

## What Real Forgiveness Looks Like 2017-02-12

Gen 45:1-7

*1 Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him. He cried, "Make everyone go out from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. 2 And he wept aloud, so that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. 3 And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence.*

*4 So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, please." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. 5 And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. 6 For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. 7 And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors.*

As your pastor, I know many of you are struggling with past hurts such as divorce, abuse, and abandonment.

- 1<sup>st</sup> step towards reconciliation usually come from the one injured, not the one who hurt them.
- Through the help of the Holy Spirit, you can obey the command to forgive anyone of anything.
  - Easier to forgive if consider the forgiveness which God has freely given us and trust in His sovereignty. Lk 7:40-48, Eph 4:25-32, Rom 8:28, 2 Cor 12:7-9

You must forgive, but reconciliation does not happen until the offender repents. Lk 17:3-4

- Joseph did not wait to forgive his brothers, but he waited a year or longer to see their repentance before he disclosed his identity & reconciliation occurred.
  - God made provision for our forgiveness before we repented.
- Offender must repent for genuine/lasting reconciliation to take place.

The heart of genuine, Biblical forgiveness is the deep heart's desire for the offender to be restored to God & one offended/harmed.

- That type of forgiveness can eventually come, and when it does it will produce tangible "good" fruit. Mt 7:17

Offended chooses not to hurt reputation of offender. Gen 45:1, Prov 17:9, Mt 18:15

- Joseph dealt with the sin of his brothers in private. Kept their sin secret. Eph 4:26-32
  - If the offense is illegal, report it to proper authorities but do not gossip or speak ill of the offender.
- Forgiveness does not seek to minimize or overlook sin, but to neutralize it in both.

Offended chooses to treat offender with kindness. Luke 6:27-28, Gen 45:4-5, 11, 15

- Joseph did not seek revenge but blessed his brothers before & after they repented.
  - Joseph did not say the word "forgive" but his words & actions conveyed it.
    - Promised protection, supply all their needs, kissed/wept.
- People need to feel they're forgiven, not just hear it.
  - Joseph did not distance himself from them but urged them to come close.
    - Don't flee emotionally/physically unless necessary for safety.

Offended grants mercy & desires to set repentant offender free from fear & guilt.

- Joseph did not want his brothers to be angry with themselves.
  - Let them tell their father their sin in their own way & time.
- Didn't deny their sin but not constantly bring it up either. 1 Cor 13:5

- If the offended requires the offender to “pay for it” with something they say/do before forgiving, then not truly forgiving.
  - Forgiveness is not conditional – it is a matter of grace, not works. Mk 11:25, Ps 103:12, Jer 31:34b, Rom 8:1

Offended maintains forgiveness: 17 years later Joseph did not retract forgiveness.

- Not “forget” hurt but can refuse to call to remembrance in future.

My heart for your joy...Cross set us free from bondage to sin of unforgiveness.

- Today people do not forgive others for VOTING differently...22 yr marriage, 80% murders
- Holy Spirit can empower you to be Christ-like by forgiving others. Phil 2:3-4, Col 3:12-13, Spurgeon
  - Forgiving little things makes it easier to forgive big ones.
- Be agent of reconciliation to those who have wronged you.
  - Not every relationship will work out. Rom 12:18-21
  - Forgiveness opens the door to reconciliation and repentance & always glorifies God.

“A Christian should be a striking likeness of Jesus Christ. You have read lives of Christ, beautifully and eloquently written, but the best life of Christ is His living biography, written out in the words and actions of His people. Best of all, as the highest portraiture of Jesus, try to forgive your enemies, as He did; and let those sublime words of your Master, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,’ always ring in your ears. Forgive, as you hope to be forgiven. Heap coals of fire on the head of your enemy by your kindness to him. Good for evil, remember, is Godlike. And in all ways and by all means so live that all may say of you, ‘He has been with Jesus.’” ~ C.H. Spurgeon