


Meant for Good

Discovering Christ through
the Story of Joseph

FROM THOMAS ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH



A close-up photograph of a textured, golden-brown fabric, likely a book cover or endpaper. The fabric has a fine, woven texture and features intricate, embossed or woven patterns in a darker, more metallic gold color. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture and creating deep shadows in the folds and creases. The overall appearance is one of elegance and historical quality.

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Introduction

Welcome to our study on Genesis 37-50, *Meant for Good: Discovering Christ through the Story of Joseph*.

Why Genesis 37-50

The story of Joseph is the longest in the book of Genesis and one of the most familiar in all the Bible. Joseph's life contains moments of bitter betrayal, long seasons of waiting, and beautiful scenes of redemption and forgiveness. Woven throughout all these stories is one glorious truth: what was meant for evil, God Himself meant for good – to bring about the deliverance of many people (Genesis 50:19-20). By studying these chapters, we will see the devastating consequences of sin on families, the importance of perseverance amid suffering, and the power of forgiveness and reconciliation. Most importantly, the story of Joseph is an invitation to trust the faithful God who is sovereign over all things, always keeps His promises, and loves to lavish His grace on those who least deserve it.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Throughout this study, we will:

Examine the Life of Joseph: We will examine how the story of Joseph wraps up the storyline of Genesis while providing a bridge to the book of Exodus and beyond.

Explore Redemption, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation: We will delve into how faith and forgiveness in the life of Joseph sets the stage for greater reconciliation and redemption in the lives of God's people.

Understand the Providence of God: We will trace the sovereign hand of a faithful God as He uses even the darkest moments of Joseph's life to save the world from starvation, reconcile and reunite his family, and preserve His covenant promises.

Discover Christ in the life of Joseph: In the story of Joseph, we see parallels of the life of Christ who experienced betrayal and rejection and still remained faithful to the will of God the Father. As a result, many people believed in Him and were spared from spiritual destruction (John 3:16).

Like Christ, Joseph was betrayed and rejected by his own people. Despite his rejection, Joseph remained obedient to God and God used Joseph to bring deliverance and reconciliation to those who betrayed him and spared him from physical destruction.

KEY THEMES

As we study Genesis 37-50, we will focus on several key themes:

The Providence of God: God's Providence is His ability to weave every moment of our lives (even moments of darkness and betrayal) to fulfill His divine purpose for us and those around us.

The Loyal Love of God: God *always* keeps His promises. What He initiates He will be faithfully loyal to complete.

Suffering & Perseverance: Amid the inconsistencies, difficulties, and sufferings of this life, God's people faithfully persevere knowing there is greater glory to come.

Redemption, Forgiveness & Reconciliation: The beauty of God's love is that He can redeem any person, no matter what they have done. And God empowers people to forgive any person, no matter how deeply they have been hurt.

Study Purpose

The mission of Thomas Road is to *“change our world by developing Christ-followers who love God and love people.”* We do this through practicing the values of Scripture, Prayer, Worship, Community, Serving, and Sharing.

HEAD, HEART, AND HANDS

At Thomas Road, we want to clearly identify the *“Head,” “Heart,” and “Hands”* of each study before we begin:

Head: We will understand how God's Providence orchestrates undeserved forgiveness, radical redemption, and surprising reconciliation to save a generation of people from starvation, preserve the line of Abraham, and look towards the coming of a Son who will one day crush the head of the Serpent forever.

Heart = We will believe our faithful God is sovereign and will always keep His promises. God makes 5,467 promises in His Word and He keeps every single one (Proverbs 30:5). The story of Joseph invites us to trust the loyal love of God who providentially directs every detail of our lives for our good and His glory.

Hands = As recipients of an extraordinary forgiveness, redemption, and reconciliation through Jesus Christ, we will seek to extend extraordinary forgiveness, redemption, and reconciliation to others. We are ambassadors for Christ, drawing near to God through Christ and imploring others to be reconciled to Him (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Study Structure

Throughout this study, we will explore three key terms to help us discover the Word of God, learn about each verse, and rightly apply these scriptures to our lives.

“DISCOVER” is digging into what the passage says. These questions will push us to understand the passage’s setting, key words, and the overall context of the passage.

“LEARN” is investigating specifically what is taught in the passage. These questions will teach us about God, what the passage reveals about our part in God’s story, and what the writer is attempting to convey to the audience.

“APPLY” is being challenged to find practical ways to implement the teachings from each passage into our everyday life.

EACH WEEK WILL INCLUDE:

***Reading and Reflection:** Start by reading the five daily devotionals provided each week. Use the space below each devotional to answer questions, write personal prayers, and reflect on how you are challenged to grow deeper in your personal relationship with God.*

***Listen, Comprehend, and Discuss:** Each week, gather with your group to listen to a lesson about a passage in Genesis. Then, engage in discussions guided by the questions in the daily devotionals to delve deeper into the text and apply its lessons to your lives.*

***Connecting to Christ:** Throughout each week, we will see how the story points towards Jesus and the fulfillment of God’s promises. Therefore, as these stories unveil the character of Christ, we will discover how we are meant to live in light of His loyal love for us.*

Preparing for *the Journey...*

Whether you navigate this study individually or as part of a group, we encourage you to approach each devotional day with a mind and heart that is open to receiving God's truth and is willing to obey Him. Commit yourself now to discover, learn, and apply God's truth every time you read His Word. As you journey through these chapters, you will see how the story of Joseph reveals a God who is sovereign over all things, always keeps His promises, and loves to lavish His grace on those who least deserve it.

As you gather with your group, come ready to discuss what stood out in the weekly reading and how God has moved in your heart and life. Engage in the discussion questions at the end of each week to cultivate fruitful conversation in your group.

God may use what He impressed upon you to impact another group member. Likewise, you may be changed by another's experience and interaction with the study. When we are committed to learn all we can of God's word, we create environments where everyone is safe and free to share.

As we begin this study, take a moment to consider the following questions →

1. What are your first impressions of the story of Joseph (Genesis 37-50)?

2. What stories or passages in these chapters have always intrigued you?

3. Are there any questions or topics in the story of Joseph you find confusing or challenging?

4. Are there any questions you would love to have answered during this study?

Author, Time Period, & Audience

Why is Genesis important?

As the first book of the Bible, Genesis is foundational for what we believe about God and His relationship with those He created. The story of the Bible can be summarized in four parts: creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. Genesis not only provides us the story of creation and the fall (Genesis 1-3), but also declares the great lengths God will go to redeem, deliver, and save His people (Genesis 3:14-15).

Genesis was written by Moses during the time of Israel's wilderness wandering following the Exodus from Egypt. Genesis is one of a five-part series of books called the Torah ("Torah" meaning "Law"), which also includes Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Moses wrote and compiled the Torah in the 1400s BC.

As two million Israelites emerged from four centuries of bitter, ruthless slavery, they needed to know who they were and

how they got there. While the stories of Genesis provide a true, historical, and accurate account of Israel’s origins, they also provide a foundational identity for this newly delivered nation. When you read Genesis, it is helpful to ask, “Why was this information important to forming Israel as a people?” Genesis is an account of their journey and an invitation for God’s recently enslaved people to trust Him and live as His covenant community.

Context

How did we get here?

When you turn to any passage in Scripture, your first question should always be: “How did we get here?” The Bible tells one story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration with many accounts that contribute to this theme. Although the life of Joseph is an incredible story in itself, it was not written to stand alone. Genesis 37-50 serves as a turning point of the Torah: wrapping up the storylines of Genesis and providing a bridge to the book of Exodus. Below, we provide a summary of Genesis 1-36, while noting the important themes that will culminate in the life of Joseph.

THE SERPENT CRUSHER (GENESIS 1-11)

The pages of Genesis open to an incredible scene: One God – Yahweh – creates the universe simply by speaking it into existence. Although God declares His creation “very good,” the

story takes a sharp turn as Adam and Eve fall to the Serpent's temptation in the Garden. Despite the devastating curse of sin, God provides a glimmer of hope: *"The LORD God said to the serpent ... I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel"* (Genesis 3:14, 15). Although the attacks of the Serpent will not soon end, one day there will come a Serpent Crusher who will defeat sin and death forever.

Every story of Genesis is patterned after this promise. No matter how many times the Serpent sows sin, death, and destruction, God always provides deliverance. God's plans and purposes are never hindered, confused, or delayed. As Genesis 11 closes, we are introduced to the family line in the story who will, one day, crush the head of the Serpent forever.

THE GOD OF PROMISES: ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB (GENESIS 12-36)

Genesis 12 introduces a new character to this unfolding story: Abraham. As God calls Abraham and his wife to leave their homeland to settle in a new land – a Promised Land – He chooses to make Abraham the recipient of an extraordinary covenant. God's covenant includes three primary promises: Abraham and his descendants will possess the land of Canaan; he will have descendants as many as the stars in heaven and grains of sand on the shore; and finally, all the families of the earth will be blessed through him. Where the Serpent leaves a legacy of curse, Abraham and his descendants will leave a legacy of blessing to every nation on the earth. More than a glimmer of hope, the promises of the Abrahamic covenant are a bright development in God's unfolding plan.

While Genesis 12 opens with great hope, the story quickly descends into darkness. Often Abraham and his descendants act more like the seed of the Serpent than the family of promise. Abraham has moments of great faith, but both he and his wife frequently lose hope in God's promises. Their son is named "Isaac," which means, "he laughs," because both Abraham and Sarah laugh faithlessly at God when He promises them a son in their old age (Genesis 17:17, 18:13-15). Isaac's son is named "Jacob," which means "deceiver," or "he cheats" (Genesis 25:26). Sure enough, Jacob spends the first half of his life cheating his brother out of his birthright and his father out of a blessing. As the story unfolds, one begins to wonder if having someone come from the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was the best choice to crush the head of the Serpent forever.

Despite the deceit, failure, and sin of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God not only reiterates His promises – He expands them! Eighteen times in Genesis 12-36, God repeats the Abrahamic covenant, reinforcing and heightening His promises. God promises Abraham that through him will come a King (Genesis 17:6, 16; 27:29; 35:11) who will possess the gates of His enemies (Genesis 22:17, 24:60) and His descendants will be scattered to bless every nation on the earth (Genesis 28:14). No matter how many times the Serpent's strike threatens Abraham and his descendants, God continues to redeem, deliver, and multiply His promises.

As you will read in Week 1, Genesis 37 opens to Jacob and his twelve sons who dwell in the land God promised to their forefather Abraham. While Jacob is blessed with twelve sons, they too often act like the seed of the serpent. Yet, again and again,

God takes what the Serpent means for evil and redeems it for good (Genesis 50:19-20).

Fourteen generations after Abraham, God sends His own Son, Jesus Christ, as the true and promised King. Through His death and resurrection, He crushes the head of the Serpent and possesses the gates of His enemies forever. In the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus' followers scatter to every nation, tribe, and tongue, bringing good news of life, hope, and blessing to all who believe. The life of Joseph gives us a glimpse of what we see fully in Jesus Christ: Our faithful God is sovereign over all things, He always keeps His promises, and He loves to lavish His grace on those who least deserve it.



SCRIPTURE FOCUS

Genesis
37-38

Week 1 The Sons of Deceit

MEMORY VERSE

1 John 1:8-9^(NKJV)

⁸ *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* ⁹ *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Overview

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A PERSISTENT PROMISE &
A PERSISTENT PROBLEM

Genesis 37:1-4

THE DREAMER

Genesis 37:5-11

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A BLINDING SELFISHNESS

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WHAT GOOD CAN COME FROM THIS?

Genesis 38:12-30

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Genesis 37-38

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Application Questions



Overview Week 1

DISCOVER: WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE PASSAGE?

Context

Moses opens Genesis 37 with a straightforward, albeit strange phrase. He writes, “*This is the history of Jacob*” (Genesis 37:2), which literally means “these are the generations of Jacob.” Moses uses this phrase (called a toledoth) throughout Genesis to signal the beginning of a new development in the storyline (Genesis 2:4, 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:10, 11:27, 25:12-13, 25:19, 36:1). The phrase ties each story back to Genesis 3:15 and the anticipation of an offspring who will crush the head of the Serpent forever. Moses sets the stage for a new showdown between the Serpent and the offspring of the woman.

Key Words & Phrases

CLOTHING: Garments and clothing play a critical role in the unfolding narrative of Genesis 37-50. The loss of clothing often signals the loss of position, while receiving clothing implies elevated or changing positions. Joseph's tunic of many colors is one of the most well-known features of this story. The tunic initially represents Jacob's favor and alludes to a royal destiny. When Joseph is stripped of his clothing and thrown into the pit, his story takes a dramatic turn from favored son to foreign slave.

Likewise, Judah also gives up his most personally meaningful garments – his signet ring, cord, and staff – to a veiled Tamar. Judah's willingness to part with his most meaningful garments emphasizes his own carelessness and selfishness. Tamar's reception of Judah's garments ultimately secures her own deliverance from death and exposes Judah's selfishness.

DREAMS: The use of dreams as a means for God to reveal His plans is not new in Genesis (Genesis 15:1, 20:1-7, 28:10-17), and they play a significant role in the storyline of Joseph. In the story of Joseph,

dreams are a means for God to communicate His plans to others. Joseph's dreams in Genesis 37 confirm his royal destiny. The fact there are two indicates God Himself will fulfill them (Genesis 41:32). However, instead of deepening the reverence of Jacob's family, the dreams instigate severe division, strife, and especially envy. Jacob, Joseph, and the brothers do not yet realize the path to exaltation is marked by suffering.

WENT DOWN: Moses identifies the main characters of the story through a subtle, but important word clue. When Jacob learns about the (falsified) death of Joseph, he mournfully cries, "*For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning*" (Genesis 37:35). The next chapter opens with a surprising character, Judah, who "*went down*" (Genesis 38:1) from his brothers. Finally, Genesis 39 opens with Joseph who had been "*taken down to Egypt*" (Genesis 39:1). While Genesis 37-50 features Joseph most prominently, the story of Joseph is really the story of Jacob, Judah, and Joseph.

LEARN: WHAT IS THE PASSAGE TEACHING?

God & His Character

Surprisingly, the one character who seems to be absent in these chapters is God Himself. This is a repeated literary tool Moses uses to emphasize the pervasiveness of sin in a story (see also Exodus 1-2). Where sinfulness abounds, the presence of God often seems absent. However, Moses

also emphasizes God's Providence amid the sinful actions of Joseph's family. What Jacob, Judah, and the brothers mean for evil, God Himself means for good (Genesis 50:19-20). God is *sovereign*, working and weaving even the darkest moments to fulfill His perfect will.

The Nature of Humanity

This week is entitled “The Sons of Deceit” as an ironic wordplay. Indeed, the sons of Jacob are literally the ***sons of deceit*** as the name “Jacob” means “he cheats” or “deceiver.” For the sons of Jacob, the apples certainly do not fall far from the tree. None of the characters in these chapters are morally righteous. Jacob unfairly favors his son by gifting him a regal robe. Consumed by jealousy, the sons of Jacob

plot to murder Joseph, and ultimately sell him into slavery out of guilt. Judah is depicted as exceedingly greedy, selfish, and lustful. The sin-sick nature of humanity that began all the way back in the Garden of Eden is on full display.

There is one question that resounds throughout these chapters: what *good* can come from all this?

Biggest Lesson

This week’s *biggest lessons* center on how sin infects and destroys families. In these chapters, we see how favoritism, arrogance, jealousy, selfishness, greed, and lust all contribute to an increasingly destructive pattern of sin. The stories of Jacob, Joseph, and Judah are an invitation for us to break the cycles of sin in our lives by looking to Jesus, repenting of our sins, and cultivating righteousness

in our lives. Like a diamond can very clearly be seen when presented against a black velvet cloth, the dark sinfulness of these chapters also serves to amplify the patient, providential, loyal love of God. He is longsuffering towards His people, faithfully sovereign over the affairs of men, and *always* keeps His covenant promises.

A Persistent Promise & A Persistent Problem

Genesis 37:1-4

¹Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. ²This is the history of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.

³Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors. ⁴But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

DISCOVER

Moses opens Genesis 37 by giving context and introducing the key conflict of the story. Jacob and his sons dwell in Canaan, the land promised to Abraham back in Genesis 12. Jacob makes his son Joseph a “tunic of many colors” (Genesis 37:3) to show his special affection and love towards him. Jacob’s other sons are jealous of Joseph’s favored status and hate him as a result.

LEARN

The story opens with both a persistent promise and a persistent problem. The Abrahamic covenant promises – land, descendants, and blessing – seem to be partially coming to fruition. Jacob is blessed with twelve sons, more than his forefathers Abraham and Isaac combined. They still dwell in the land of Canaan which God promised to Abraham and his descendants nearly two hundred years before. The



“generations of Jacob” (Genesis 37:2) seem hopeful and anticipatory.

Yet, like every story in Genesis, the persistent promises of God seem to be constantly under attack. Although Jacob has many sons, he favors Joseph above the others. He makes him a “tunic of many colors” to show his special affection. The phrase “tunic of many colors” is used only once again, in 2 Samuel 13:18, to refer to garments worn by King David’s daughter. The royal undertones are unmistakable, especially in light of the earlier promises from God that a king will come from the line of Abraham (Genesis 17:6, 16; 27:29; 35:11). The robe is more than a sign of favored status, it points towards Joseph as the chosen royal son anticipated throughout the book of Genesis.

Instead of blessing their newly minted royal brother, Jacob’s favoritism incites deep hatred against Joseph. Sibling strife is not new in the storyline of Genesis. The stories of Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, and Jacob and Esau are all examples of fierce fraternal conflict. When they see the favor of Jacob towards Joseph, the brothers seethe with hatred so deeply they cannot even *speaking* peaceably to him. Their actions and words are all infected by the biting poison of jealousy.

Significantly, “*peaceably*” (Genesis 37:4) comes from the word *shalom*, which means completeness or wholeness. Familial strife of any kind fractures *shalom* or the wholeness of a family. Whether in the form of unfair favoritism, an overconfident little

brother, or a boiling brotherly jealousy, when sin is sown in a family it only reaps destruction.

APPLY

The Apostle Paul warns us of the effects of sin in 1 Corinthians 5:6: “*Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?*” Although leaven is small and seemingly insignificant, the whole loaf of bread rises and falls with its presence. Jacob’s seemingly trivial favoritism plants seeds of deep jealousy that later grow into hatred and betrayal. Like Jacob, sin infects every part of who we are and insidiously spreads destruction in our lives, our families, and our communities. Paul provides a straightforward, although difficult remedy: “*Therefore, purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump*” (1 Corinthians 5:7).

This week, we want to invite you to spend time purging the old leaven in your life. While addressing our sin is awkward, hard, and uncomfortable, not addressing our sin is devastating and deadly. Today, pray for the Holy Spirit to illuminate where the leaven of sin might be spreading in your life, family, and community. Then, pray for the courage and boldness to bring sin to light. Fight against every ounce of flesh that tells you sin is not serious, other people cannot be trusted, or that you are too sinful to be forgiven. Take some time to write down specific sins, confess them to the Lord, and seek His forgiveness. The Bible invites us to confess our sins to one another so that we might be healed (James 5:16) – consider sharing what you write down with your group or group leader this week.



REFLECTION 

The Dreamer

Genesis 37:5-11

⁵Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. ⁶So he said to them, “Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: ⁷There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf.”

⁸And his brothers said to him, “Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?” So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

⁹Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, “Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me.”

¹⁰So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, “What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?” ¹¹And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

DISCOVER

Joseph receives two dreams indicating that he will one day rule over his family. His brothers respond with a deepening hatred towards their brother. Jacob rebukes his son, but continues to ponder these events.

LEARN

The two dreams described in this passage are significant for what they foreshadow as well as their result. In the first dream, Joseph and his brothers gather sheaves of grain in the field. When Joseph’s sheaf stands upright, his brothers’ sheaves all bow towards his. When Joseph recounts the dream to his brothers, they respond incredulously: “*Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?*” (Genesis 37:8). The dream only deepens their hatred towards Joseph.

