

GENESIS: Where Grace Begins
The Goodness of God – Genesis 50:15-26

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Genesis 50:20 ESV

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS FEAR HIM

"When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him."

- Genesis 50:15 ESV

Joseph's brothers' fears were _____ and _____. Why were the brothers so afraid? _____ and a misunderstanding of _____ drove their fear and anxiety. Their fears caused them to unnecessarily seek Joseph's forgiveness.

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS SEEK FORGIVENESS

So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this command before he died: 'Say to Joseph, "Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you." ' And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants."

- Genesis 50:16–18 ESV

The brothers request for forgiveness is introduced with a _____. Even though this plea is cloaked in sin, the plea contains a _____ of their _____, and it accurately describes their desperate desire for _____.

Joseph had truly forgiven his brothers. He intended to release them from whatever pain and guilt they might have experienced. So, when he sees his brothers didn't receive his forgiveness, assuming it was too good to be true, he _____.

In verse 18, the brothers come to Joseph and offer themselves as his personal _____. In doing so, they are literally fulfilling Joseph's dream that his brothers will bow down to him (Gen. 37:6–7). Joseph _____ their offer.

JOSEPH COMFORTS HIS BROTHERS

Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

- Genesis 50:19-21 ESV

On the basis of his confidence in the ways of the Lord, Joseph was able to comfort his brothers and relieve their fears. In Joseph's brief words of comfort, he gave three reasons not to fear.

1) Joseph's brothers do not need to fear because Joseph had _____ to play _____.

"In our bad moments we imagine that we know what God ought to do with others. And at our very worst moments, we take correction into our own hands—because God apparently has not had the wisdom to do so." – Kent Hughes

2) Joseph's brothers do not need to fear because Joseph discerned God's _____ in their _____.

This is the mysterious heart of the Joseph story: Through the sins of wicked men, God works good. In verse 20, Joseph communicates what theologians call _____: Though he gives human beings freedom to act, God is in ultimate control of the outcome. And God's plan is good.

Throughout Scripture, God's sovereignty is a comfort to believers. He has promised to work all things together for His glory and our good (Romans 8:28). We have nothing to fear because if God is for us, who can be against us (Romans 8:31)? No one can oppose His will, and nothing can thwart His plans (Isaiah 14:27). Joseph's example reminds us of Psalm 115:3: "our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases." Embracing this perspective won't take our trials away, but it will enable us to find joy and peace in the midst of them (James 1:2-4).

The supreme example of God working evil for good is _____. (Acts 2:22-24)

3) Joseph's brothers do not need to fear because he promised to _____ for them and their little ones.

Jesus said, "But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, *do good* to those who hate you" (Luke 6:27).

"Each sentence of Joseph's threefold reply is a pinnacle of Old Testament (and New Testament) faith. To leave all the righting of one's wrongs to God; to see his providence in man's malice, and to repay evil not only with forgiveness but also with practical affection, are attitudes which anticipate the adjective 'Christian' and even 'Christlike'." – Derek Kinder

JOSEPH: A BLESSED MAN

So Joseph remained in Egypt, he and his father's house. Joseph lived 110 years. And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation. The children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were counted as Joseph's own.

- Genesis 50:22-23 ESV

God's blessing on Joseph's life is apparent. He lived 110 years, 93 of them in Egypt and 80 of them as a ruler there. He lived to see the third generation of descendants through Ephraim. Proverbs declares, "Grandchildren are the crown of the aged" (Proverbs 17:6). Joseph wore his crown joyfully.

JOSEPH: A MAN OF FAITH

And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here."

GENESIS 50:24-25 ESV

Like his father before him, Joseph requested that his bones be taken out of the land of Egypt to the Promised Land. Unlike his father Jacob, who made Joseph promise to take his bones _____ back to Canaan after his death, Joseph was content to have his people take his bones back to Canaan _____ when they all departed at the exodus.

Joseph offers two prophetic promises in his last words:

1) God will certainly come to the _____ of their _____.

2) God will indeed bring their descendants up from _____ to _____
_____ to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (12:7; 13:15, 17; 15:7, 18;
24:7; 26:3; 28:13).

The writer of Hebrews said: "By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones" (11:22). Joseph acts in faith. He does not see the outcome. Hebrews 11 says that "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things *not* seen" (Heb 11:1). Joseph does not see the exodus from Egypt; he does not see Israel receive possession of the Promised Land; but he knew it would happen some day because God promised.

JOSEPH DIES

So Joseph died, being 110 years old. They embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

- Genesis 50:26 ESV

The story of Genesis began with God creating a beautiful Paradise on earth for his creatures. Now, the story ends with Joseph in a coffin in Egypt—waiting, waiting for God to bring his people back to the Promised Land.

Unlike Jacob, Joseph had no grand funeral procession. R. Kent Hughes commented, "His father Jacob's immediate burial in the family tomb in Canaan had rightly expressed his solidarity with Abraham and Isaac and his sure hope in the land. But Joseph's temporary burial in Egypt also rightly expressed his identification with the future generations in Egypt and their hope of returning to the land."

When the exodus finally came, Joseph's instructions here were carried out. With the passing of some thirty plus generations, Pharaoh let Israel go.

In Exodus 13:19 we read, "Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones with you from here."

Joseph's body was buried at Shechem. In Joshua 24:32 we read, "As for the bones of Joseph, which the people of Israel brought up from Egypt, they buried them at Shechem, in the piece of land that Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of money. It became an inheritance of the descendants of Joseph."

In the grave, Joseph is still waiting for God to completely fill his promise. They had the land, but ultimately God's promise of land means the return of Paradise on earth (Gen 2; Rev 22:1-5).

CONCLUSION

As we wait for God's promises to be fulfilled, let's not lose _____. Peter encourages Christians, "...do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise ... but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance." Peter concludes, "In accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home" (2 Pet 3:4, 8-9, 13).

If you're in a period of _____, trust that God is using it for something greater than you can see now. Paul reminds us that our suffering is accomplishing something eternal, preparing for us a weight of glory that is beyond all comparison (2 Corinthians 4:17). Peter reminds us that "after we have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. (1 Peter 5:10)

As with Joseph, our trials and sufferings may be for _____. Joseph counted all of his suffering worth it compared with all God did through it for others. As Paul said, "Blessed be the...God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so *that* we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).