively pursue restoration

What has Joseph been doing all this time? Working to bring his brothers to repentance

Here is the problem: When we are hurt, we often times adopt a passive role—we sit back and wait for them to do something.

Joseph adopted an active role—he began to work behind the scenes to restore the relationship.

The important thing—it is not how I feel, but it is the break between us—actively pursue to make it right.

This kind of response is demanded by God

**Matthew 18:15**, *“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.”*

Go and tell—don’t gossip about it; don’t wait for him.

**Luke 17:3**, *“Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.”*

Goal: repentance and restoration

Do we have any unresolved conflict between us and another believer?

Any unresolved conflict at all?

Is it his fault?

- If it is, have we adopted the right spirit and done what is necessary to make possible in the future our true forgiveness of him?

Some conflicts are hanging over our heads—some for years have been the result of the fact that we are not a receptive person for the action of the person who has sinned against us.

It would be God’s will that we let it grieve our hearts, be active in restoration.

Fractured, divided church . . .

Sweet spirit, unified people

We are people; we will have difficulties with each other.

The important thing is what we do about them.

Let us stand for closing invitation.

God is ready to forgive and the initiative has come from Him:

- He has pointed out our offenses and made it possible to be forgiven.

In order for God to forgive sin – 2 conditions are necessary:

- First – A life must be taken as a substitute for that of the sinner.  
Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission (forgiveness) of sin.
- Second – The sinner must come to God's sacrifice in a spirit of repentance and faith.

Have you received forgiveness of your sins?

Salvation

God completely forgives sin.

God's forgiveness of us demands that we forgive others

**Matthew 6:14-15**, *“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”*

Forgive and ye shall be forgiven. The Bible teaches . . .

## Rear of Document

It was unbelievable, but he must be Joseph for he was speaking to them in their own language.

Everything was out in the open now; suddenly the pieces of the puzzle began to fall into place.

Jacob and his family could not have survived had they stayed in the land of Israel. They would have perished.

Joseph wants to bring them down to the land of Goshen which is actually the best part of Egypt.

It is in that land that God is going to make them a nation sheltered from the rest of the world.

Since Joseph was “lord of all,” why should his family live in destitution in Canaan? Five more years of famine were ahead of them, and it would be foolish to make repeated trips to Egypt to obtain food.

Joseph instructed his brothers to hurry home, give the good news to his father that he was alive, pack whatever belongings they needed, and come to Egypt to live permanently.

### **Vs. 9-13**

Joseph instructed his brothers to return home and tell his father that he was still alive. They were to tell Jacob of the position and glory that God had given Joseph in Egypt, and then they were to bring Jacob and all his family to Egypt where they could be cared for by Joseph.

### **Vs. 11**

Joseph also emphasized again that there were five years of famine yet coming. Unless they were near to him, where he could channel adequate supplies to them, they could not even be sure of survival through the bleak years ahead. God had providentially arranged for Joseph to be “lord of all Egypt” just at the time when Israel and his sons would be facing this otherwise desolate future.

Joseph recounted everything that had happened to him in Egypt, and how the Lord had worked so mysteriously and yet so mightily.

Quite probably he called in his wife and his two sons and introduced them.

For their part, his brothers told him all the news from home, about their own families and everything that had transpired the past twenty-two years.

It was a day to remember.