The second dream intensifies the prophetic message of the first. In this dream, the sun, moon, and stars all bow to Joseph’s reign. This time, Joseph tells both his father and his brothers, eliciting a strong rebuke from Jacob. Again, the brothers respond with a growing envy towards their brother.

If the coat of many colors was a subtle hint at Joseph's role as a future royal figure, this pair of dreams removes all doubt. The two dreams indicate that God Himself will fulfill them (Genesis 41:32). Even Jacob's rebuke towards Joseph is softened as he "*kept the matter in mind*" (Genesis 37:11), showing his own inclination to believe the authenticity of Joseph's dreams. Surely Jacob is reminded of God's promise earlier in Genesis that "*kings would come from his body*" (Genesis 35:11).

Joseph's dreams should be received with rejoicing and celebration – God is faithful to keep His promises! Yet, when God's plans do not match Jacob and the brothers' expectations, Joseph's dreams are met with rebuke, skepticism, and hatred.

APPLY

Like Jacob and the brothers, so often our trust in God's plans and purposes is contingent upon meeting our expectations. When our path begins to deviate from what we anticipated – the loss of a job, the abrupt ending of a dear friendship, the sudden

illness of a family member – we begin to question God's faithfulness. Our slavery to unmet expectations blinds us to God's goodness and faithfulness, driving us deeper into disappointment and unbelief. How have unmet expectations produced disappointment or unbelief in your life? Take some time to be honest about the discontentment in your heart and consider sharing what you write down with your group or group leader this week.

How do we fight the disappointment of unmet expectations? We cultivate hope in the Lord. The prophet Jeremiah declared, "*Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD*" (Jeremiah 17:7). The blessed man can be free from the chains of unmet expectations because he trusts the God who is faithfully sovereign over all things and will always keep His promises. Like a tree planted by the waters, hope in the Lord is an inexhaustible fountain that always produces fruit, no matter how withering the heat or prolonged the drought (Jeremiah 17:8).

REFLECTION

Devotional Day 3

The Fruit of Jealousy

Genesis 37:12-36

¹²Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. ¹³And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them."

So he said to him, "Here I am."

¹⁴Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.

¹⁵Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?"

¹⁶So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding their flocks."

¹⁷And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.' " So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.

¹⁸Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. ¹⁹Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming! ²⁰Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"

²¹But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him." ²²And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"—that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.

²³So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him. ²⁴Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it.

²⁵And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way

to carry them down to Egypt. ²⁶So Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? ²⁷Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh.” And his brothers listened. ²⁸Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

²⁹Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes. ³⁰And he returned to his brothers and said, “The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?”

³¹So they took Joseph’s tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. ³²Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, “We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son’s tunic or not?”

³³And he recognized it and said, “It is my son’s tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces.” ³⁴Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. ³⁵And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, “For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning.” Thus his father wept for him.

³⁶Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.

DISCOVER

Jacob sends Joseph to check on his brothers at Shechem. The sons of Jacob conspire to murder their brother, but instead choose to sell him into slavery.

LEARN

As the sons of Jacob see Joseph approach on the horizon, they sarcastically declare, “*Look, the lord of dreams is coming!*” (Genesis 37:19). Immediately they recognize the tunic of many colors, for them a symbol of Joseph’s prideful arrogance. Their simmering jealousy begins to boil into rage, culminating with a plot to kill Joseph. The family called to be a blessing to all the families of the earth (Genesis 12:3) is ready to murder their own brother. While the half-hearted compassion of Reuben saves Joseph’s life, Judah’s greed drives the brothers to sell him into slavery instead. As the brothers plant seeds of jealousy and hatred in their own hearts, they end up reaping a harvest of bitterness, resentment, and eventually hatred.

APPLY

This story displays a pattern with which we are all too familiar. Jealousy begins as a flickering spark that eventually grows into a consuming fire, inhibiting faithfulness and destroying relationships. The smoke of discontentment and hatred eventually chokes our trust in God and our love for others. Truly, “*a little leaven leavens the whole lump*” (1 Corinthians 5:6). Where has jealousy been planted in your life? Maybe

a neighbor's new car, a coworker's promotion, or the seeming perfection of a friend's marriage makes you resentful towards them. Jealousy may have even driven you to lose trust in God's faithfulness.

How do we combat the damaging blaze of jealousy? We cultivate gratitude. Take time today to write down every blessing in your life, big or small. Rehearse God's faithfulness towards you: remember

how He saved you from the domain of sin and death and delivered you into the kingdom of Christ; remember how He patiently walked with you in your sinfulness, grumbling, and discontentment; remember how His loyal love towards you supplies every one of your needs. The consuming fire of jealousy can only be doused by a flood of thanksgiving, so let the rivers of gratitude roll over your heart today.

REFLECTION

Devotional Day 4

A Blinding Selfishness

Genesis 38:1-11

¹It came to pass at that time that Judah departed from his brothers, and visited a certain Adullamite whose name was Hirah. ²And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua, and he married her and went in to her. ³So she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Er. ⁴She conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan. ⁵And she conceived yet again and bore a son, and called his name Shelah. He was at Chezib when she bore him.

⁶Then Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. ⁷But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD killed him. ⁸And Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother." ⁹But Onan knew that the heir would not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he emitted on the ground, lest he should give an heir to his brother. ¹⁰And the

thing which he did displeased the LORD; therefore He killed him also.

¹¹Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house till my son Shelah is grown." For he said, "Lest he also die like his brothers." And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

DISCOVER

As Joseph is sold into slavery, the story shifts focus to an unlikely character: Judah. He departs from his brothers and marries a Canaanite woman named Shua. She bears three sons with Judah: Er, Onan, and Shelah. The wickedness of Er and Onan lead to their deaths, while the selfishness of Judah deprives his daughter-in-law of an heir.

LEARN

Admittedly, this story seems a little out of place. What do the family troubles of Judah have to do with the life of Joseph? In a word, *everything*. Remember, the story of Joseph is really the story of Jacob, Judah, and Joseph. In the previous chapter, Judah is

depicted as selfish and greedy, suggesting his brothers sell Joseph into slavery instead of letting him die in the pit (Genesis 37:26-28). As Genesis 38 zooms in on the story of Judah and his family, we see Judah's sons are no better than their father.

Judah's firstborn son is killed because of his wickedness, leaving his widowed wife Tamar. As was custom in Levirate marriage (Deuteronomy 25:5-10), Tamar has the option to conceive a son by Onan, Judah's second-born son. This would ensure there is a male heir for Er and someone to provide support for Tamar. However, Onan greedily wants Er's firstborn inheritance for himself, so he refuses to help Tamar conceive. Like his brother before him, Onan's sinfulness leads to his death. Only Shelah, Judah's youngest son, is left for Tamar. Instead of seeing the wickedness of his own sons, however, Judah blames Tamar for their deaths and withholds Shelah from her. Judah's selfishness does not just deprive Er of a male heir, it also deprives Tamar from any future husband or son to take care of her.

APPLY

Selfishness is not ultimately rooted in what we may think, say, or do, but in what motivates our thoughts, words, and actions. Judah's selfishness drives him towards a blind greed that costs Joseph his freedom, Er and Onan their lives, and Tamar any sense of future provision or security. Instead of esteeming others as more significant than himself, Judah's love turns inward and blinds him to the devastation of his own actions. Are your thoughts and actions motivated by your love for others, or has your love turned inward to serve yourself?

Like Judah towards his sons, maybe you have a family member or friend who is deep in sin, but you refuse to address it because you are more concerned about yourself than their well-being. Like Judah towards Tamar, maybe your selfishness has deadened your heart to the plight of others, and you refuse to take responsibility where God has called you. Friend, take some time today to be completely honest about what motivates you. Ask your spouse, a trusted leader, or friend to give you feedback on your thoughts and actions. Next, plead with the Holy Spirit to give you motivations driven by love and concern for others.



REFLECTION 

Devotional Day 5

What *Good* Can Come from This?

Genesis 38:12-30

¹²Now in the process of time the daughter of Shua, Judah's wife, died; and Judah was comforted, and went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. ¹³And it was told Tamar, saying, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." ¹⁴So she took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place which was on the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife. ¹⁵When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, because she had covered her face. ¹⁶Then he turned to her by the way, and said, "Please let me come in to you"; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law.

So she said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?"

¹⁷And he said, "I will send a young goat from the flock."

So she said, "Will you give me a pledge till you send it?"

¹⁸Then he said, "What pledge shall I give you?"

So she said, "Your signet and cord, and your staff that is in your hand." Then he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him. ¹⁹So she arose and went away, and laid aside her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood.

²⁰And Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand, but he did not find her. ²¹Then he asked the men of that place, saying, "Where is the harlot who was openly by the roadside?"

And they said, "There was no harlot in this place."

²²So he returned to Judah and said, “I cannot find her. Also, the men of the place said there was no harlot in this place.”

²³Then Judah said, “Let her take them for herself, lest we be shamed; for I sent this young goat and you have not found her.”

²⁴And it came to pass, about three months after, that Judah was told, saying, “Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the harlot; furthermore she is with child by harlotry.”

So Judah said, “Bring her out and let her be burned!”

²⁵When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, “By the man to whom these belong, I am with child.” And she said, “Please determine whose these are—the signet and cord, and staff.”

²⁶So Judah acknowledged them and said, “She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son.” And he never knew her again.

²⁷Now it came to pass, at the time for giving birth, that behold, twins were in her womb. ²⁸And so it was, when she was giving birth, that the one put out his hand; and the midwife took a scarlet thread and bound it on his hand, saying, “This one came out first.” ²⁹Then it happened, as he drew back his hand, that his brother came out unexpectedly; and she said, “How did you break through? This

breach be upon you!” Therefore his name was called Perez. ³⁰Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet thread on his hand. And his name was called Zerah.

DISCOVER

Neglected by her father-in-law, Tamar decides to take conceiving an heir into her own hands by deceiving Judah. After he learns of her pregnancy, Judah seeks to put Tamar to death. However, Tamar exposes Judah’s selfish hypocrisy and he relents. Tamar gives birth to twin sons, Perez and Zerah.

LEARN

The descending spiral of sinfulness in Genesis 37-38 finds its culmination in a deeply sorrowful scene. Tamar, desperate for an heir, uses deception to take advantage of her father-in-law’s recent loss. Judah, motivated by selfishness and lust, not only falls to her deception but also hypocritically tries to kill her for her adultery. When Tamar shows Judah’s signet ring and cord, she not only saves her life, but initiates Judah’s own redemption. After acknowledging the ring and cord are his, Judah says, “She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son” (Genesis 38:26). For the first time in two chapters, somebody recognizes the depth of their sinfulness. Moreover, Judah “never knew (Tamar) again,” indicating his repentance and determination to live faithfully.



APPLY

Like greed and selfishness, lust and selfishness are really two sides of the same coin. In this passage, Judah's selfishness drives him to fulfill his own desires and vindicate his own unrighteousness. First, Judah uses Tamar as an object to fulfill his lusts, then uses her pregnancy as an excuse to have her killed and rid himself of her forever. Instead, Judah is exposed as a selfish, greedy, lustful hypocrite. At the rock bottom of his life, caught in the culmination of decades of sinfulness, Judah breaks the cycle of sin by choosing repentance.

This week, you saw how the little leaven of Jacob's favoritism infected his whole family. You observed how the jealousy of the sons of Jacob blossomed into bitterness, resentment, and rage. You witnessed the selfishness of Judah greedily selling his own brother

into slavery, ignoring his own sons' wickedness, and lustfully taking advantage of his own daughter-in-law. Everywhere you read, the seed of the Serpent sinfully sows discord, dysfunction, and destruction wherever it is allowed to grow. Surely, what *good* can come from this?

As we end this week, that may be the question you are facing as well. You may see the wreckage of sin in your life and wonder, "what good can come from all of this?" You may think your sin is too strong, your past is too tarnished, and your life is too marred to be redeemed. Whatever you have done, God stands before you, graciously beckoning you to follow Him. His grace is more than enough to forgive anything you have ever done. Like Judah, today you can repent by acknowledging your sin, asking God for forgiveness, and praying for the Holy Spirit to renew your life and heart (Psalm 51:10; Romans 2:12).

REFLECTION

Discussion Week 1

Notes

Discussion Week 1

Application questions

1. What parts of the passage stood out to you this week? Why?
2. How does sin operate like leaven, spreading throughout all our lives? What does it mean to *“purge out the old leaven”* (1 Corinthians 5:7)?

3. How have unmet expectations produced disappointment or unbelief in your life? How do we cultivate hope to combat the disappointment that stems from unmet expectations?

4. Jealousy is like a flickering spark that grows into a consuming fire, inhibiting faithfulness and destroying relationships. How does jealousy undermine our relationship with God and others? What are some practical ways to fight the blaze of jealousy in your life?

5. Selfishness is ultimately a love that *turns inward*, choosing to fulfill our own desires over the needs of others. Selfishness is a deadly fuel that motivates sinful thoughts, words, and actions. Where do you see selfishness in your life? How can you combat selfish motivations?

- 6.** As Judah is exposed as a hypocrite before Tamar, he chooses to take responsibility for his sin, repent, and determines not to sin again. What sin in your life has been left unconfessed and unrepented? Reflect on your own salvation and the precious gift of God's grace and forgiveness He lavished upon you and allow your heart to confess, repent, and praise Him for doing His perfect work in your life.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

Begin to encourage and foster a culture of repentance and praise. Recommend that as the group shares God's blessings and their struggles, they look to each other to repent of sin in a private setting.

- For the larger group, share your salvation story and how the Holy Spirit opened your eyes to the need for Jesus.
- Next, look to Jesus! How does the death and resurrection of Jesus help convict us of sin, equip us to fight sin, and encourage us to remain faithful?
- Finally, make a plan to fight. How can this group keep you accountable to fight sin and encourage you to cultivate righteousness? Consider pairing off to pray for one another and create a plan to help each other overcome sin this week.

Genesis 39

Week 2 The Providential Presence & Loyal Love of God

MEMORY VERSE

Genesis 39:20-21^(NKJV)

Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison. But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

Overview

DISCOVER & LEARN

Background & Themes

Devotionals

GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL PRESENCE

Genesis 39:1-6

JOSEPH'S BLAMELESS INTEGRITY

Genesis 39:7-10

JOSEPH'S COSTLY INTEGRITY

Genesis 39:11-20

A NEVER-FAILING, ETERNALLY-
PERSEVERING, ALWAYS-KEEPS-HIS-
PROMISES KIND OF LOVE

Genesis 39:20-23; Deuteronomy 7:6-9

A SMOKING OVEN, BURNING
TORCH, AND PATHWAY OF BLOOD

Genesis 15

Discussion

NOTES

Genesis 39

APPLY

Application Questions

Overview Week 2

DISCOVER: WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE PASSAGE?

Context

After focusing on the sorrowful sinfulness of Judah and his family, Moses transitions back to Joseph who is “taken down” (Genesis 39:1) to Egypt as a slave. We read back in Genesis 37:36 that Joseph was bought by Potiphar, a military officer for Pharaoh and the captain of the guard. Joseph’s time in Potiphar’s house is marked by faithfulness and success, as opposed to Judah’s which is marked by selfishness and devastation.



Key Words & Phrases

CLOTHING: Garments and clothing continue to play a critical role in the unfolding narrative of Genesis 39. In this chapter, Joseph is “disrobed” as he flees the temptation of Potiphar’s wife. Like his brothers in Genesis 37, Joseph’s garments are used by Potiphar’s wife to give evidence of a false accusation about him.

WENT DOWN: Like we saw last week, this story focuses on Jacob, Judah, and Joseph who all “went down” somewhere in the narrative. In Genesis 38, Judah “went down” from his brothers, only to commit an assortment of selfish sins. In Genesis 39, Joseph descends to Egypt as a slave (Genesis 39:1), and to Potiphar’s jail as a prisoner (Genesis 39:20). Significantly, however, Joseph’s “descents” are not marked by arrogance or sinfulness, but by God’s very presence. Where Judah failed to live out the role of God’s covenant family, Joseph overwhelmingly succeeded.

THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD: When Genesis 39 declares “*the LORD was with Joseph,*” it

is more than a euphemism for blessing and favor. God’s presence was with Joseph in both Potiphar’s house (Genesis 39:2) and prison (Genesis 39:21). The presence of God is a key theme in both the Torah (Genesis – Deuteronomy) and the Bible as a whole. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, they “*hid themselves from the presence of the LORD*” (Genesis 3:8). Adam and Eve’s sin did not just drive them away from the Garden, it separated them from experiencing the blessing of enjoying God’s very presence. Yet, as we discussed in the introduction, the rest of Genesis looks forward to the coming of the Serpent Crusher who will bring God’s people back into His presence. No matter how dark the season, God’s presence is working in those who trust His promises, foiling the Serpent’s plans and anticipating the greater deliverance to come.

LOYAL LOVE: The end of Genesis 39 introduces a key theological word of the Old Testament. While in prison, “*the LORD ... showed (Joseph) mercy.*” The word “mercy” in this verse is the Hebrew word “hesed” and refers to God’s loyal, covenant-keeping love. Unlike human love which tends to be erratic, finicky, and unreliable, God’s loyal love is totally committed to keeping His covenant promises. No matter how many times the Serpent strikes, or how sinful His people may become, God always delivers, redeems, and restores through His loyal love.

God & His Character

If God was seemingly absent in the previous two chapters, His presence and providence appear in Genesis 39. In the first six verses, Moses mentions “*the LORD*” five times (Genesis 39:2-3, 5), emphasizing His role in the progression of Joseph’s life. Judah’s sinfulness brought curse and destruction on

his sons and daughter-in-law, while God’s presence in Joseph’s faithfulness brings blessing and favor. Even as a slave in Potiphar’s house and a prisoner in Potiphar’s prison, the Lord is with Joseph, providentially weaving a story of deep darkness into one of deliverance and blessing.

The Nature of Humanity

Genesis 39 provides a powerful comparison between Judah’s wickedness and Joseph’s faithfulness. Judah’s faithlessness and sinfulness lead to disastrous consequences for his sons and daughter-in-law. Joseph’s faithfulness and integrity lead to favor in both Potiphar’s house and prison. The

key difference: “*the LORD was with Joseph*” (Genesis 39:2, 3, 21). When we put our faith in God’s promises and rely on the power of His presence, God will “*make you complete in every good work to do His will*” (Hebrews 13:21).

Biggest Lesson

Although last week's readings focused on the destructive cycle of sin, this week focuses on the resilient flourishing of righteousness and integrity. Assured of God's presence and having an unshakable faith in God, Joseph could trust God to keep His promises no matter how dark the season. In Joseph's life, we see the steady, providential hand of God working while weaving moments of faithfulness and seasons of difficulty into an incredible story of grace and reconciliation.

Devotional Day 1

God's Providential Presence

Genesis 39:1-6

¹Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. ²The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. ³And his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand. ⁴So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. ⁵So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house and in the field. ⁶Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate.

Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.

DISCOVER

As Moses transitions the story from Judah's family to Joseph's time in Egypt, a clear contrast begins to emerge. Even as a slave, Joseph quickly rises to oversee Potiphar's household, managing his affairs and supervising his staff. Joseph's success is credited to God's presence in his life.

LEARN

A key theme of the Torah (Genesis – Deuteronomy) is God's presence. Whereas God's seeming absence in the previous two chapters emphasized a devastating pattern of sinfulness, His presence in this chapter portrays blessing and success. Joseph's faithfulness to work hard, leverage his gifts, and seek the flourishing of those around him stands opposed to Judah's laziness, greed, and selfishness.

While Joseph may have been endowed with gifts of leadership and administration, the passage is clear that Joseph's success is not ultimately because of his competency. What sets Joseph apart is the presence and power of God in his life and work. Only the Lord's presence could take a Hebrew slave and make him the chief-of-staff of the second most powerful ruler in Egypt.

APPLY

Joseph's faithfulness in this passage provides a powerful theology of work. Even before the Fall in Genesis 3, Adam is given instructions to *tend and keep the garden* (Genesis 2:15). Work is intended as a source of flourishing for God's image-bearers, but the curse of sin makes work difficult and burdensome (Genesis 3:17-19). Joseph provides a template for us to redeem even the most challenging work.

