

Joseph as a Signpost

Genesis 45-46

The Joseph narrative features favoritism, betrayal, guilt, confession, transformation, forgiveness, and restoration.

The violations we've read about are so serious, it's hard to believe that there could be forgiveness.

We expect vengeance for wrongdoing.

Throughout their time in Egypt, the brothers expect vengeance. Much morality hinges on retaliation. The problem with retribution is that:

- a. It feels good for a short time but makes the situation worse.
- b. It makes you anxious because you know your opponent is looking for a chance to strike.
- c. It distracts us from more positive ends.

So, what breaks the cycle of payback?

God offers forgiveness and restoration (45:4f).

Joseph's telling his brothers "not to be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before to preserve life" stands out as one of the most theologically robust utterances in the Bible. Joseph's understanding God's big picture helps him forgive those who've wronged him.

Joseph embraces his brothers and weeps, saying, "I am your brother" (45:2, 4, 14-15; 46:29). He speaks with kindness.

- Forgiveness does not deny that a real offense has occurred.
- Forgiveness does not subvert justice.
- Forgiveness requires courage.
- Forgiveness is a gift for others.

God provides for His redeemed people (45:11, 21, 23).

In the barren times, Joseph takes it upon himself to provide lavishly for the people of God. When God provides, we have a tendency to quarrel (45:24) or doubt God's goodness (45:26).

Joseph points to Jesus.

- The chosen son is betrayed by sinful men (Luke 24:7).
- The son is raised up from humility to kingship (Ephesians 1:20-23).
- The son offers grace, forgiveness, reconciliation, and provision for those who wished him dead (Ephesians 1:7).
- The ministry of the son brings about transformation of those who draw near to Him (John 5:24).
- The son redeems the people of God (Titus 2:14).

John 5:39: "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me."

Luke 24:44: "Everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

1 Corinthians 15:3: "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures."

Key Take-Away: In Christ, God offers forgiveness, restoration, and provision.

Application Questions:

Why is forgiveness so important in close relationships? How does forgiveness relate to an easily offended culture?

How is forgiveness for getting (a benefit to the victim) and for giving (a benefit to the perpetrator)?

How can we better thank God for His provision?