



## Lesson #9: True Forgiveness (Genesis 45)

If you could summarize the Bible's message with just one word what word would you use? There are perhaps many different answers to that question but I believe the best word to describe the message of the Bible is the word "\_\_\_\_\_." What we see throughout the 66 books of the Bible is a history of God reconciling sinful man back to Himself. The Apostle Paul summarizes his whole ministry by saying, "all things are of God, who hath \_\_\_\_\_ us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given us the ministry of \_\_\_\_\_" (2 Cor. 5:18). Really God's ministry of reconciliation is all about *forgiveness*.

Last week we studied out Genesis 44 and saw what it meant to have true \_\_\_\_\_. This week we turn to the climax of Joseph's story as he reveals himself to his brethren and we learn what it meant to exercise true \_\_\_\_\_ and true *forgiveness*.

### 1. True forgiveness \_\_\_\_\_ close fellowship

Genesis 45:2-4

Have you ever heard the phrase, "Big boys don't cry"? Well Joseph was a big boy and he sure cried a lot. Really as you trace out the moments that Joseph wept you begin to get a picture of what made this man tick.

- 42:24 – "He turned himself from them and \_\_\_\_\_."
- 43:30 – "Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to \_\_\_\_\_."
- 45:15 – "Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and he \_\_\_\_\_ upon them."
- 50:11 – "Joseph fell upon his father's face, and he \_\_\_\_\_ upon him."
- 50:17 – "Joseph \_\_\_\_\_ went they spake unto him."

When did Joseph weep? Answer: Joseph weeps any moment that there is any indication that he is harboring ill will or \_\_\_\_\_ towards his \_\_\_\_\_. Joseph instructs his brothers to "come near to me" (45:4). The word he uses carries the idea of close relationship.

### 2. True forgiveness \_\_\_\_\_ guilt

Genesis 45:5

I don't know about you but when someone hurts me I carnally wish they could get beat up a little bit because of what they did. Joseph doesn't view his brothers in that way.

One of the signs, or tests, of true forgiveness being demonstrated in the life of Joseph is that he is not wanting his brothers to go around feeling \_\_\_\_\_. That's what true forgiveness is all about. True forgiveness relinquishes guilt.

### 3. True forgiveness \_\_\_\_\_ God's providence

Genesis 45:5-8

There is no debate about who sold Joseph into slavery ("You sold him hither" 45:5). Yet, over and over we see Joseph recognizing God's hand even in the midst of incredibly difficulty.

- 45:5 – "\_\_\_\_\_ sent me before you to preserve life."
- 45:7 – "\_\_\_\_\_ sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance."
- 45:8 – "So now it was not you that sent me hither, but \_\_\_\_\_."

Joseph is telling his brothers that even their sinful behavior was being used by God to accomplish His purposes. A person can forgive when they recognize that the offender may be the instrument but the almighty God is in control. You need to understand that a lack of forgiveness really is a demonstration of a refusal to understand and appreciate the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

### 4. True forgiveness \_\_\_\_\_ goodness for evil

Genesis 42:9-20

We all would like to believe that we don't have to forgive unless a person requests forgiveness. But Paul says we must "forgive each other, just as Christ in God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32). The rest of the passage is going to talk about how Joseph tells his brothers to go get dad. His father is mentioned \_\_\_\_\_x in this passage. What Joseph is talking about here is that he is now going to show his brothers he forgives them by \_\_\_\_\_ for them. Forgiveness, then, is not about \_\_\_\_\_ but \_\_\_\_\_.

### 5. True forgiveness \_\_\_\_\_ learns to trust again

Genesis 45:9-20, 5:9-20, 24

Joseph commissioned his brothers to go tell their father three important things.

- 1) Joseph is \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) He has an exalted \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) He wants to receive you and your family to himself.

Going and telling their father this news meant admitting their sin but it also meant that Joseph was beginning to trust them again.

### Concluding Thoughts

The idea of vengeance can seem distant at times but it hits really close to home when we are the one getting hurt. Often we raise the question, "God if you're going to let this happen can't you at least let me give these people their just deserves?" Joseph had every reason to feel this way but instead he became one of the greatest examples of forgiveness in all the Bible. because God offers us true \_\_\_\_\_ we must offer others true \_\_\_\_\_.