First, Joseph is personally diligent, disciplined, and dedicated to the flourishing of Potiphar's affairs. Even as a slave who receives no wages, Joseph understands that integrity in work honors God and inspires people. When you approach your work, are you leveraging your energy, gifts, and competencies for the success of those you are called to lead and serve? Selfless work is a dedication to bring a level of excellence to all God calls us to accomplish.

Next, pray for the Holy Spirit to empower your work so you are able to faithfully serve God and lovingly serve others. Joseph's competencies in leading, managing, and even growing Potiphar's success are only due to the Lord's hand of blessing on him. All work is inherently *spiritual*, the difference is whether we depend on the Lord to empower us, or we depend on our own gifts, talents, and competencies to sustain us. Write a prayer today asking God to enable you to do all He is calling you to accomplish.

REFLECTION

Devotional Day 2

Joseph's Blameless Integrity

Genesis 39:7-10

⁷And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me."

⁸But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. ⁹There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

¹⁰So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.

DISCOVER

Potiphar's wife tempts Joseph. He resists, maintaining his integrity with Potiphar and staying faithful to the Lord.

LEARN

Joseph's successful resistance against Potiphar's wife is not coincidental or haphazard. He does not stumble into victory over the temptation. Rather, Joseph's success is due to a character rooted in three unassailable convictions. First, he does not betray the trust of Potiphar. Joseph is given expansive responsibilities over Potiphar's property, staff, and resources. The trust he labors hard to earn is a gift from God. Joseph is not willing to betray that trust by giving in to temptation.

Next, Joseph does not betray his convictions on marriage. Joseph says, "There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife" (Genesis 39:9). In the throes of temptation, Joseph reminds Potiphar's wife of the commitment she had made to her husband. Joseph knew God Himself joined Potiphar and his wife together and he would not be the one to tear them apart (Matthew 19:6).

Finally, and most importantly, Joseph does not betray the providential care of his God. Joseph declares to Potiphar's wife, *"How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"* (Genesis 39:9). Beyond betraying the trust of Potiphar or undermining his beliefs about marriage, Joseph is not willing to sin against his God. All of Joseph's success – the prosperity of his labor, his rapid ascent in leadership, and the flourishing of Potiphar's household – is because God is with Joseph. Trading the blessing and favor of God for the temporary satisfaction of sin is an absurd proposition to Joseph.

APPLY

Joseph's daily barrage of temptation is not foreign to the life of any believer. You too can have victory like Joseph by developing a character formed

by convictions. Joseph had **relational convictions**. Fidelity to your spouse, family, friends, coworkers, and church requires a commitment to righteousness. Sinful infidelity destroys trust, tears families apart, and causes discord in every environment it touches. Joseph also had **truth convictions**. Fidelity to believing and obeying God's Word enables us to resist when temptation tries to seduce us. Finally, Joseph had **spiritual convictions**. His fidelity to Potiphar and his fidelity to truth flowed out of a greater loyalty to the Lord. Compared to God's blessing, the fleeting pleasures of sin were an absurd trade. Friend, are you facing temptation today? Consider how sin destroys relationships and undermines our convictions. Like Joseph, pray to God to empower you (Genesis 39:2) and for Him to give you victory over sin.

REFLECTION

Devotional Day 3

Joseph's Costly Integrity

Genesis 39:11-20

¹¹But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside, ¹²that she caught him by his garment, saying, “Lie with me.” But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside. ¹³And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled outside, ¹⁴that she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, “See, he has brought in to us a Hebrew to mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. ¹⁵And it happened, when he heard that I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside.”

¹⁶So she kept his garment with her until his master came home. ¹⁷Then she spoke to him with

words like these, saying, “The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came in to me to mock me; ¹⁸so it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside.”

¹⁹So it was, when his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, saying, “Your servant did to me after this manner,” that his anger was aroused. ²⁰Then Joseph’s master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king’s prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison.

DISCOVER

As Joseph flees the temptation of Potiphar’s wife, she grabs his garment. Potiphar’s wife uses the garment to falsely accuse Joseph of taking advantage of her. Upon hearing his wife’s concocted story, Potiphar throws Joseph in prison.

LEARN

Once again, the story of Joseph centers around clothing. Like his tunic of many colors (Genesis 37:23), Joseph is wickedly stripped of his garment. Like Joseph's brothers (Genesis 37:31-32), Potiphar's wife uses the garment to concoct a deceptive story about Joseph. The stunning reversal of Joseph's status and favor in Potiphar's house is a sobering reminder of the costliness of integrity. For Joseph, following the Lord with integrity means trading a prominent, powerful position in Potiphar's palace for a seemingly unimportant and impotent place in Potiphar's prison.

APPLY

Often the price of maintaining our integrity is expensive. Fleeing from sin preserves our faithfulness to God and our witness before the world, but it also may come with the loss of friends, job opportunities, or reputation before others. What are some moments or seasons when keeping integrity has been costly for you? Write down specific ways the Lord sustained you in that season. No matter how costly, faithful integrity to God is always worth it because God is always faithful to us. Today, pray for a resilient faithfulness that will follow God no matter the price.

REFLECTION

Devotional Day 4

A Never-Failing, Eternally-Persevering, Always-Keeps-His- Promises Kind of Love

Genesis 39:20-23

²⁰Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison. ²¹But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. ²²And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing. ²³The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper.

Deuteronomy 7:6-9

⁶“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. ⁷The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; ⁸but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

⁹“Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments;

DISCOVER

Genesis 39 ends similarly to how it began. Joseph is once again stripped of his garments and imprisoned in a pit of death by those who betrayed him. However, God continues to fill Joseph with His presence, blessing him with favor and prosperity even in prison.

LEARN

Although Joseph was *"there in the prison"* (Genesis 39:20), his imprisonment was no solitary confinement: *for the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy* (Genesis 39:21). More than describing his experience in the prison, this verse is a key interpretive text for the whole story of Joseph.

First, *"the LORD was with Joseph"* shows us that God Himself was preserving, protecting, and providing for Joseph in prison. Just as God's presence brought prosperity as a slave in Potiphar's house (Genesis 39:3-4), so too it brought prosperity in Potiphar's prison (Genesis 39:23). For Joseph, the nearness of God was a brilliant light amid the darkness and difficulty of his descent into prison.

While the first phrase tells us how God preserved and prospered Joseph with His presence, the second phrase, *"the LORD ... showed him mercy,"* tells us why. As mentioned before, the Hebrew word translated "mercy" is *"hesed,"* and refers to God's covenantal, loyal love. When God shows Joseph *hesed*, He is showing a never-failing, eternally-persevering, always-keeps-His-promises kind of love. God's loyal love means He will always be faithful to His covenant promises. As Moses declares in Deuteronomy, *"Know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and loyal love for a thousand generations"* (Deuteronomy 7:9).

APPLY

How do we respond to a God who delights to dwell with us and always loves with a loyal love? God's presence invites you to rest in Him. In Exodus 33, God affirms to Moses, *"My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest"* (Exodus 33:14). Whether he is in the pit, the palace, or the prison, Joseph can rest because God Himself is with him. The greatest weapon against the darkness of our days is the light of God's gracious presence. Pray for God to go with you today and for His Holy Spirit to be your constant guide and companion.

God's loyal love also invites you to *trust*. How do we know God's presence will be with His people?



Because His love is neither fickle nor indecisive – it is not beholden to emotion or swayed by circumstance. He does not love finickily, erratically, or unreliably. God’s love for you is not rooted at any point in who you are, what you have done, or what you will do. Rather, God’s loyal love bound himself to you in the blood of Jesus Christ, forever persevering

through every season of difficulty, darkness, and rebellion. One of the most beautiful aspects of the gospel is that what God has started He will also be faithfully loyal to complete (Philippians 1:6). You can trust God to be all that you need today because He loves with a loyal love.

REFLECTION

A Smoking Oven, Burning Torch, and Pathway of Blood

Genesis 15

¹After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.”

²But Abram said, “LORD God, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” ³Then Abram said, “Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!”

⁴And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, “This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.”

⁵Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

⁶And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

⁷Then He said to him, “I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it.”

⁸And he said, “LORD God, how shall I know that I will inherit it?”

⁹So He said to him, “Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” ¹⁰Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. ¹¹And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹²Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great

darkness fell upon him. ¹³Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. ¹⁴And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

¹⁷And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. ¹⁸On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying:

“To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates— ¹⁹the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, ²¹the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.”

DISCOVER

As Abram (later renamed Abraham) struggles with trusting God’s promises for an heir, God reiterates that Abram will have descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky. God performs a “cutting the

covenant” ceremony, telling Abram of his descendants’ future and reassuring him that He will keep His covenant promises.

LEARN

Back in Genesis 12, God chose Abram and his descendants to be the recipients of an extraordinary covenant. When we get to Genesis 15, however, fifteen years have elapsed, and Abram is still without a son. We know Abram is fearful (Genesis 15:1) and more than a little frustrated at God’s seeming unfaithfulness (“You have given me no offspring,” Genesis 15:3). As God reiterates His promises to Abraham, He beckons him outside of his tent, draws his gaze to the starry skies, and declares, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them ... So shall your descendants be” (Genesis 15:5). In a beautiful moment of trust, Abram believes the promises of God.

The rest of the chapter records what is called a “cutting the covenant” ceremony. In the Ancient Near East, a “cutting the covenant” ceremony was often used to seal or confirm a covenant relationship. Two parties would gather, cut a series of animals in half, and then walk through the pathway between the two pieces. By walking through the “blood path,” each party declared that if they failed to keep the terms of the covenant, they deserved the



same end as the sacrificed animals. However, in this covenant ceremony, God alone walked through the blood path (Genesis 15:17). God was declaring that only He was responsible for keeping the covenant promises He made.

APPLY

As we read in Genesis 39 this week, God still shows loyal, covenant-keeping love to His people. Despite Jacob's unfair favoritism, the brother's vengeful jealousy, and Judah's selfish greed, God is committed to keeping His promises. Even two hundred years after He walked through the blood path, "*the LORD was with (Joseph) and showed him loyal love*" (Genesis 39:21).

Like many things in the Scriptures, this scene of grace and faithfulness is a shadow of something far greater. In this passage, we are reminded that Jesus Christ also walked through a blood path to seal a new and greater covenant than the one with Abram. This blood, however, was not the blood of animals, but the blood of Christ Himself. Through His sacrificial death, Jesus paid the price of our sinful rebellion and delivered us from sin, death, and hell. Through His resurrection, Jesus secured every promise of God, guaranteeing abundant and eternal life for all those who follow Him. No matter the doubt in your heart or the darkness of your days, Jesus walked through the blood path on your behalf to secure every promise of God towards you.

REFLECTION

Discussion Week 2

Notes

Discussion Week 2

Application questions

1. God has created us for work (Genesis 2:15). In our passage this week, we saw Joseph approach his work with diligence, discipline, and dedication. What are some obstacles you face in bringing the same integrity to your work?

2. While Joseph's work was marked by integrity, what ultimately brought his work favor and blessing was "God's presence" (i.e. Joseph was open to God working in and through him to bring God glory in his situation). If work is inherently spiritual, what are some practical ways you can remember God is with you and empowering you to bring Him glory in your work?

3. Joseph faced a daily barrage of temptation from Potiphar's wife, yet maintained his integrity with Potiphar, his convictions, and God.

- What are some temptations you face regularly?

- What are some ways you can strengthen your integrity in order to fight against temptation?

4. What are some examples of seasons or moments when maintaining your integrity cost you and how did God sustain you in those times?

5. We read this week that even though Joseph was cast into prison, *“the LORD was with him and showed him loyal love”* (Genesis 39:21).

- What are some things you do in the ups and downs of life that help you remember God is always with you, He always loves you, and He is working all things for your good?

- Why is it significant that God’s love is loyal? How does that provide hope amid darkness?



Genesis 40+41

Week 3

A Blessing to All the Nations of the Earth

MEMORY VERSE

Genesis 41:50-52^(NKJV)

Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: "For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." And the name of the second he called Ephraim: "For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

Overview

DISCOVER & LEARN

Background & Themes

Devotionals

THE BAKER AND THE BUTLER

Genesis 40:1-23

FROM THE PIT TO THE PALACE

Genesis 41:1-36

THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME

Genesis 41:37-49; Philippians 2:5-11

A FRUITFUL FORGETFULNESS

Genesis 41:50-57

THE BOOKENDS OF THE OLD
TESTAMENT

Daniel 2

Discussion

NOTES

Genesis 40-41

APPLY

Application Questions

Overview Week 3

DISCOVER: WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE PASSAGE?

Context

At the beginning of Genesis 40, Joseph is in the pit of Potiphar's prison, filled with God's presence and clinging to His promises. By the end of Genesis 41, Joseph is the second most powerful person in the entire land of Egypt. In dramatic fashion, God raises Joseph from the pit of betrayal and forgottenness to bring about the salvation of all the families of the earth.



Key Words & Phrases

CLOTHING: The crescendo of Joseph’s rise from the pit to the palace is accompanied by a new set of clothing. Pharaoh “*took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck*” (Genesis 41:42). Whereas Joseph’s tunic of many colors is alluded to as a royal destiny, Joseph’s new royal ring, garments, and gold chain bestow on him power second only to Pharaoh himself. What was only a shadow in Genesis 37 became reality by the end of Genesis 41.

DREAMS: Dreams once again play an important role in both the unfolding story of Joseph and his character development. Joseph’s confinement with the king’s prisoners becomes highly significant when he is given the opportunity to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh’s chief butler and baker. Although the chief butler initially forgets Joseph, his favorable

reappointment to Pharaoh’s service sets the stage for Joseph’s rise two years later.

Of course, Pharaoh’s troubling dreams and the inability of his wise men and magicians to interpret them provides Joseph the opportunity to present himself before the king. Joseph’s successful interpretation as well as administrative wisdom in the face of the impending famine pave the way for Joseph to rise from prisoner to Prime Minister.

MANASSEH AND EPHRAIM: The names of Joseph’s sons represent a significant theme not only of Joseph’s life, but the story of Scripture itself. Joseph calls his first son *Manasseh*, because “*God made me forget all my toil and all my father’s house*” (Genesis 41:51). Likewise, Joseph calls his second son Ephraim, because “*God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction*” (Genesis 41:52). The light of the Lord’s gracious blessing and favor dispels the darkness of jealous betrayal and unjust imprisonment from Joseph’s past. God’s providence and loyal love plants seeds in the barrenness of Joseph’s suffering that eventually grow into a garden of grace and provision. Manasseh and Ephraim’s birth are living examples of what the Apostle Paul later writes: “*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*” (2 Corinthians 4:17).

LEARN: WHAT IS THE PASSAGE TEACHING?

The Nature of Humanity

Genesis 39 ends by emphasizing God's presence and loyal love (Genesis 39:21). In Genesis 40, although Joseph asks for the chief butler to show him *hesed*, or *loyal love* ("kindness," Genesis 40:14), the chief butler fails to remember Joseph. The story is intentionally comparing the fickle and often unreliable loyalty of humanity with God's never-failing faithfulness and loyal love. Although human beings often fail to keep their promises, God never fails to keep His.

Additionally, these chapters show Joseph's profound freedom, even amid his suffering. When Joseph stands before Pharaoh, he makes it clear that the God of the Hebrews – not the Egyptians – is the one who provides interpretations for dreams. Joseph's first words in front of the most powerful men on earth are not to curry favor but declare allegiance. Whether those words landed him back in prison, or worse, Joseph chooses to trust the providential hand and loyal love of his God over the power of any earthly ruler.

God & His Character

It is impossible to miss God's gracious hand of providence leading and guiding Joseph's life in these chapters. Although Joseph is unjustly thrown into prison by Potiphar, he is providentially placed "*where the king's prisoners were confined*" (Genesis 39:20). Joseph's interpretation of the chief butler's dream paves the way for him to interpret Pharaoh's dreams two years later. Pharaoh's promotion of Joseph not only feeds Egypt and the surrounding countries, it also fulfills part of the Abrahamic covenant to be a blessing to all the nations of the earth (Genesis 22:18). Every step of the way, God is working and weaving a plan that is far better than anyone anticipated.

Biggest Lesson

Joseph's rise from the pit to the palace is an extraordinary example of God's providence. God's faithfulness to weave a bright tapestry of salvation and deliverance from the muted tones of Joseph's suffering invites us to trust Him. Like Joseph, when we choose to trust God's providence and loyal love, we can think, speak, and act without self-interest or manipulation. Total dependence upon God does not make us weak, it makes us free.

The Baker and the Butler

Genesis 40:1-23

¹It came to pass after these things that the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their lord, the king of Egypt. ²And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief butler and the chief baker. ³So he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison, the place where Joseph was confined. ⁴And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them; so they were in custody for a while.

⁵Then the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison, had a dream, both of them, each man's dream in one night and each man's dream with its own interpretation. ⁶And Joseph came in to them in the morning and looked at them, and saw that they were sad. ⁷So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in the custody of his lord's house, saying, "Why do you look so sad today?"

⁸And they said to him, "We each have had a dream, and there is no interpreter of it."

So Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me, please."

⁹Then the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, "Behold, in my dream a vine was before me, ¹⁰and in the vine were three branches; it was as though it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and its clusters brought forth ripe grapes. ¹¹Then Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand."

¹²And Joseph said to him, "This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days. ¹³Now within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner, when you were his butler. ¹⁴But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of

this house. ¹⁵For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon.”

¹⁶When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, “I also was in my dream, and there were three white baskets on my head. ¹⁷In the uppermost basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, and the birds ate them out of the basket on my head.”

¹⁸So Joseph answered and said, “This is the interpretation of it: The three baskets are three days. ¹⁹Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat your flesh from you.”

²⁰Now it came to pass on the third day, which was Pharaoh’s birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. ²¹Then he restored the chief butler to his butlership again, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh’s hand. ²²But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. ²³Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

DISCOVER

As Joseph faithfully stewards his leadership in Potiphar’s prison, he comes to oversee Pharaoh’s chief baker and chief butler. Both experience dreams on the same night. The butler’s dream indicates he will be restored to his place in Pharaoh’s household, while the baker’s dream shows he will be hung for

his transgressions. Although Joseph asks the butler to remember him, Joseph is betrayed and forgotten in the pit once again.

LEARN

Joseph’s descent into the pit of Potiphar’s prison included being “*confined with the king’s prisoners*” (Genesis 39:20). Although it looks as though Joseph is farther than ever from fulfilling his calling, God’s providential hand is guiding Joseph’s path every step of the way. During Joseph’s time in prison, Pharaoh’s chief butler and chief baker come under his care.

Joseph’s compassion for the distraught baker and butler once again indicates the dedication, diligence, and discipline he brings to his work. He does not wallow or waste away in prison. Filled with the presence of God and convinced of His loyal love, Joseph intentionally shepherds the prisoners under his care. Upon hearing of their disconcerting dreams, Joseph declares, “*Do not interpretations belong to God?*” (Genesis 40:8). Joseph immediately understands God has prepared him for this moment and will equip him with all he needs to accomplish His will.

The divergent interpretations of the butler and baker’s dreams are troubling. The butler’s dream ends with life and restoration, while the baker’s dream ends in death and degradation. Joseph has one request of the butler: “*But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness (hesed, “loyal love”) to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house*” (Genesis 40:14). If the butler is restored, then maybe he can appeal

to Pharaoh and Joseph might be released from his unjust imprisonment.

Significantly, Joseph's requests "kindness" from the butler. Joseph asks for loyalty – just as he is instrumental in the butler's release, so the butler might show him the same kindness. Sorrowfully, however, "*the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him*" (Genesis 40:23).

APPLY

The repeated use of the word *hesed* in both Genesis 39:21 and 40:14 creates a powerful comparison. The butler's lack of concern, remembrance, or kindness towards Joseph is contrasted with God's never-failing, covenant-keeping love. We consistently fail to live up to our commitments, sometimes hurting or betraying others in the process. Are you in

a season where you are experiencing the bitterness of betrayal? Take some time to grieve for what is lost then plead for the Lord to bring forgiveness and reconciliation. Remember the commitment of God's loyal love towards you and pray for the Lord to soften and renew your heart.

Unfortunately, we too are often like the chief butler. In spite of our sin and rebellion, God extends faithfulness and loyal love towards us. Yet, like the chief butler, we so often neglect extending the same mercy and kindness to others. If you are heavy with the weight of past decisions and broken relationships, the Lord invites you to confess your sins before Him (1 John 1:9). Think through specific ways you can seek forgiveness from those you have hurt and take steps to be reconciled with them.

REFLECTION

Devotional Day 2

From the Pit to the Palace

Genesis 41:1-36

¹Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river. ²Suddenly there came up out of the river seven cows, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. ³Then behold, seven other cows came up after them out of the river, ugly and gaunt, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the river. ⁴And the ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven fine looking and fat cows. So Pharaoh awoke. ⁵He slept and dreamed a second time; and suddenly seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, plump and good. ⁶Then behold, seven thin heads, blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. ⁷And the seven thin heads devoured the seven plump and full heads. So Pharaoh awoke, and indeed, it was a dream. ⁸Now it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of

Egypt and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh.

⁹Then the chief butler spoke to Pharaoh, saying: “I remember my faults this day. ¹⁰When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, both me and the chief baker, ¹¹we each had a dream in one night, he and I. Each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his own dream. ¹²Now there was a young Hebrew man with us there, a servant of the captain of the guard. And we told him, and he interpreted our dreams for us; to each man he interpreted according to his own dream. ¹³And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him.”

¹⁴Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; and he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh.

¹⁵And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it.”

¹⁶So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace.”

¹⁷Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: “Behold, in my dream I stood on the bank of the river. ¹⁸Suddenly seven cows came up out of the river, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. ¹⁹Then behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such ugliness as I have never seen in all the land of Egypt. ²⁰And the gaunt and ugly cows ate up the first seven, the fat cows. ²¹When they had eaten them up, no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they were just as ugly as at the beginning. So I awoke. ²²Also I saw in my dream, and suddenly seven heads came up on one stalk, full and good. ²³Then behold, seven heads, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. ²⁴And the thin heads devoured the seven good heads. So I told this to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me.”

²⁵Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do: ²⁶The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads are

seven years; the dreams are one. ²⁷And the seven thin and ugly cows which came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty heads blighted by the east wind are seven years of famine. ²⁸This is the thing which I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do. ²⁹Indeed seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; ³⁰but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land. ³¹So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it will be very severe. ³²And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

³³“Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. ³⁴Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years. ³⁵And let them gather all the food of those good years that are coming, and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. ³⁶Then that food shall be as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land may not perish during the famine.”



DISCOVER

Pharaoh awakes from two dreams. The first includes seven healthy, fat cows who are consumed by seven unhealthy, gaunt cows. The second dream includes seven healthy, plump heads of grain that are devoured by seven unhealthy, blighted heads of grain. Deeply troubled, Pharaoh finds even his best wise men and magicians are unable to interpret the dreams. The chief butler remembers his fault and tells Pharaoh of Joseph's ability to interpret dreams. Pharaoh calls Joseph from the prison, shaves his head, and clothes him in new garments. Then, Joseph successfully interprets Pharaoh's dreams.

LEARN

As Pharaoh awakens suddenly following his two very troubling dreams, Joseph is *"brought quickly out of the dungeon"* (Genesis 39:14) to be presented before Pharaoh. The chief butler's remembrance of Joseph sets a high-stakes meeting that could mean Joseph's freedom from his unjust imprisonment. Immediately, Pharaoh inquires of Joseph, *"I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it"* (Genesis 41:15). Stunningly,

Joseph responds negatively, *"It is not in me,"* and in the same breath draws Pharaoh's gaze to another: *"God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace"* (Genesis 41:16).

Joseph's declaration is a stunning moment of courage. Pharaoh knows Joseph is a Hebrew and does not worship the Egyptian gods. When Joseph declares, *"God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace,"* he is also effectively saying, "the Egyptian gods cannot give you an answer of peace." Joseph's first words before the most powerful man on earth are not meant to court favor, but declare allegiance. Likewise, before giving his interpretation of the dreams, Joseph declares, *"God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do"* (Genesis 41:25). Not only is God the one who interprets dreams, but He is the very one who sends the dreams and will ultimately accomplish what is revealed by them.

By serving God, Joseph is released from the pressure of having to appease or manipulate Pharaoh. Even as a prisoner hoping for release, Joseph's allegiance to God makes him the freest man in the room.

APPLY

Joseph's story is not stunning because of his dramatic rise from the pit to the palace, but because his faithfulness is never contingent on his circumstances. Friends, *this is freedom*. Think about it – what could you do to Joseph? There is no punishment that could sway his convictions; there is no promise of release that

could convince him to renounce his God. Whether he is thrown in the pit or promoted in the palace, Joseph's faithfulness never wavers. What keeps you from trusting God like Joseph? Take some time to think through the obstacles that may be inhibiting your full dependence upon God and obedience to His commands. Then, ask the Lord to free you from those things!

REFLECTION

The Name Above Every Name

Genesis 41:37-49

³⁷So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. ³⁸And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?”

³⁹Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. ⁴⁰You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you.” ⁴¹And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.”

⁴²Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. ⁴³And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, “Bow

the knee!” So he set him over all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁴Pharaoh also said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.” ⁴⁵And Pharaoh called Joseph’s name Zaphnath-Paaneah. And he gave him as a wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On. So Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.

⁴⁶Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁷Now in the seven plentiful years the ground brought forth abundantly. ⁴⁸So he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities; he laid up in every city the food of the fields which surrounded them. ⁴⁹Joseph gathered very much grain, as the sand of the sea, until he stopped counting, for it was immeasurable.

Philippians 2:5-11

⁵Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. ⁹Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

DISCOVER

Upon hearing Joseph's interpretation, Pharaoh promotes him to oversee the collection and distribution of grain. Joseph receives Pharaoh's signet ring, new royal robes, and a second chariot – all indicative of his new royal position.

LEARN

Joseph's story provides a powerful parallel to the life of Christ described in Philippians 2:5-11.

- Like Joseph, who went from favored son to foreign slave, Jesus too *“did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men”* (Philippians 2:6-7)
- Like Joseph, who was stripped of his garments out of total obedience to God, Jesus too was stripped of His garments and *“became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross”* (Philippians 2:8).
- Like Joseph, whose obedience led to his promotion from prisoner to Prime Minister, Jesus' obedience led to His exaltation: *“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him”* (Philippians 2:9).
- Like Joseph, who was bestowed with a new name at which every Egyptian would bow, so Jesus was *“given ... the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth”* (Philippians 2:9-10).

APPLY

The Apostle Paul begins this passage in Philippians with a straightforward command: *“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 2:5). There are two ways we cultivate the mind of Christ as Joseph does. Like Joseph, we cultivate the mind of Christ first through faithfulness to Jesus. In the Kingdom of God, the pathway to exaltation is humble suffering, and success is measured only in faithful obedience to Christ. If you are in a season of suffering today, take heart! Our Lord walked the pathway of suffering before

you and will be faithful to sustain you in every season of trial and tribulation.

Having the mind of Christ also means drawing our gaze away from our present suffering and looking forward to the future glory (Romans 8:18). Whereas Joseph is clothed in regal garments, one day all God's people will be arrayed in garments of righteousness, "*clean and bright*" (Revelation 19:7), far more resplendent than those of Joseph. Whereas Joseph is made Prime Minister over all Egypt, one day all God's people will be "*kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth*" (Revelation 5:10).

Charles Spurgeon powerfully wrote: "If your eyes cannot see the blissful future: borrow the telescope of faith; wipe the misty breath of your doubts from the glass; look through it and behold the coming glory" (*Morning and Evening, April 2*). For those in Christ, Joseph's story from the pit to the palace will one day be your story. For those who might be in a season of suffering, one day you will be clothed in new robes and you will be a king and priest before the Lord. Take heart - pick up the telescope of faith and see the coming glory.

REFLECTION

Devotional Day 4

A Fruitful Forgetfulness

Genesis 41:50-57

⁵⁰And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. ⁵¹Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: “For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father’s house.” ⁵²And the name of the second he called Ephraim: “For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.”

⁵³Then the seven years of plenty which were in the land of Egypt ended, ⁵⁴and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. The famine was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. ⁵⁵So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, do.” ⁵⁶The famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians. And the famine became

severe in the land of Egypt. ⁵⁷So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, because the famine was severe in all lands.

DISCOVER

Joseph has two sons: Manasseh and Ephraim. As the seven years of plenty give way to the seven years of famine, Joseph wisely oversees the distribution of grain to Egypt and all the countries of the earth.

LEARN

There are two powerful pictures of God’s providence in this passage. The first comes from Joseph’s two sons. Joseph names his first son “Manasseh” because “God made him forget all my toil and all my father’s house” (Genesis 41:51). He names his second son “Ephraim” because “God caused him to be fruitful in the land of my affliction” (Genesis 41:52). Manasseh and Ephraim are living illustrations of the key theme of Joseph’s entire story: what was meant for evil, God Himself meant for good. Notice

the names are tied to God Himself. Only God could mean the bitterness of betrayal, the desperation of slavery, and the shame of prison for good. In his children, Joseph begins to see the goodness of God amid the suffering he endures.

Additionally, as the countries of the earth begin flooding into Egypt looking for grain (Genesis 41:57), Joseph realizes the two-century-old promises given to Abraham are coming to fruition: *“In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice”* (Genesis 22:18). For over a decade, Joseph suffers bereavement and defeat again and again, only to see God’s covenant promises come to pass. While the Serpent meant to destroy the covenant family through betrayal and sin, God Himself meant it for the salvation of all the families of the earth.

APPLY

Do you trust God’s providence in your life? You may yearn deeply to feel the same fruitful forgetfulness that Joseph did. Maybe you are trying to forget a past of mistakes, sin, and regret – a past that always seems to haunt you. Like Joseph, look to

what God has done for you. As God declared through the prophet Isaiah, *“I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins”* (Isaiah 43:25). Only in Christ are your sins blotted out, and only in Christ does God remember them no more! Even as you contend against the consequences of the past, you can rest knowing that the blood of Christ has given you victory over the sins of your past!

In what circumstance or season of affliction do you struggle to see fruit? Like Joseph, look to what God promises His people. Again, God declared through His prophet Isaiah, *“Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the LORD ... For the LORD comforts Zion; he comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song”* (Isaiah 51:1, 3). Only the Lord can grow a garden in the desolate wasteland of our suffering. Continue to pursue the Lord in righteousness; He will bring fruitfulness even to the most barren places.

REFLECTION

The Bookends of the Old Testament

Daniel 2

¹Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him. ²Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. ³And the king said to them, "I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream."

⁴Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation."

⁵The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap. ⁶However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards,

and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation."

⁷They answered again and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation."

⁸The king answered and said, "I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: ⁹if you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation."

¹⁰The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, "There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. ¹¹It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it

to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.”

¹²For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave the command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. ¹³So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.

¹⁴Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king’s guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon; ¹⁵he answered and said to Arioch the king’s captain, “Why is the decree from the king so urgent?” Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel.

¹⁶So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. ¹⁷Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, ¹⁸that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. ¹⁹Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

²⁰Daniel answered and said:

*“Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,
For wisdom and might are His.*

*²¹And He changes the times and the seasons;
He removes kings and raises up kings;
He gives wisdom to the wise*

And knowledge to those who have understanding.

*²²He reveals deep and secret things;
He knows what is in the darkness,
And light dwells with Him.*

*²³“I thank You and praise You,
O God of my fathers;*

*You have given me wisdom and might,
And have now made known to me what we asked
of You,
For You have made known to us the king’s
demand.”*

²⁴Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: “Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation.”

²⁵Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, “I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation.”

²⁶The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, “Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?”

²⁷Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, “The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. ²⁸But there

is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: ²⁹As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be. ³⁰But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for our sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart.

³¹“You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. ³²This image’s head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, ³³its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. ³⁴You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. ³⁵Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

³⁶“This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. ³⁷You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given

you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; ³⁸and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold. ³⁹But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. ⁴⁰And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. ⁴¹Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. ⁴²And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. ⁴³As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. ⁴⁴And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. ⁴⁵Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.”

⁴⁶Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. ⁴⁷The king answered Daniel, and said, “Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret.” ⁴⁸Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon. ⁴⁹Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

DISCOVER

King Nebuchadnezzar, after just two years on the throne, awakens in the middle of the night following a troublesome dream. He summons the magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and Chaldeans to interpret the dream, but they are unsuccessful even to the point of death. To avoid death, Daniel, a young Hebrew exile and slave, entreats his God for the correct interpretation. He gives Nebuchadnezzar the correct interpretation and is given authority to rule over the province of Babylon.

LEARN

Nearly thirteen centuries after Joseph interpreted dreams in the court of Pharaoh, another young Hebrew exiled to serve in a foreign court is given the opportunity to interpret dreams for King Nebuchadnezzar. *Before reading below, take some*

time to read through Daniel 2 and note any connections between the stories of Joseph and Daniel.

The connections between Joseph and Daniel are numerous:

- Pharaoh’s dreams occur two years into Joseph’s imprisonment (Genesis 41:1); Nebuchadnezzar’s dream occurs two years into his reign (Daniel 2:1)
- Both Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar’s dreams are “troubling” and awaken them from sleep (Genesis 41:8; Daniel 2:1, 3)
- The kings’ wise men and magicians are unable to interpret the dreams (Genesis 41:8; Daniel 2:4-11)
- Joseph and Daniel are both introduced by their ethnicity (Genesis 41:2; Daniel 2:25)
- Both Hebrew boys attribute dream interpretation to God alone (Genesis 41:16; Daniel 2:28-30)
- The dreams concern events in the future (Genesis 41:26-31; Daniel 2:45)
- Joseph and Daniel are promoted to being rulers in a foreign land (Genesis 41:41; Daniel 2:48)

Daniel’s experience in King Nebuchadnezzar’s court parallels Joseph’s experience in Pharaoh’s court. Like Joseph, who is sent to a foreign land to

eventually preserve the Abrahamic family, Daniel and the exiles are sent into Babylon to preserve the messianic line from corruption in the land of Canaan. Both Joseph and Daniel pay careful attention to their personal integrity before men and God (Genesis 39:8-9; Daniel 1:4, 1:8-16, 6:10). Both find favor with their captors due to their great wisdom and administrative skill (Genesis 39:2-6; Daniel 1:4, 17, 5:11).

Why are these connections important? Because God always paints with the same hues of deliverance, salvation, and redemption. Over a millennia after the death of Joseph, the Serpent still strikes at the heels of God's people. What the Serpent meant for evil by subjecting God's people to the horrors of conquest and exile, God Himself meant for good. Through the exile, a righteous remnant of Jews is preserved, and the messianic line is protected from

certain destruction. From the beginning of the Old Testament to the end, the same truths resonate: God is faithfully sovereign over all things, He always keeps His promises, and He loves to lavish His grace on those who least deserve it.

APPLY

God bookends the Old Testament with two stories of faithfulness amid exile and deliverance against the greatest odds. Like Joseph and Daniel, we too are strangers and exiles sojourning on the earth (Hebrews 11:13). We are caught between the incredible promises of future glory and the reality of suffering and defeat in this life. How does being a stranger and exile on the earth rearrange our priorities? How do the stories of Joseph and Daniel give us a blueprint for how to flourish as exiles in this life?

REFLECTION

7. Like Joseph and Daniel, Hebrews 11:13 tells us that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. How does being a stranger and exile on the earth rearrange our priorities? How do the stories of Joseph and Daniel's faithfulness amid exile give us a blueprint for how to flourish as exiles in this life?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

- Read Philippians 2:5-11. What does it practically look like to *“have the mind which was in Christ Jesus”*?
- As we saw this week, Charles Spurgeon wrote: “If your eyes cannot see the blissful future: borrow the telescope of faith; wipe the misty breath of your doubts from the glass; look through it and behold the coming glory.” What misty doubts might hinder you from seeing the fullness of the coming glory? What does it practically look like to “look through the telescope of faith”?

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

Genesis 42-45

Week 4 Reconciliation & Redemption

MEMORY VERSE

Genesis 45:5^(NKJV)

"But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life."

Overview

DISCOVER & LEARN

Background & Themes

Devotionals

JOSEPH'S TEST AND GOD'S MERCY

Genesis 42

A SEAT AT THE TABLE

Genesis 43

JUDAH'S SACRIFICIAL LOVE

Genesis 44

FOR THE LIVES OF MANY

Genesis 45:1-14; Isaiah 53

IN LIGHT OF GOD'S
FORGIVENESS

Genesis 45:15-28; Matthew 18:21-22

Discussion

NOTES

Genesis 42-45

APPLY

Application Questions

Overview Week 4

DISCOVER: WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE PASSAGE?

Context

Genesis 42-45 captures the reunion of Joseph and his brothers in Egypt during a severe famine. Joseph, once sold into slavery by his brothers, now holds a position of power and influence as the governor of Egypt. The chapters reveal God's providence over Joseph's journey and the reconciliation that follows between Joseph and his family. The narrative speaks to a broken, sinful humanity that often acts out of fear and jealousy, yet it also shows how God can transform even the most painful experiences for His redemptive purposes.

Key Words & Phrases

FAMINE: A time of great need that drives Joseph's brothers to Egypt and represents how crises often lead to moments of divine intervention.

WEEPING: Joseph's deep emotional response illustrates the pain and vulnerability that often accompany reconciliation.

FORGIVENESS: The heart of Joseph's interaction with his brothers points to a greater forgiveness that we receive in Christ.

PROVISION: Joseph's role in saving not only Egypt but also his own family shows God's care and sovereignty for His people.

LEARN: WHAT IS THE PASSAGE TEACHING?

God & His Biggest Character Lesson

In these chapters, God's providence is front and center. He takes what was intended for harm and turns it into something good. He orchestrates circumstances not just for Joseph's good but for the preservation of a nation. He will do this to bring forth the One who will crush the Serpent and ultimately restore what was lost in the Fall (Genesis 3:15). God is faithful to His promises, even when they seem delayed. His grace is displayed in the way He brings healing and restoration to a fractured family.

The story of Joseph and his brothers teaches us that reconciliation is both possible and necessary, even after deep betrayal. But this is only possible because God is at work in the messiness of human relationships, turning even our worst moments into opportunities for redemption. We are reminded that forgiveness, while costly, paves the way for peace and restoration, just as Joseph's forgiveness of his brothers points us to the ultimate forgiveness we receive through Christ.

The Nature of Humanity

Joseph's brothers demonstrate the fallen nature of humanity, prone to jealousy, fear, and self-preservation. Yet, through their guilt and eventual repentance, we see how people can change when confronted with their sin. Joseph, as a Christ-like figure, models forgiveness, showing that while human hearts may be deceitful, they can also be transformed by grace. The story reminds us that true reconciliation requires both acknowledgment of wrongdoing and a heart softened by mercy.



Devotional Day 1

Joseph's Test and God's Mercy

Genesis 42

¹When Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, “Why do you look at one another?” ²And he said, “Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may live and not die.”

³So Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. ⁴But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, “Lest some calamity befall him.” ⁵And the sons of Israel went to buy grain among those who journeyed, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

⁶Now Joseph was governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with their faces to the earth. ⁷Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger

to them and spoke roughly to them. Then he said to them, “Where do you come from?”

And they said, “From the land of Canaan to buy food.”

⁸So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. ⁹Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them, and said to them, “You are spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land!”

¹⁰And they said to him, “No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. ¹¹We are all one man's sons; we are honest men; your servants are not spies.”

¹²But he said to them, “No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land.”

¹³And they said, “Your servants are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and

in fact, the youngest is with our father today, and one is no more.”

¹⁴But Joseph said to them, “It is as I spoke to you, saying, ‘You are spies!’ ¹⁵In this manner you shall be tested: By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. ¹⁶Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether there is any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies!” ¹⁷So he put them all together in prison three days.

¹⁸Then Joseph said to them the third day, “Do this and live, for I fear God: ¹⁹If you are honest men, let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house; but you, go and carry grain for the famine of your houses. ²⁰And bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die.”

And they did so. ²¹Then they said to one another, “We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us.”

²²And Reuben answered them, saying, “Did I not speak to you, saying, ‘Do not sin against the boy’; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us.” ²³But they did not know that Joseph understood them, for he spoke to them through an interpreter. ²⁴And he turned himself away from them and wept. Then he returned

to them again, and talked with them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.

²⁵Then Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain, to restore every man’s money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. Thus he did for them. ²⁶So they loaded their donkeys with the grain and departed from there. ²⁷But as one of them opened his sack to give his donkey feed at the encampment, he saw his money; and there it was, in the mouth of his sack. ²⁸So he said to his brothers, “My money has been restored, and there it is, in my sack!” Then their hearts failed them and they were afraid, saying to one another, “What is this that God has done to us?”

²⁹Then they went to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan and told him all that had happened to them, saying: ³⁰“The man who is lord of the land spoke roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. ³¹But we said to him, ‘We are honest men; we are not spies. ³²We are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no more, and the youngest is with our father this day in the land of Canaan.’ ³³Then the man, the lord of the country, said to us, ‘By this I will know that you are honest men: Leave one of your brothers here with me, take food for the famine of your households, and be gone. ³⁴And bring your youngest brother to me; so I shall know that you are not spies, but that you are honest men. I will grant your brother to you, and you may trade in the land.’ ”

³⁵*Then it happened as they emptied their sacks, that surprisingly each man's bundle of money was in his sack; and when they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.* ³⁶*And Jacob their father said to them, "You have bereaved me: Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and you want to take Benjamin. All these things are against me."*

³⁷*Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying, "Kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you; put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you."*

³⁸*But he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If any calamity should befall him along the way in which you go, then you would bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave."*

DISCOVER

Within this passage, Jacob sends ten of his sons to Egypt to buy grain during a famine, leaving Benjamin behind. When they arrive, they unknowingly meet Joseph, who recognizes them but does not reveal his identity. Joseph tests his brothers by accusing them of being spies, imprisoning Simeon, and demanding they bring Benjamin back to prove their honesty.

LEARN

In Genesis 42, we come to a transformative moment in the story of Joseph. His brothers, driven by famine, are sent to Egypt. Jacob, their father, allows all his sons except Benjamin, the youngest, to

make the journey. His favoritism toward Benjamin, Rachel's son, echoes the same favoritism he once showed to Joseph. Despite years passing, the family's old wounds remain, still haunted by grief and partiality. When Joseph's brothers arrive in Egypt, they unknowingly bow before their brother, fulfilling the very dream that once fueled their jealousy. But Joseph, now a powerful figure, recognizes them immediately. We might wonder what he felt in that moment: bitterness, anger, or perhaps the desire for revenge? Yet, instead of acting impulsively, Joseph tests them with a carefully considered plan.

At first glance, Joseph's actions, speaking harshly and holding Simeon captive, might seem like the response of someone seeking to pay back old wrongs. However, the deeper we go into the narrative, the more we see Joseph's plan is not driven by revenge but by a desire to bring his brothers to repentance. He does not merely test their integrity; he brings their long-buried guilt to the surface. The brothers are convicted, recognizing that their past sin against Joseph still weighs heavily on their hearts. What they hid away for so long now comes to light. Joseph's emotions are also on full display. He overhears their conversation about their guilt and, unable to contain his grief, weeps. In this moment of compassion, we see a picture of Christ's own heart toward us. Our sin grieves the heart of God, but rather than responding with wrath, He moves toward us in mercy.

APPLY

Joseph's actions remind us of how God works in our lives. There are times when it feels like God is harsh, when we face trials that seem too difficult to bear. But often, these moments are not meant to harm us, but to test and refine our character, as we see in James 1:2-4 and Hebrews 12:5-11. Joseph wants to see if his brothers have changed, if they have integrity, even when no one is watching. Similarly, God uses trials to reveal what is in our hearts. Like Joseph's brothers, we cannot hide our guilt or sin forever. Friend, when our sin is left in

the dark, it festers and grows, but when brought to light, it can be met with forgiveness and restoration. God's heart is grieved by our sin, but He also offers us compassion and mercy through Christ. Like Joseph's brothers, is there an area of your life where God may invite you to bring something into the light so that you can experience His compassion and mercy? Take some time today to reflect and ask God to search your heart and bring to light any sin that needs to be pruned from your life, so that you may walk forward in God's grace and mercy.

REFLECTION

Devotional Day 2

A Seat at the Table

Genesis 43

¹Now the famine was severe in the land. ²And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, “Go back, buy us a little food.”

³But Judah spoke to him, saying, “The man solemnly warned us, saying, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.’ ⁴If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. ⁵But if you will not send him, we will not go down; for the man said to us, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.’”

⁶And Israel said, “Why did you deal so wrongfully with me as to tell the man whether you had still another brother?”

⁷But they said, “The man asked us pointedly about ourselves and our family, saying, ‘Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?’ And we told him according to these words. Could we

possibly have known that he would say, ‘Bring your brother down?’”

⁸Then Judah said to Israel his father, “Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones. ⁹I myself will be surety for him; from my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. ¹⁰For if we had not lingered, surely by now we would have returned this second time.”

¹¹And their father Israel said to them, “If it must be so, then do this: Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry down a present for the man—a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. ¹²Take double money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight. ¹³Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man. ¹⁴And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release your

other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved!”

¹⁵So the men took that present and Benjamin, and they took double money in their hand, and arose and went down to Egypt; and they stood before Joseph.

¹⁶When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, “Take these men to my home, and slaughter an animal and make ready; for these men will dine with me at noon.” ¹⁷Then the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man brought the men into Joseph’s house.

¹⁸Now the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph’s house; and they said, “It is because of the money, which was returned in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may make a case against us and seize us, to take us as slaves with our donkeys.”

¹⁹When they drew near to the steward of Joseph’s house, they talked with him at the door of the house, ²⁰and said, “O sir, we indeed came down the first time to buy food; ²¹but it happened, when we came to the encampment, that we opened our sacks, and there, each man’s money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it back in our hand. ²²And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks.”

²³But he said, “Peace be with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money.” Then he brought Simeon out to them.

²⁴So the man brought the men into Joseph’s house and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys feed. ²⁵Then they made the present ready for Joseph’s coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there.

²⁶And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed down before him to the earth. ²⁷Then he asked them about their well-being, and said, “Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?”

²⁸And they answered, “Your servant our father is in good health; he is still alive.” And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves.

²⁹Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother’s son, and said, “Is this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?” And he said, “God be gracious to you, my son.” ³⁰Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought somewhere to weep. And he went into his chamber and wept there. ³¹Then he washed his face and came out; and he restrained himself, and said, “Serve the bread.”

³²So they set him a place by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians. ³³And they sat before him, the first-born according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in astonishment at one another. ³⁴Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

DISCOVER

In Genesis 43, as the famine worsens, Jacob reluctantly agrees to send Benjamin to Egypt with his other sons to buy more grain. When they arrive, Joseph welcomes them into his house, treats them to a feast, and shows special favor to Benjamin, though he still hides his identity. The brothers are confused but relieved when they are treated well, and Simeon is released from imprisonment.

LEARN

Despite his reluctance to send Benjamin to Egypt, Jacob's hand is forced by the severity of the famine. It is Judah who steps up, urging his father to let him take Benjamin, assuring Jacob that he will personally bear the responsibility for his brother's safety. This is no small moment. Judah, a forefather of Christ, is willing to sacrifice his own security for the sake of saving his family. In this, we see a glimpse of

Christ, the ultimate Savior, who would one day offer Himself as the Bread of Life for the world. Judah's transformation is key. Once driven by self-interest, he now exhibits a willingness to risk everything for the sake of his family. What a powerful foreshadowing of the self-giving love we see perfectly fulfilled in Christ.

When Joseph's brothers arrive at his house, fear grips them, as they worry about facing retribution for their past betrayal. Ironically, they fear the same suffering they once inflicted on Joseph. However, Joseph's steward reassures them, telling them not to fear because God has already provided for them. As Joseph meets them, he asks about their well-being. The word he uses is "Shalom," which appears three times in the passage. This Hebrew term goes beyond peace, literally meaning a sense of wholeness and restoration. Just as sin shattered the peace in Eden, so too did the brothers' betrayal disrupt the harmony of their family. Instead of seeking revenge, Joseph shows grace and concern for them, especially for his younger brother Benjamin. During the meal that follows, Joseph arranges the seating and gives Benjamin five times more food than the others, a subtle test to observe how his brothers would react to this favoritism. Years earlier, jealousy consumed them when Joseph was favored. Now, Joseph watches to see if their hearts have changed, using the abundant food and wine to ease tension and reveal any lingering resentment.

APPLY

Even as Joseph tests his brothers, we see that his heart softens for the hope of grace and reconciliation. This scene reflects the gospel itself. Joseph, the beloved son who suffers unjustly, prepares a feast for those who betrayed him. His brothers, once his enemies, now sit at his table, undeserving yet welcomed. Joseph's grace toward them reflects God's

grace toward us in Christ. Though we are unworthy, God invites us to His table, offering reconciliation and the generous gift of His Spirit. In Christ, we experience both forgiveness and the restoration of peace. How does the reality of God's grace, that welcomes undeserving people to His table, shape the way you live and extend grace to others? Who do you need to invite to sit at your table?

REFLECTION

Devotional Day 3

Judah's Sacrificial Love

Genesis 44

¹And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, “Fill the men’s sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man’s money in the mouth of his sack. ²Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain money.” So he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. ³As soon as the morning dawned, the men were sent away, they and their donkeys. ⁴When they had gone out of the city, and were not yet far off, Joseph said to his steward, “Get up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid evil for good? ⁵Is not this the one from which my lord drinks, and with which he indeed practices divination? You have done evil in so doing.’”

⁶So he overtook them, and he spoke to them these same words. ⁷And they said to him, “Why does my lord say these words? Far be it from us that your servants should do such a thing. ⁸Look, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money

which we found in the mouth of our sacks. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord’s house?

⁹With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord’s slaves.”

¹⁰And he said, “Now also let it be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and you shall be blameless.” ¹¹Then each man speedily let down his sack to the ground, and each opened his sack. ¹²So he searched. He began with the oldest and left off with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack. ¹³Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city.

¹⁴So Judah and his brothers came to Joseph’s house, and he was still there; and they fell before him on the ground. ¹⁵And Joseph said to them, “What deed is this you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice divination?”

¹⁶Then Judah said, “What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your

servants; here we are, my lord's slaves, both we and he also with whom the cup was found."

¹⁷But he said, "Far be it from me that I should do so; the man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. And as for you, go up in peace to your father."

¹⁸Then Judah came near to him and said: "O my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's hearing, and do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you are even like Pharaoh. ¹⁹My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?' ²⁰And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, who is young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him.' ²¹Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.' ²²And we said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' ²³But you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.'

²⁴"So it was, when we went up to your servant my father, that we told him the words of my lord. ²⁵And our father said, 'Go back and buy us a little food.' ²⁶But we said, 'We cannot go down; if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we may not see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.' ²⁷Then your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons; ²⁸and the

one went out from me, and I said, "Surely he is torn to pieces"; and I have not seen him since. ²⁹But if you take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.'

³⁰"Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, ³¹it will happen, when he sees that the lad is not with us, that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. ³²For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.' ³³Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. ³⁴For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?"

DISCOVER

Joseph tests his brothers further by secretly placing his silver cup in Benjamin's grain sack before they depart. After the brothers leave, Joseph's steward catches up with them, accuses them of theft, and finds the cup in Benjamin's sack. He leads the brothers back to Joseph. Judah pleads for Benjamin's release, offering himself as a slave in his place. He explains that returning without Benjamin would devastate their father, Jacob.

LEARN

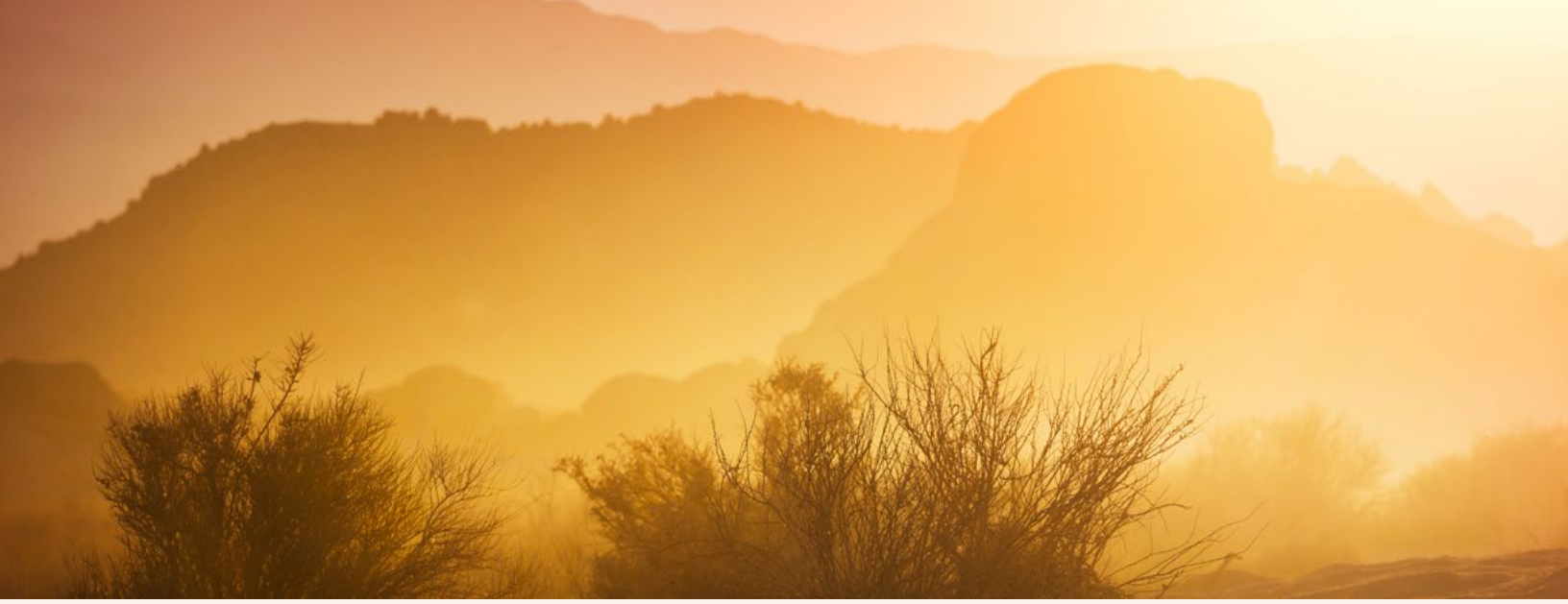
After 22 years of separation, Joseph and his brothers are finally reunited, but not without a final test to reveal the condition of their hearts. Guided by God, Joseph orchestrates this last trial by instructing his steward to fill their bags with food, return the silver, and place his personal cup in Benjamin's sack. The sacred importance of the cup was emphasized by the steward, and Joseph watches to see how they react. Would they abandon Benjamin to the same fate they once inflicted upon him? Or had time and experience brought about genuine transformation in their hearts?

Joseph's test aims to expose whether jealousy and bitterness still linger in his brothers' hearts. When the cup is discovered in Benjamin's bag, instead of reacting with relief, the brothers tear their clothes in grief, a sign of deep sorrow, as if they lost a loved one. This reaction marks a profound change from their past. Years ago, they sold Joseph without remorse, but now, they loyally support Benjamin, even if it means slavery or death. Judah's plea to take Benjamin's place as a slave stands out as one of the most moving moments in Scripture. The same man who once led the effort to sell Joseph now steps forward to sell himself in place of Benjamin. The same

man who denied the care of his daughter-in-law, is now the one who cares for his family. God transformed Judah's life. He is no longer living in his own selfishness, but now he is a vessel of God's deliverance for his family. His willingness to offer himself in Benjamin's place points us directly to Jesus Christ, the ultimate example of sacrificial love, who would one day offer Himself on our behalf.

APPLY

Judah's transformation reminds us that no one is beyond the reach of God's grace, and true repentance is marked by a complete change in both heart and action. The man who once acted out of selfish ambition becomes a model of selfless love. His growth from self-centeredness to sacrificial care for his family challenges us to examine our own lives. Are we willing to set aside our pride and personal desires for the sake of others, even when it costs us something? In Judah's story, we see a foreshadowing of Christ's greater sacrifice, but we are also called to follow in His footsteps, allowing God to reshape us from the inside out. How might God call you to step forward in love and sacrifice, even in relationships where you have previously failed?



REFLECTION 

Devotional Day 4

For the Lives of Many

Genesis 45:1-14

¹Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, “Make everyone go out from me!” So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. ²And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it.

³Then Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph; does my father still live?” But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. ⁴And Joseph said to his brothers, “Please come near to me.” So they came near. Then he said: “I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. ⁷And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives

by a great deliverance. ⁸So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

⁹“Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph: “God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry. ¹⁰You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children’s children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. ¹¹There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for there are still five years of famine.”’

¹²“And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my mouth that speaks to you. ¹³So you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here.”

¹⁴Then he fell on his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck.

Isaiah 53

¹Who has believed our report?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

²For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant,
And as a root out of dry ground.

He has no form or comeliness;

And when we see Him,

There is no beauty that we should desire Him.

³He is despised and rejected by men,

A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him;

He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

⁴Surely He has borne our griefs

And carried our sorrows;

Yet we esteemed Him stricken,

Smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵But He was wounded for our transgressions,

He was bruised for our iniquities;

The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,

And by His stripes we are healed.

⁶All we like sheep have gone astray;

We have turned, every one, to his own way;

And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

⁷He was oppressed and He was afflicted,

Yet He opened not His mouth;

He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,

And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,

So He opened not His mouth.

⁸He was taken from prison and from judgment,

And who will declare His generation?

For He was cut off from the land of the living;

For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.

⁹And they made His grave with the wicked—

But with the rich at His death,

Because He had done no violence,

Nor was any deceit in His mouth.

¹⁰Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him;

He has put Him to grief.

When You make His soul an offering for sin,

He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days,

And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.

¹¹He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.

By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many,

For He shall bear their iniquities.

¹²Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great,

And He shall divide the spoil with the strong,

Because He poured out His soul unto death,

And He was numbered with the transgressors,

And He bore the sin of many,

And made intercession for the transgressors.

DISCOVER

Joseph can no longer contain his emotions and reveals his true identity to his brothers, shocking them. He reassures them not to be distressed, explaining that God sent him to Egypt ahead of them to preserve life during the famine. Joseph tells his brothers to bring their father Jacob to Egypt, promising to care for them and their families in the best part of the land.

LEARN

In Genesis 45, Joseph finally reveals his identity to his brothers after Judah's heartfelt plea to spare Benjamin. Overcome with emotion, Joseph sends out all his attendants and weeps so loudly that everyone hears. The years of pain and separation flood back, but Joseph holds no resentment. He tells his brothers that it was, "God who sent him" to save lives the lives of many, not their betrayal. In the same way, just as Joseph suffers at the hands of his brothers to save the lives of many, Christ was sent to earth to suffer at our hands to save and redeem us all. God used their evil for good, just as He used Christ's suffering for our ultimate salvation.

Joseph's weeping reveals his deep love for his brothers, even after all they did. He is not just weeping for the past; he is overwhelmed by the grace of

God's reconciliation. Similarly, we are like Joseph's brothers, undeserving of grace yet given it fully and freely. We caused Christ's suffering through our sin, yet He, like Joseph, does not hold our wrongs against us. Instead, Christ intercedes for us, offering forgiveness and reconciliation. Just as Joseph's forgiveness brought his family back together, Christ's forgiveness brings us into a restored relationship with God. This shows that even when others intend harm, God's sovereign plan uses everything for His purposes.

APPLY

Joseph's brothers are undeserving of his grace, but he forgives them and provides for them abundantly. In the same way, despite our sin, God forgives us and offers us the riches of His grace. Joseph's tears reflect the compassion of Christ, who wept over our lostness and willingly suffered so we could be saved. Knowing the weight of our sin and how it caused Christ to suffer should change how we view Him, not just as our Savior, but as the Suffering Servant who bore our guilt. His sacrificial love is what unites us to Him, not because we deserve it, but because of His overwhelming grace. How does understanding the weight of your sin and Christ's role as the Suffering Servant change the way you view His sacrifice and grace in your life?



REFLECTION 

Devotional Day 5

In Light of God's Forgiveness

Genesis 45:15-28

¹⁶Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, "Joseph's brothers have come." So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well. ¹⁷And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. ¹⁸Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. ¹⁹Now you are commanded—do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. ²⁰Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.' "

²¹Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them carts, according to the command of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey. ²²He

gave to all of them, to each man, changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments. ²³And he sent to his father these things: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey. ²⁴So he sent his brothers away, and they departed; and he said to them, "See that you do not become troubled along the way."

²⁵Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. ²⁶And they told him, saying, "Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." And Jacob's heart stood still, because he did not believe them. ²⁷But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. ²⁸Then Israel said, "It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

Matthew 18:21-22

²¹Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”

²²Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

DISCOVER

At the end of Genesis 45, Joseph embraces and weeps with his brothers, fully reconciling with them. Pharaoh hears of Joseph's family and invites them to settle in Egypt. He offers them the best provisions for the journey. Joseph sends his brothers back to Canaan with gifts and supplies, and when they tell Jacob that Joseph is alive and ruling in Egypt, Jacob is stunned but overjoyed. He decides to go see his son before he dies.

LEARN

After years of separation, heartache, and regret, Joseph's brothers obey his instructions by returning home to Jacob and sharing the astonishing news that Joseph is alive.

Jacob, however, reacts with disbelief. Having endured the devastating loss of Joseph, the fear of losing Benjamin, and the captivity of Simeon, Jacob becomes so accustomed to sorrow that the possibility of good news seems unimaginable. His heart is hardened by pain and loss, so it is not until he sees the gifts sent from Egypt that he begins to believe

Joseph is truly alive. This moment in Genesis 45 is similar to the experience of Thomas in John 20:24-29. Just as Thomas doubts Jesus' resurrection until he sees and touches the wounds in Jesus' hands and side, Jacob needs physical evidence to accept the truth of his family's restoration.

The proof given to Jacob is a true sign of forgiveness. Joseph's story demonstrates the power of forgiveness and the profound impact it can have on relationships. Despite having every reason to hold on to anger and resentment, Joseph chooses to forgive his brothers for the betrayal that cost him years of suffering. His ability to extend grace in this situation teaches us that forgiveness is not just about releasing others from their wrongs; it is about freeing ourselves from the bondage of bitterness. Matthew 18:21-22 shows us that forgiveness is not a one-time event, but a continual practice. Jesus teaches that we must forgive “seventy-seven times,” emphasizing that there is no limit to how often we should extend grace. Refusing to forgive can cloud our hearts, making it difficult to fully experience God's mercy and grace. Ephesians 4:32 reminds us to “*be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*” When we hold on to unforgiveness, we lose sight of the fullness of Christ's work on the cross, which was a supreme act of forgiveness. Unforgiveness prohibits us from seeing the scope of God's mercy in our own lives and prevents us from understanding the depth of His love.



APPLY

Perhaps you, like Joseph, were deeply wronged by someone close to you. Or maybe you struggle to forgive a particular person who hurt you. Who do you need to forgive today? What steps can you take toward reconciliation? Jesus teaches in Matthew 5:23-24 that before we come to God in worship, we must seek peace with others. Is there someone you need to make peace with today? Take time today

to reflect on these passages as you ask God for the strength to forgive. By taking the first steps toward healing, you open yourself to the grace of God, allowing Him to restore your relationships and reveal His mercy in your life. Forgiveness is never easy, but as we follow Christ's example, we begin to experience the depth of God's love in a new and transformative way.

REFLECTION

Discussion Week 4

Application questions

1. What parts of the passage stood out to you this week? Why?

2. Joseph's brothers kept their sin hidden for years, yet as they grew older, so did their guilt over their sin. It was necessary for their sin to become known for them to begin to receive healing and forgiveness. Like Joseph's brothers, is there an area of your life where God may be inviting you to bring something into the light so you can experience His compassion and mercy?

- Encourage members of the group to privately share areas of their lives that they have kept hidden and need confession.

- As those areas are shared confidentially, invite them to pray for each other and as appropriate, keep each other accountable.

3. How does the reality of God's grace, which welcomes undeserving people to His table, shape the way you live and extend grace to others? Who do you need to invite to have a seat at your table?

4. In Judah's story, we see a foreshadowing of Christ's greater sacrifice, but we are also called to follow in His footsteps, and allow God to reshape us from the inside out. How might God call you to step forward in love and sacrifice, even in relationships where you have previously failed?

- 5.** Is there someone you need to make peace with today?
- Make time as a group to discuss practical ways you can take the next step in reconciliation.
- 6.** This week focused on forgiveness. While we see a need to make peace with others, we also have become increasingly aware of our own failings and how that impacts our relationship with God. How does understanding the weight of your sin and Christ's role as the Suffering Servant change the way you view His sacrifice and grace in your life?

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

*Genesis
46-49*

Week 5 Jacob's Blessing

MEMORY VERSE

Genesis 48:15^(NKJV)

And he blessed Joseph, and said: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has fed me all my life long to this day,"



Overview

DISCOVER & LEARN

Background & Themes

Devotionals

PRAISE IN THE PROMISE

Genesis 46:1-27

HOPE IN THE INHERITANCE

Genesis 46:28-34; 47:1-12; Ephesians 1

FAITH IN THE MIDST OF CRISIS

Genesis 47:13-31

REST IN THE SHEPHERD

Genesis 48

BLESSINGS AND THE PROMISE
OF REDEMPTION

Genesis 49:1-28

Discussion

NOTES

Genesis 46-49

APPLY

Application Questions

Overview Week 5

DISCOVER: WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE PASSAGE?

Context

The events of Genesis 46–49 take place in the later years of Jacob's life, around 1876 BC, during the period when his family resettles in Egypt. At this point, Joseph has risen to power as second-in-command to Pharaoh, and a severe famine forces Jacob and his family to leave the land of Canaan. Approximately 22 years had passed since Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers. Now the family is reunited in the region of Goshen, where they settle under Joseph's protection.

Jacob nears the end of his life, likely in his 130s, and calls his sons to his side to bless them. These blessings are not just fatherly wishes, but prophetic

pronouncements with long-term implications for the tribes that will emerge from his sons. The geographical setting of these events is Egypt, particularly in the fertile land of Goshen, where Jacob's family finds refuge during the famine. This moment is significant not only because it marks the last recorded words of Jacob, but because it foreshadows the future of Israel as a nation in both the immediate context of Egyptian bondage and the distant Messianic promise.

Historically, this passage marks the beginning of the Israelites' time in Egypt, a 400-year period that eventually leads to their enslavement and the rise of Moses as their deliverer. The prophetic blessings Jacob speaks over his sons provide a glimpse into the destinies of the tribes that will define the nation of Israel's history.

Key Words & Phrases

BLESSING: The imparting of prophetic words over each son.

JUDAH: The lineage through which the Messiah, Jesus Christ, will come.

SCEPTER: A symbol of kingship and authority, pointing to Judah's leadership.

ISRAEL: Jacob's other name, used to represent the nation that will arise from his descendants.

INHERITANCE: The land and legacy passed down through the generations.

PILGRIMS AND STRANGERS: Referring to the temporary, earthly nature of life for those awaiting eternal promises.

LEARN: WHAT IS THE PASSAGE TEACHING?

God & His Character

God is shown as faithful and sovereign, working through Jacob's blessings to unfold His long-term plan for the people of Israel. His covenantal promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are fulfilled through the blessings, especially the Messianic prophecy concerning Judah's lineage. This passage reveals God's omniscience and providential control over the future as He directs the destinies of Jacob's sons.

The Nature of Humanity

Humanity's imperfections are evident in Jacob's sons, each of whom has a complex legacy. Despite their flaws and failures, God's grace prevails. The blessings reflect both the sons' past actions and their future roles. They reveal that human nature is a mix of weakness and potential, yet it is still used by God for His purposes. Judah's transformation from sinful to chosen shows how God redeems broken people.

Biggest Lesson

The story of Jacob's blessings emphasizes that God's plans go beyond human failings. Though imperfect, each of Jacob's sons plays a role in God's redemptive story. Judah, in particular, becomes a symbol of leadership and a reminder of the Messianic promise that God can use anyone, no matter their past, to fulfill His divine purposes.

Devotional Day 1

Praise in the Promise

Genesis 46:1-27

¹So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. ²Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, “Jacob, Jacob!”

And he said, “Here I am.”

³So He said, “I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. ⁴I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes.”

⁵Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones, and their wives, in the carts which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. ⁶So they took their livestock and their goods, which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him. ⁷His sons and his sons’ sons, his daughters and his sons’ daughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt.

⁸Now these were the names of the children of Israel, Jacob and his sons, who went to Egypt: Reuben was Jacob’s firstborn. ⁹The sons of Reuben were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. ¹⁰The sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman. ¹¹The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. ¹²The sons of Judah were Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan). The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul. ¹³The sons of Issachar were Tola, Puvah, Job, and Shimron. ¹⁴The sons of Zebulun were Sered, Elon, and Jahleel. ¹⁵These were the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Padan Aram, with his daughter Dinah. All the persons, his sons and his daughters, were thirty-three.

¹⁶The sons of Gad were Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli. ¹⁷The sons of Asher were Jimnah, Ishuah, Isui, Beriah, and Serah, their sister. And the sons of Beriah were Heber and Malchiel. ¹⁸These were the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave

to Leah his daughter; and these she bore to Jacob: sixteen persons.

¹⁹The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife, were Joseph and Benjamin. ²⁰And to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him.

²¹The sons of Benjamin were Belah, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard. ²²These were the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob: fourteen persons in all.

²³The son of Dan was Hushim. ²⁴The sons of Naphtali were Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.

²⁵These were the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to Rachel his daughter, and she bore these to Jacob: seven persons in all.

²⁶All the persons who went with Jacob to Egypt, who came from his body, besides Jacob's sons' wives, were sixty-six persons in all. ²⁷And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt were two persons. All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy.

DISCOVER

In Genesis 46:1-27, Jacob prepares to leave Canaan and journey to Egypt, where he will be reunited with his son Joseph. God reassures Jacob that despite the unknown future in Egypt, He will remain faithful to His promise. The genealogy in this passage shows God's ongoing preservation of Jacob's family as they grow into the nation He promised to Abraham.

LEARN

Before entering Egypt, Jacob pauses in Beer-Sheba to worship God, a place significant in his family's history, where both Abraham and Isaac had called upon the Lord. This moment reflects Jacob's understanding of God's sovereignty and his faith in God's promises, even in the face of uncertainty. Although Jacob is aware of past warnings about Egypt and the prophecy of Israel's future suffering (Genesis 15:13), God reinforces His covenant with His people and encourages Jacob not to be afraid, promising that He will bring the nation back to the Promised Land. God also comforts Jacob with the assurance that Joseph will be with him at his death. This promise demonstrates God's intimate care for His people even in their most vulnerable moments.

Over 215 years, Jacob's family grew from one to seventy, but in the next 430 years, they expanded into a nation of millions. This gives evidence of God's faithfulness to His covenant. Their journey from Canaan to Egypt required genuine trust in God's promises. If they had let unbelief take hold, they might have stayed behind. But it was their deep faith in God's character and His plan that led them forward, even into the unknown.

APPLY

Jacob's act of worship, even in the midst of the unknown, is a vital example of how we are to face challenges in our own lives. Jacob praises God and gives sacrifices to Him because he recalls the

faithfulness of God in the past and the assurance of God in the future. Jacob's sacrifice in Beer-Sheba challenges us to praise God and recall His faithfulness even when we are in the midst of unfamiliar or daunting situations. Faith is not the absence of fear, but the decision to move forward in confidence knowing that God is who He says He is and that He will do what He promises. Genuine faith acknowledges that we may not see the full picture or understand how everything will unfold, but we can rest in the character of a God who is faithful, sovereign, and good.

Just as Jacob trusts God with the unknown, we are called to live out our faith in real, tangible ways. We step forward not because we have all the answers, but because we believe in the One who does. Jacob may have known that God was calling his family into future suffering and yet, he chose to respond with praise. How are you currently responding to the difficult circumstances in your life? In what ways do you need to respond like Jacob did, with genuine worship and sacrifice which demonstrates your faith in God, regardless of the outcome?

REFLECTION

Devotional Day 2

Hope in the Inheritance

Genesis 46:28-34

²⁸Then he sent Judah before him to Joseph, to point out before him the way to Goshen. And they came to the land of Goshen. ²⁹So Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; and he presented himself to him, and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while.

³⁰And Israel said to Joseph, “Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive.”

³¹Then Joseph said to his brothers and to his father’s household, “I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and say to him, ‘My brothers and those of my father’s house, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me. ³²And the men are shepherds, for their occupation has been to feed livestock; and they have brought their flocks, their herds, and all that they have.’ ³³So it shall be, when Pharaoh calls you and says, ‘What is your occupation?’ ³⁴that you shall say, ‘Your servants’ occupation has been with livestock from our youth even till now, both we and

also our fathers,’ that you may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians.”

Genesis 47:1-12

¹Then Joseph went and told Pharaoh, and said, “My father and my brothers, their flocks and their herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan; and indeed they are in the land of Goshen.” ²And he took five men from among his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh. ³Then Pharaoh said to his brothers, “What is your occupation?”

And they said to Pharaoh, “Your servants are shepherds, both we and also our fathers.” ⁴And they said to Pharaoh, “We have come to dwell in the land, because your servants have no pasture for their flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now therefore, please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen.”

⁵Then Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, “Your father and your brothers have come to you. ⁶The land of Egypt is before you. Have your father and brothers dwell in the best of the land; let them dwell in the land of Goshen. And if you know any competent men among them, then make them chief herdsmen over my livestock.”

⁷Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

⁸Pharaoh said to Jacob, “How old are you?”

⁹And Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The days of the years of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.” ¹⁰So Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.

¹¹And Joseph situated his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. ¹²Then Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father’s household with bread, according to the number in their families.

Ephesians 1

¹Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

⁷In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ⁸which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, ⁹having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, ¹⁰that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. ¹¹In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, ¹²that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

¹³*In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*

¹⁵*Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.*

²²*And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ²³which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

DISCOVER

In Genesis 46:28-47:12, Jacob (Israel) sends Judah ahead to Joseph in Egypt to prepare for their arrival in Goshen. Joseph meets his father, and after a tearful reunion, he presents five of his brothers to

Pharaoh, who grants them permission to settle in the best part of the land, Goshen. Joseph also introduces Jacob to Pharaoh, and Jacob blesses him, marking the family's peaceful settlement in Egypt under Joseph's care.

LEARN

Finally, we read of Joseph's long-awaited reunion with Jacob, his father. Jacob, who once cried out in despair, saying that all things were against him (Genesis 42:36), now stands before his son Joseph with a heart transformed. His previous desire for death was fueled by sorrow and hopelessness. Now he declares he is ready to die, this time not out of despair, but out of deliverance.

Joseph, like Christ, prepares a place for his family in Egypt, ensuring their survival and well-being in a foreign land. In the same way, Jesus prepares a place for us, not in temporary refuge, but in eternal joy. Jacob is fully aware of Joseph's preparation for their family, and in response, he refers to himself as a pilgrim. He knows that neither Egypt nor Canaan is his true home; his real home is with God. To be a pilgrim is to acknowledge that we are passing through this life. Jacob recognizes that he has always been in a foreign land, understanding that while Egypt provided a temporary refuge, the inheritance Christ offers is eternal and far greater.

While Israel's stay in Egypt eventually leads to hardship, as we see in the book Exodus, the inheritance that Christ promises is everlasting. As Psalm 16:6 beautifully states, *"The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; Yes, I have a good inheritance."*

Unlike Israel's temporary respite in Egypt, the place God has for His people will be good forever.

One final detail speaks volumes about God: Jacob, a simple shepherd, blesses Pharaoh, the most powerful man in the world at the time. In that culture, it was always the greater person who blessed the lesser. Yet Jacob, despite his lowly status, stands as the greater man in the eyes of God. This act recalls the blessing of Abraham by Melchizedek. Pharaoh's power is temporal, but Jacob carries the promise of becoming the father of many nations.

APPLY

Like Jacob, we are pilgrims. Our true home is not here, but with Christ in heaven. This world can offer temporary comforts, but they pale in comparison to the eternal inheritance God promises us. Jacob's

peace comes from trusting God's deliverance, not from his circumstances. We are called to live with that same confidence, knowing that our hope is secure in Christ.

The trials and uncertainties we face in life can be overwhelming, but they are not the final word. God is preparing something far better for us. Friend, what are the temporary things that you hold to tightly to in this world? And how does Jacob's declaration of being a pilgrim challenge your perspective on your earthly life? Today, be reminded that our peace comes not from what we see but from what God promises. The trials we face today may seem overwhelming, but they are temporary compared to the eternal joy and inheritance that await us. We are simply pilgrims, passing through until we get to where we truly belong.

REFLECTION

Faith in the Midst of Crisis

Genesis 47:13-31

¹³Now there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine. ¹⁴And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, for the grain which they bought; and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.

¹⁵So when the money failed in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us bread, for why should we die in your presence? For the money has failed."

¹⁶Then Joseph said, "Give your livestock, and I will give you bread for your livestock, if the money is gone." ¹⁷So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for the horses, the flocks, the cattle of the herds, and for the

donkeys. Thus he fed them with bread in exchange for all their livestock that year.

¹⁸When that year had ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is gone; my lord also has our herds of livestock. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our lands. ¹⁹Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants of Pharaoh; give us seed, that we may live and not die, that the land may not be desolate."

²⁰Then Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for every man of the Egyptians sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. So the land became Pharaoh's. ²¹And as for the people, he moved them into the cities, from one end of the borders of Egypt to the other end. ²²Only the land of the priests he did not buy; for the priests had rations allotted to them by Pharaoh, and they ate their

rations which Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their lands.

²³Then Joseph said to the people, “Indeed I have bought you and your land this day for Pharaoh. Look, here is seed for you, and you shall sow the land. ²⁴And it shall come to pass in the harvest that you shall give one-fifth to Pharaoh. Four-fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and for your food, for those of your households and as food for your little ones.”

²⁵So they said, “You have saved our lives; let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh’s servants.” ²⁶And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt to this day, that Pharaoh should have one-fifth, except for the land of the priests only, which did not become Pharaoh’s.

²⁷So Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions there and grew and multiplied exceedingly. ²⁸And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So the length of Jacob’s life was one hundred and forty-seven years. ²⁹When the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, “Now if I have found favor in your sight, please put your hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me. Please do not bury me in Egypt, ³⁰but let me lie with my fathers; you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place.”

And he said, “I will do as you have said.”

³¹Then he said, “Swear to me.” And he swore to him. So Israel bowed himself on the head of the bed.

DISCOVER

In Genesis 47:13-31, the famine deepens and the people of Egypt find themselves growing weary. With their money exhausted, they begin to trade their livestock and eventually their land for food. In the end, they sell themselves into servitude to Pharaoh in exchange for survival. Joseph oversees this system, ensuring that while Pharaoh gains control, the people retain enough to sustain themselves. Amid this, we see another storyline unfolding. Jacob senses his life is nearing its end. He asks Joseph to swear an oath to bury him not in Egypt but in Canaan, with his ancestors. Joseph agrees and honors his father’s wish to be laid to rest in the land of God’s promise.

LEARN

This passage illustrates the cost of survival during crisis and the unshakable hope of God’s covenant. Joseph’s wisdom and diligence ensure Egypt’s survival, but at a steep price for the people. They lose their wealth, their land, and eventually their freedom. Yet in the midst of this severe famine, we also see Jacob’s enduring faith. Although he lives in Egypt, his heart remains firmly anchored in God’s promises. Jacob’s character and trust in the Lord has continuously been pruned and refined. In his dying days, we see the evidence of how Jacob finally trusts wholeheartedly in the steadfast character of

God. His request to be buried in Canaan points to a greater hope: the certainty that Egypt is not his family's ultimate home. Jacob believes that God will one day bring them back to the Promised Land, even though it is not yet in their possession. This moment of faith stands in contrast to the temporary relief Egypt offers, foreshadowing the eventual oppression Israel will face in this foreign land.

APPLY

Jacob and Joseph provide us with two different pictures of faith. Jacob, for much of his life, resists God's refining work. Only in his old age does he realize

that God has always been guiding him. In contrast, Joseph consistently walks in the awareness of God's presence, trusting His purposes even in difficult circumstances. Right now, in what ways are you like Jacob, struggling to surrender to God? In what ways can you be more like Joseph? Are you confident that God is with you? Ask the Lord to shape your heart to be more like Joseph's, trusting in His promises and living with the full understanding that God is with you.

REFLECTION

Rest in the Shepherd

Genesis 48

¹Now it came to pass after these things that Joseph was told, “Indeed your father is sick”; and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. ²And Jacob was told, “Look, your son Joseph is coming to you”; and Israel strengthened himself and sat up on the bed. ³Then Jacob said to Joseph: “God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, ⁴and said to me, ‘Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.’ ⁵And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. ⁶Your offspring whom you beget after them shall be yours; they will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. ⁷But as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died beside me in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).”

⁸Then Israel saw Joseph’s sons, and said, “Who are these?”

⁹And Joseph said to his father, “They are my sons, whom God has given me in this place.”

And he said, “Please bring them to me, and I will bless them.” ¹⁰Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. Then Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. ¹¹And Israel said to Joseph, “I had not thought to see your face; but in fact, God has also shown me your offspring!”

¹²So Joseph brought them from beside his knees, and he bowed down with his face to the earth. ¹³And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel’s left hand, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel’s right hand, and brought them near him. ¹⁴Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim’s head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh’s head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn. ¹⁵And he blessed Joseph, and said:

“God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,

*The God who has fed me all my life long to this day,
16The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil,
Bless the lads;
Let my name be named upon them,
And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;
And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of
the earth.”*

*17Now when Joseph saw that his father laid his
right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased
him; so he took hold of his father’s hand to remove
it from Ephraim’s head to Manasseh’s head. 18And
Joseph said to his father, “Not so, my father, for this
one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head.”*

*19But his father refused and said, “I know, my son,
I know. He also shall become a people, and he also
shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be
greater than he, and his descendants shall become a
multitude of nations.”*

*20So he blessed them that day, saying, “By you
Israel will bless, saying, ‘May God make you as
Ephraim and as Manasseh!’ ” And thus he set
Ephraim before Manasseh.*

*21Then Israel said to Joseph, “Behold, I am dying,
but God will be with you and bring you back to
the land of your fathers. 22Moreover I have given
to you one portion above your brothers, which I
took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword
and my bow.”*

DISCOVER

As Jacob nears the end of his life, he is told that Joseph has come to visit him. In this tender moment, Jacob recounts God’s faithfulness, specifically the covenant promises to make his descendants a great nation. He adopts Joseph’s two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, and blesses them as his own. While Joseph attempts to place the blessing of the firstborn on Manasseh, the elder, Jacob is led by the Spirit to bless Ephraim, the younger, with the greater portion. This moment reveals not only God’s sovereign plan, but also Jacob’s growing understanding of God’s care throughout his life.

LEARN

In blessing Joseph’s sons, Jacob says something remarkable about God. In the CSB version Jacob states, “The God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day” (Genesis 48:15). This is the first time in Scripture that God is referred to as a Shepherd, and it is a testimony born out of Jacob’s life experience.

Jacob’s story is one of wandering. From fleeing his brother Esau, to wrestling with God, to struggling in family relationships, Jacob’s path is not driven out of obedience to the Lord. He is prone to wander. Yet, as Jacob reflects on his life, he recognizes a deeper truth: God has been his Shepherd, guiding him through every step, even in his straying. Despite Jacob’s shortcomings, God is with him, and never abandons him. Like a faithful Shepherd, God pursues him, provides for him, and leads him through every trial and blessing.

Shepherds are not distant or detached; they are intimately involved in the daily care of their sheep. They know the sheep by name, protect them from danger, and gently lead them to places of rest and nourishment. In calling God his Shepherd, Jacob acknowledges not only God's protection but also His constant presence and provision in every circumstance.

Jacob's life, like ours, is marked by moments of failure, fear, and confusion. Yet God remains steady. Even when Jacob wanders, God leads him back, offering grace and guidance. The image of God as a Shepherd reminds us that, though we too are prone to wander, God's care for us is unshakable. His faithfulness to lead us is not dependent on our performance, but on His steadfast love.

APPLY

Jacob's words challenge us to reflect on how God has been our Shepherd, even when we have been unaware of His leading. Just as Jacob looked

back on his life and saw the hand of God in every moment, we can trust that God is with us in every season. Even when we stray, God is faithful to guide us back to His fold. He does not abandon us to our wandering; instead, He shepherds us with love and grace. Seeing God as our shepherd also invites us to trust more fully in God's care. We live in a world that prizes independence, yet sheep are dependent on the shepherd for their survival. When we acknowledge that we are like sheep, prone to wander, vulnerable, and in need of constant guidance, we open ourselves to receive the tender care of our Shepherd, who leads us beside still waters and restores our souls (Psalm 23:2-3). In what areas of your life are you prone to wander, relying on your own strength or direction? How can you more fully trust in God's guidance, knowing that He has been your Shepherd all along, and that He leads you even in your wandering?

REFLECTION

Devotional Day 5

Blessings and the Promise of Redemption

Genesis 49:1-28

¹And Jacob called his sons and said, “Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days:

²“Gather together and hear, you sons of Jacob,
And listen to Israel your father.

³“Reuben, you are my firstborn,
My might and the beginning of my strength,
The excellency of dignity and the excellency
of power.

⁴Unstable as water, you shall not excel,
Because you went up to your father’s bed;
Then you defiled it—
He went up to my couch.

⁵“Simeon and Levi are brothers;
Instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place.

⁶Let not my soul enter their council;
Let not my honor be united to their assembly;
For in their anger they slew a man,
And in their self-will they hamstringed an ox.

⁷Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce;
And their wrath, for it is cruel!
I will divide them in Jacob
And scatter them in Israel.

⁸“Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall
praise;
Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies;
Your father’s children shall bow down before you.

⁹*Judah is a lion's whelp;
From the prey, my son, you have gone up.
He bows down, he lies down as a lion;
And as a lion, who shall rouse him?
¹⁰The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
Nor a lawgiver from between his feet,
Until Shiloh comes;
And to Him shall be the obedience of the people.
¹¹Binding his donkey to the vine,
And his donkey's colt to the choice vine,
He washed his garments in wine,
And his clothes in the blood of grapes.
¹²His eyes are darker than wine,
And his teeth whiter than milk.
¹³"Zebulun shall dwell by the haven of the sea;
He shall become a haven for ships,
And his border shall adjoin Sidon.
¹⁴"Issachar is a strong donkey,
Lying down between two burdens;
¹⁵He saw that rest was good,
And that the land was pleasant;
He bowed his shoulder to bear a burden,
And became a band of slaves.
¹⁶"Dan shall judge his people*

*As one of the tribes of Israel.
¹⁷Dan shall be a serpent by the way,
A viper by the path,
That bites the horse's heels
So that its rider shall fall backward.
¹⁸I have waited for your salvation, O LORD!
¹⁹"Gad, a troop shall tramp upon him,
But he shall triumph at last.
²⁰"Bread from Asher shall be rich,
And he shall yield royal dainties.
²¹"Naphtali is a deer let loose;
He uses beautiful words.
²²"Joseph is a fruitful bough,
A fruitful bough by a well;
His branches run over the wall.
²³The archers have bitterly grieved him,
Shot at him and hated him.
²⁴But his bow remained in strength,
And the arms of his hands were made strong
By the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob
(From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel),
²⁵By the God of your father who will help you,
And by the Almighty who will bless you
With blessings of heaven above,*

Blessings of the deep that lies beneath,

Blessings of the breasts and of the womb.

26*The blessings of your father*

Have excelled the blessings of my ancestors,

Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.

They shall be on the head of Joseph,

And on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers.

27*“Benjamin is a ravenous wolf;*

In the morning he shall devour the prey,

And at night he shall divide the spoil.”

28*All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father spoke to them. And he blessed them; he blessed each one according to his own blessing.*

DISCOVER

Jacob gathers his sons to bless them and reveal their future as the tribes of Israel. He gives specific blessings and prophecies for each son: Reuben loses his birthright due to instability; Simeon and Levi are rebuked for their violence; Judah is praised and promised leadership and kingship; while other sons like Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, and Naphtali are given unique blessings related to their future roles. Joseph receives the longest and most favorable blessing, and Benjamin is described as a fierce warrior.

LEARN

Amidst these blessings, Joseph and Judah receive special distinction. Joseph, faithful through hardship, is promised fruitfulness and prosperity. His descendants, through Ephraim and Manasseh, will become prominent in the northern kingdom of Israel. However, Judah's blessing carries an even greater weight, as it foreshadows the line of the Messiah. Though Judah is neither the firstborn nor the favored son, God chooses him to carry forward the promise given to Abraham, revealing His sovereign plan. Jacob's words concerning Judah contain four vivid images, each pointing to the coming of Christ.

1. The Warrior: Jacob describes Judah as a lion, a powerful and victorious warrior (Genesis 49:9). This image points to Christ, the *"Lion of the tribe of Judah,"* who will conquer sin and death (Revelation 5:5). Jesus comes not only to fight for His people but to win the ultimate victory over the forces of evil.

2. The Ruler: Judah is told that the scepter will not depart from him, a symbol of kingship and authority (Genesis 49:10). This prophecy finds fulfillment in the kingship of David and His descendants, but its ultimate fulfillment is in Christ, the King of Kings, who will reign forever. The scepter passing to Christ points to His eternal rule, where He reigns with justice and righteousness (Isaiah 9:7, Luke 1:32-33).

3. The Prosperity: Judah's blessing speaks of an abundance of wine and prosperity (Genesis 49:11).



This imagery of fruitful vines and abundance reflects the future joy and life found in Christ, who declares, “*I am the true vine*” (John 15:1). Jesus brings spiritual prosperity and offers eternal life and the fullness of God’s blessings to all who are united with Him.

4. The Garments Washed in Wine: Finally, Judah’s blessing speaks of garments washed in wine, a vivid image of blood-stained robes (Genesis 49:11). This foreshadows Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, where His blood is shed for the salvation of many. This imagery points to the ultimate atonement: Christ’s blood poured out for the redemption of sinners (Revelation 7:14, Isaiah 63:1-3).

APPLY

As we reflect on Jacob’s blessings, we see the hand of God guiding history toward the coming of Christ. The blessings of Jacob foreshadow the

future: because of Joseph’s faithfulness, his progeny will be fruitful; because of Judah’s repentance, his progeny will be kings. Joseph’s fruitfulness and Judah’s kingship both point to the redemptive work of Jesus. Like Joseph, Jesus endured suffering and was exalted, offering life to those who come to Him in faith. And like Judah, Christ is the promised King, the Lion who will reign in victory forever. Consider how these images of Christ as warrior, ruler, provider, and sacrifice reveal His power, authority, and love for His people. In light of these promises that came to complete fruition, how do you allow God to be the ruler, provider, power, and ultimate authority over your life? Is there one characteristic that you struggle to allow Him to have complete sovereignty over? Which one is it, and how can you allow him to rule over your heart today?

Discussion Week 5

Application questions

1. What parts of the passage stood out to you this week? Why?
2. How do you currently respond to the difficult circumstances in your life? In what ways do you need to respond like Jacob did, with genuine worship and sacrifice that demonstrates your faith in God, regardless of the outcome?
3. How does Jacob's declaration of being a pilgrim inform your perspective on your earthly life?

4. What are some temporary things you are holding onto in this world, and how can you shift your focus to the eternal inheritance God promises?

5. In what ways are you like Jacob, struggling to surrender to God? In what ways can you be more like Joseph, confident that God is with you?

6. In what areas of your life are you prone to wander, relying on your own strength? How can you more fully trust in God's guidance?

7. How do the images of Christ as warrior, ruler, provider, and sacrifice affect your understanding of His role in your life?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

- How does recalling God's faithfulness in the past help strengthen your faith for the future?
- How has God acted as a Shepherd in your life, even when you were not fully aware of His leading?
- What do the blessings given to Judah and Joseph reveal about God's redemptive plan through Jesus Christ?

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

Genesis 50

Week 6

Greeting the Promises of God from Afar

MEMORY VERSE

Genesis 50:20^(NKJV)

*"But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good,
in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive."*

Overview

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TRUSTING THE PROMISE BEYOND
THE GRAVE

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50:1-14

EXTENDING FORGIVENESS
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FAITH THAT IMPACTS FUTURE
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Genesis 50:22-26;
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GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY AND
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Genesis 49:28-33; 50

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Overview Week 6

DISCOVER: WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE PASSAGE?

Context

This section of scripture focuses on the end of Jacob's life and his final blessings over his sons, the burial of Jacob in the Promised Land, and Joseph's death. All are within the context of God's unfolding promises to the patriarchs. It spans from the closing moments of Genesis, showing the fulfillment and yet anticipated nature of God's promises to His people, through Exodus, 400 years later, where Israel begins their journey toward the Promised Land. Hebrews 11 provides a New Testament perspective on the faith of Abraham and his descendants who greet the promises of God from afar, believing without yet receiving.

Key Words & Phrases

PROMISE: Central to the patriarchs' lives as they live in anticipation of the future inheritance.

FAITH: Demonstrated through belief in God's promises, even when not fully realized in their lifetimes.

FORGIVENESS: Joseph's remarkable forgiveness of his brothers is a picture of God's forgiveness toward us. He does not hold their evil against them but instead sees how God's sovereign hand turned their sin into salvation.

PROVISION: From Joseph's rise to power in Egypt to God's guidance of Israel through the wilderness, His provision is unwavering. Even in the hardest of times, God's hand is never withdrawn from His people.

LEARN: WHAT IS THE PASSAGE TEACHING?

Biggest Lesson

The hope that we have in the promises of God are not in question. We can walk in full assurance that what God says will always come to fruition. Just as Jacob and Joseph trusted God's covenant promises for future generations, we, too, are called to walk by faith, forgive others, and live as strangers on earth, and look forward to the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises. We also see that as the book comes to a close, Moses shows the children of Israel that God's promises are sure. Barrenness, doubt, disobedience, deceitfulness, betrayal, sin, tragedy, and famine could not prevent God from fulfilling His promise to Abraham to grow His descendants into a great nation.

God & His Character

God is the ultimate redeemer. He turns human evil and suffering into opportunities for His goodness and purposes to prevail. In Genesis 50:20, we see God's plan succeed throughout Joseph's life, transforming the malicious actions of his brothers into a story of provision and salvation for an entire nation. This passage reveals that God is not limited by human sin or circumstance, rather, He uses even the worst intentions to demonstrate how His mercy and grace is so much greater. God's character is both just and merciful, capable of bringing hope and restoration out of brokenness, proving that His promises will stand firm despite human failings.

The Nature of Humanity

Humanity, in its frailty, often struggles to see beyond present trials and setbacks. We often place our hope in the circumstances of this world. However, the hope of God's promises gives us a future inheritance to cling to. Like Joseph, we are called to trust in God's ultimate plan, knowing that our inheritance, His promises, are secure, even if we do not fully see them in our lifetime. This passage encourages us to live in hope, confident that God's promises of redemption, provision, and eternal inheritance will be fulfilled, no matter the obstacles we face.



Devotional Day 1

Trusting the Promise Beyond the Grave

Genesis 49:28-33

²⁹Then he charged them and said to them: “I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, ³⁰in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite as a possession for a burial place. ³¹There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah. ³²The field and the cave that is there were purchased from the sons of Heth.” ³³And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.

Genesis 50:1-14

¹Then Joseph fell on his father’s face, and wept over him, and kissed him. ²And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel. ³Forty days were required for him, for such are the days required for those who are embalmed; and the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.

⁴Now when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, “If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak in the hearing of Pharaoh, saying, ⁵‘My father made me swear, saying, “Behold, I am dying; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me.” Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father, and I will come back.’ ”

⁶And Pharaoh said, “Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear.”

⁷So Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, ⁸as well as all the house of Joseph, his brothers, and his father's house. Only their little ones, their flocks, and their herds they left in the land of Goshen. ⁹And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen, and it was a very great gathering.

¹⁰Then they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, and they mourned there with a great and very solemn lamentation. He observed seven days of mourning for his father. ¹¹And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This is a deep mourning of the Egyptians." Therefore its name was called Abel Mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan.

¹²So his sons did for him just as he had commanded them. ¹³For his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite as property for a burial place. ¹⁴And after he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers and all who went up with him to bury his father.

DISCOVER

After blessing his sons, Jacob gives instructions to be buried in the cave of Machpelah, the family tomb. Joseph and his brothers honor their father's wishes by taking him to Canaan for burial, mourning

deeply for him, and returning to Egypt afterward. This passage is about the fulfillment of Jacob's final request and the continuing unity of the family under Joseph's leadership.

LEARN

Jacob's burial request is not just about honoring a father, it is a statement of faith. He wants to be laid to rest in the land promised to his descendants. Israel's embalming is significant because, while the Egyptians preserved bodies in hope of conquering death, the Hebrews placed their hope in the promises of God. The deep mourning of the Egyptians for Jacob foreshadows the contrasting response we will see in Exodus when Israel leaves Egypt. Here, Egypt mourns the loss of a patriarch, but soon Egypt will be hardened against Israel as Pharaoh tries to hold them in slavery. However, God will lead His people out in another exodus, and this will point to the ultimate deliverance in Jesus, who also came "out of Egypt" to bring salvation (Matthew 2:15). God's promises, spanning generations, always work toward His plan of redemption.

APPLY

We live in a world that mirrors Egypt in its relentless pursuit of self-preservation. Everywhere we look, people strive to shield themselves from pain, to avoid suffering at all costs. We mask our fears, numb our pain, and chase comfort, hoping to preserve some sense of control in a world that constantly reminds us of our fragility. But in Joseph's story, we

see a radically different response. Joseph does not shy away from suffering or try to escape it. Instead, he leans into it. Not because he finds suffering itself to be good, but because he trusts that God is writing a bigger story. Joseph understands that even in his pain, God works for his good and for His glory.

What about us? How often do we resist the very trials God is using to shape us? How often do we forget that God is more concerned with our transformation than our comfort? Joseph's life challenges us to see suffering not as something to avoid, but as part of God's redemptive plan. It is in the crucible of

hardship that God refines our faith, molds our character, and draws us closer to Him. Joseph's trust in God's promises enables him to endure suffering with hope, knowing that his story was part of something much bigger: God's story of redemption. How do you respond to suffering in your life? Do you seek to preserve yourself through your own efforts, or do you trust that God is at work even in your pain? Ask yourself: What would it look like to lean into the suffering you are facing, not in despair, but in trust, knowing that God is writing a greater story through it?

REFLECTION

Extending Forgiveness and Grace

Genesis 50:15-21

¹⁵When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him." ¹⁶So they sent messengers to Joseph, saying, "Before your father died he commanded, saying, ¹⁷'Thus you shall say to Joseph: "I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you." ' Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father." And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

¹⁸Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, "Behold, we are your servants."

¹⁹Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? ²⁰But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. ²¹Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

DISCOVER

Genesis 50:15-21 captures the aftermath of Jacob's death, as Joseph's brothers fear retribution for their past sins against him. They seek Joseph's forgiveness, and worry that he may take revenge. However, Joseph reassures them, affirming that although they intended harm, God used their actions for good to preserve many lives. He extends grace and promises to care for their families and them, embodying forgiveness and trust in God's sovereign plan.

LEARN

After many years of living in true harmony with his brothers, the death of their father, Jacob, stirs up old fears. Joseph's brothers begin to wonder if now, after all this time, Joseph will seek revenge for the suffering they caused him. In their fear, they send a message that pleads for forgiveness. But Joseph's response is one of grace and mercy. He asks a profound rhetorical question: "Am I in the place of God?" In other words, he acknowledges that it is not his role to seek justice or hold on to bitterness

(Genesis 50:19). Joseph sees the situation through an eternal lens, not an earthly one. He understands that God uses their wrongdoing for good, for His glory. Joseph does not just offer forgiveness; he promises to care for them. In mercy, he commits to their well-being, regardless of what they did to him.

APPLY

Like Joseph's brothers, we often struggle to believe that we are truly forgiven. We live with the fear that our past mistakes will eventually catch up with us, that we will finally get what we deserve. We wonder if grudges are held against

us, waiting to be unleashed. But because of Christ's work on the cross, we do not have to live in fear. We were forgiven once and for all. God completely cleansed us, forgave us, and now chooses to love and care for us. Christ is the better Joseph. He does not just promise to care for us during this life but offers us eternity. The temptation may arise to live as if we need to earn or prove God's love, but the truth is, we get to live from His grace, not for it. The moment we repent, we receive complete forgiveness. So, how are you living today? How would your life look different if you operated from God's forgiveness, rather than trying to earn it?

REFLECTION

Devotional Day 3

Faith That Impacts Future Generations

Genesis 50:22-26

²²So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's household. And Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. ²³Joseph saw Ephraim's children to the third generation. The children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were also brought up on Joseph's knees.

²⁴And Joseph said to his brethren, "I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." ²⁵Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here." ²⁶So Joseph died, being one hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

Psalm 78:1-8

¹Give ear, O my people, to my law;
Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

²I will open my mouth in a parable;
I will utter dark sayings of old,

³Which we have heard and known,
And our fathers have told us.

⁴We will not hide them from their children,
Telling to the generation to come the praises
of the LORD,

And His strength and His wonderful works that
He has done.

⁵For He established a testimony in Jacob,
And appointed a law in Israel,

*Which He commanded our fathers,
That they should make them known to their
children;*

*⁶That the generation to come might know them,
The children who would be born,
That they may arise and declare them to their
children,*

*⁷That they may set their hope in God,
And not forget the works of God,*

But keep His commandments;

*⁸And may not be like their fathers,
A stubborn and rebellious generation,
A generation that did not set its heart aright,
And whose spirit was not faithful to God.*

DISCOVER

Genesis 50:22-26 describes Joseph's final years and death. He lives to the age of 110 and witnesses the growth of his family and the next generations in Egypt. Before his death, Joseph reaffirms God's promise to bring Israel back to the land He had sworn to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Joseph requests that when God fulfills this promise, his bones will be taken from Egypt and buried in the Promised Land. His final words reflect his unwavering faith in God's covenant and Israel's future deliverance.

LEARN

Though Joseph's life is shorter compared to his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, it is a life marked by great faith. Even through many years of suffering and trials, Joseph remains steadfast. Although Joseph's and Jacob's lives follow similar patterns, their responses to life's challenges are drastically different. However, both men end their lives by reconciling with their families and receiving God's covenant blessing. Like his father, Joseph faces the reality of death by making plans that honor God's promises. His instructions to carry his bones back to Canaan are not merely funeral preparations; they are an expression of his unwavering trust that God would fulfill His promise to bring His people back to the land of their forefathers. Even on his deathbed, Joseph is expectant of better things to come.

APPLY

One of the most difficult truths for us to grasp is that God's promises often come through death. And Jesus is the means through whom all of God's promises are fulfilled. Joseph's request to have his bones carried back to Canaan teaches us much about living in light of God's promises. Though Joseph does not live to see the fulfillment of that promise, he acts in faith, knowing his decision would shape how future generations would live out their faith. How we live according to God's promises not only impacts our

own lives but also the generations that come after us. If those who follow you see how you live, loving and leading in the likeness of Christ even in the midst of trials, what a powerful example they will

have to guide their own faith. What do you want future generations to say about your faith? Take time to pray that your faith would lead others to the Lord, generation after generation.

REFLECTION

God's Sovereignty and Love in Suffering

Exodus 13:17-22

¹⁷Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, "Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt." ¹⁸So God led the people around by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt.

¹⁹And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you."

²⁰So they took their journey from Succoth and camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness.

²¹And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. ²²He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people.

DISCOVER

As we look at the closing chapter of Joseph's life in connection with Exodus 13:17-22, we see the fulfillment of Joseph's dying request to be carried back to the Promised Land, and the beginning of Israel's journey out of Egypt. Even as the Israelites enter the wilderness after Joseph's death, they carry his bones as a reminder that God's promises persist through generations. But more than that, they carry a story of redemption and provision. Joseph's life, like Christ's, reveals the sovereignty of a God who uses suffering for a greater purpose. Joseph's suffering is not in vain; it is part of a divine plan to bring life where there is famine. And in the same way, Christ's suffering brings eternal life to us.

LEARN

What we learn from Joseph's story is that God's purposes often unfold in the midst of prolonged suffering. Joseph does not see the full picture while he sits in a pit, is enslaved in Egypt, or confined in prison, but God is always at work. It is easy to

question God's love and sovereignty in seasons of exile or wilderness, but Joseph's life shows us that God is always sovereign and always loving, even when we cannot see the immediate outcome. As the Israelites carry Joseph's bones into the wilderness, they walk into their own long season of hardship. Yet this moment is a reminder that God's faithfulness endures. Joseph's story points forward to Christ, who entered into our ultimate exile, our separation from God, and through His suffering, brought us home to eternity with Him. Israel's years in exile are not an oversight or a sign of God's absence; they are part of God's loving, sovereign plan. Just as Joseph's suffering leads to the salvation of many, Israel's suffering in Egypt and in the wilderness is a necessary chapter in their redemption story. And beyond that, it points to a greater Savior, Christ, who would walk the ultimate road of suffering to bring us out of our spiritual exile.

APPLY

Joseph's life and Israel's journey teach us that God's love and sovereignty are not negated by our suffering. In fact, they are often most clearly seen in the wilderness. The years of hardship, the detours, and the delays, these are not signs of God's distance but of His intimate involvement in our lives. God's path is often not the one we would choose, but it is always the path of ultimate good, even when it involves seasons of exile. Joseph's life is one long preparation for a moment of salvation. Christ's life was the ultimate preparation for our eternal salvation. And the exile of God's people, though hard, is the place where they learn to trust, depend, and know the deep, sovereign love of God.

Where in your life have you been tempted to believe that God's providence or love has faltered because of suffering? How does Joseph's story, and more importantly, the story of Christ, reshape your understanding of suffering? The wilderness, the exile, the waiting, these are not wasted years. They are years where God is working His sovereign plan for your good and His glory.

REFLECTION 

Devotional Day 5

Greeting God's Promises

Hebrews 11:8-22

⁸By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

¹¹By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. ¹²Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

¹³These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ¹⁴For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. ¹⁵And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

¹⁷By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, ¹⁸of whom it was said, “In Isaac your seed shall be called,” ¹⁹concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

²⁰*By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.*

²¹*By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.*

²²*By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.*

DISCOVER

As you read through Hebrews 11:8-22, you are invited into the hall of faith, a chapter of Scripture where the faithful are commended, not for their accomplishments, but for their trust in a God they could not see and promises they had not yet received. Joseph's name is among those honored, and rightly so. By faith, he navigates betrayal, hardship, and uncertainty. His life, marked by suffering and leadership, is ultimately anchored in trust that God will fulfill His promises.

LEARN

Joseph's faith is not passive waiting. He acts, leads, and forgives, all while believing in something beyond his immediate reality. Joseph does not live to see Israel return to the land God promised, but in his final days, he gives instructions about his bones, confident they will one day rest in that land

(Hebrews 11:22). His faith holds on to what his eyes cannot yet see.

What is striking about Joseph's story is that he is not just trusting God for the blessings of the moment; his faith looks forward. He believes in the promises of God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, even when the evidence seems to point in the opposite direction. How could a man who is enslaved, imprisoned, and then exiled from his homeland trust so deeply? Because Joseph's faith is not in his circumstances, but in the character and promises of God. Hebrews reminds us that the people of God "greeted [the promises] from afar" (11:13). They embraced God's promises, even when fulfillment was distant. Joseph's life teaches us that true faith is anchored not in what we can hold today, but in the unshakable hope of what God declares for tomorrow. Faith looks beyond the present struggle and trusts in the eternal plan of a sovereign God.

APPLY

How often do we allow our circumstances to define our faith? We want to see, feel, and touch the fulfillment of God's promises now, forgetting that the true nature of faith is believing in what is not yet visible. Joseph calls us to lift our eyes from the present to the eternal, to trust that God is working even when we cannot understand His ways. Today, where is your faith being challenged? Are you struggling to



trust God with a promise unfulfilled, a prayer unanswered, or a season of suffering? Remember Joseph, who lived, suffered, and led with faith that endured beyond the grave, trusted that God's plan was far greater than what he could see. Consider this: Are

you greeting God's promises with faith, even from afar? What would it look like today to release your hold on immediate answers and instead embrace the God who holds the future?

REFLECTION

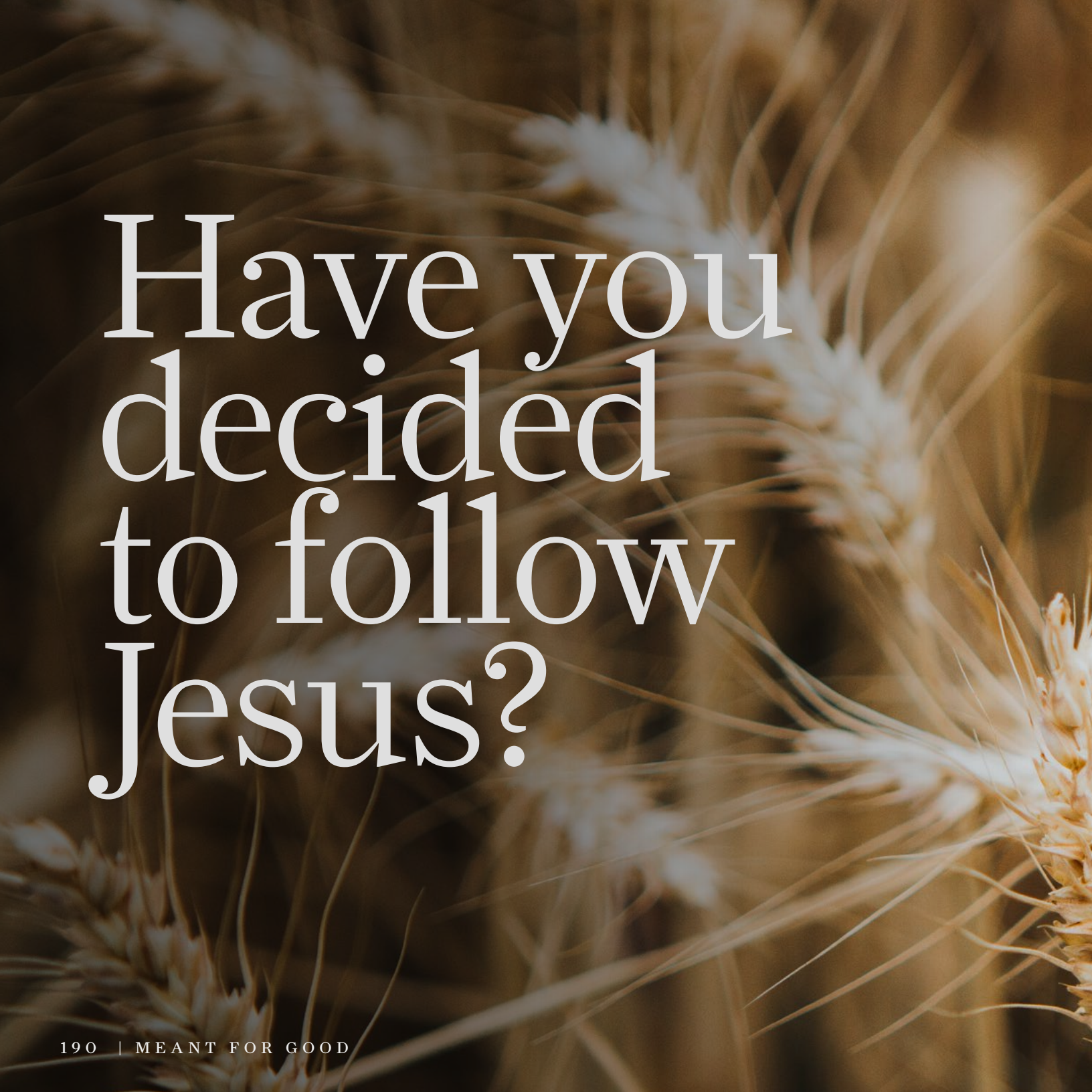
Discussion Week 6

Application questions

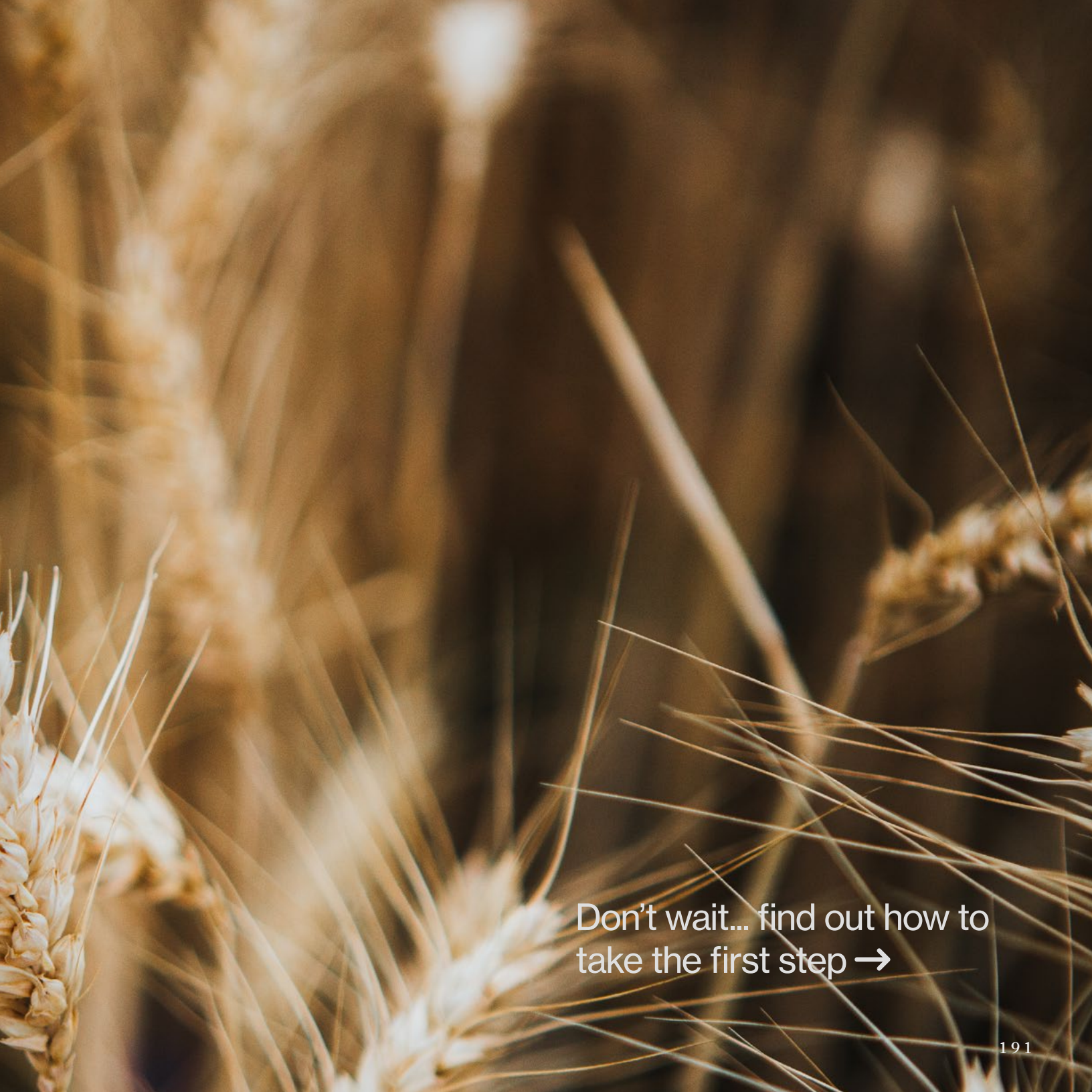
1. What parts of the passage stood out to you this week? Why?

2. What would it look like to lean into the suffering you are facing, not in despair, but in trust, knowing that God is writing a greater story through it?

3. How would your life look different if you operated from God's forgiveness, rather than trying to earn it?



Have you
decided
to follow
Jesus?



Don't wait... find out how to
take the first step →

Becoming a Christian

Romans 10:17 says, *“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*

If you have not already surrendered your heart to the Lord and asked Him to be your Savior, our hope is that the Holy Spirit stirred within you as you completed this study. Maybe you have been in church all your life and have never truly done this, or maybe this is the first time you have ever studied God’s Word and would like to accept Him now. If you have never encountered Jesus and trusted Him as your Savior, continue to read to discover how to do this.

SALVATION THROUGH JESUS

The first step on the road to Salvation through Jesus Christ is to acknowledge Romans 3:23 which says, *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* This means that all of humanity requires forgiveness from God for their sins. We are by nature born sinful and in need of a Savior.

God made a way for us to be forgiven and receive salvation through giving His Son, Jesus Christ, as a sacrifice for all. Jesus fulfilled the demands of God by His obedient life, died on the cross in full substitution and payment for the sins of all, was buried, and on the third day He arose physically and bodily from the dead. He ascended into heaven where He





now intercedes for all believers. Romans 5:8 says, *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

Salvation is a gift and received by faith in Jesus alone. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”*

Romans 10:9 says, *“If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”* Faith is a choice made within your heart that is evidenced by the way you live. Although works are not required to be saved, there will be evidence of your faith as you begin to live according to Scripture.

OUR RESPONSE

If you would like to take this next step to put your trust in Jesus and accept Him as your Lord and Savior, ask Him to be Lord of your life by praying a prayer similar to this:

Heavenly Father, I know that I am a sinner in need of a Savior. I believe that Jesus, your Son, was the sacrifice for all sin. Please forgive me for all of my own sins. I accept your offer of eternal life. Please fill my heart with your Holy Spirit. Thank you for giving me new life in you. I choose to follow you now and forever.

If you have never accepted this gift of salvation, please share your decision with your group leader or someone from the leadership team. When you encounter Jesus and ask Him to be Lord of your life, you are forever changed. We would love to guide you in your next steps to follow Him and live according to His will.

Study Resources

Meant for Good video series

Follow along with weekly videos. This resource is perfect for individuals studying without a group, life groups studying at home, or for group members who miss a week of teaching.



Meant for Good reading plan
on the YouVersion Bible App!



In this study, there are six memory verses, one designated for each week. We recommend tearing these cards out and keeping them within reach, allowing you to store the Word of God in your heart.

MEMORY VERSE

Week 1



MEMORY VERSE

Week 2



MEMORY VERSE

Week 3



MEMORY VERSE

Week 4



MEMORY VERSE

Week 5



MEMORY VERSE

Week 6



1 John 1:8-9 (NKJV)

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Genesis 39:20-21 (NKJV)

Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison. But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

Genesis 41:50-52 (NKJV)

Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: "For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." And the name of the second he called Ephraim: "For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

Genesis 45:5 (NKJV)

"But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life."

Genesis 48:15 (NKJV)

And he blessed Joseph, and said: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has fed me all my life long to this day,"

Genesis 50:20 (NKJV)

"But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive."







 **THOMAS ROAD**
FIRST CHURCH