

"The one thing I ask of the Lord - the thing I seek most - is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, delighting in the Lord's perfections and meditating in his temple." Psalm 27:4



WEEK 6

TRIUMPH IN FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION

Genesis 44:18 - 45:28

Jesus was just finishing up a time of prayer with His heavenly Father when one of His disciples approached Him and asked if He would teach them to pray. The model prayer Jesus recited for them is likely one of the most well-known prayers in the entirety of the Bible. The Lord's Prayer, found in both Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4, says this:

*"Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. Amen."*

One of the aspects which Jesus included in His prayer was the importance of forgiveness. We are to forgive as we have been forgiven. At the conclusion of His prayer, He felt the need to give even more instruction on the topic of forgiveness by saying, "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Certainly, conviction must have fallen upon some of Jesus' listeners. Jesus wanted His disciples to understand how critical it is to forgive. In just a short period of time, He was about to demonstrate the ultimate act of forgiveness by allowing Himself to be crucified in order to forgive the sins of mankind. If He, who was without sin, could forgive us, how much more should we be able to do the same for others? Further, Jesus' sacrifice on the cross would make it possible for humanity to be reconciled back to God, because our sins were paid for once and for all.



Joseph's life emulates the kind of forgiveness Jesus both taught and demonstrated. Joseph chose to forgive his brothers for the offenses they had committed against him. He chose not to hold onto unforgiveness. This pleased God and He honored Joseph's exonerated with a beautiful family reconciliation which will unfold in our story today. May God convict us as needed if we are holding unforgiveness. May we be quick to forgive, knowing it is necessary as a believer in Jesus. May we experience the freedom which comes from forgiving. May we be blessed with reconciliation with those we have forgiven.



R RECEIVING God's Word

Open in Prayer

Read Genesis 44:18-34 and 45:1-28



E EXPERIENCING God's Word

Experience 1: Genesis 44:18-34

1. Read Genesis 44:18-34. Judah is pleading with Joseph over the detainment of his brother Benjamin. In his pleas, he uses many tactics to try and get Joseph to relent which would allow Benjamin to go back home to Canaan. Look at the list of tactics Judah used and match the statements on the left with the verses on the right where you find this tactic being used.

Judah's personal responsibility	v. 33-34
Appealing to Joseph's authority	v. 19,23, 32
Appealing to his previous honesty to Joseph	v. 32
Judah's personal sacrifice	v. 18
Judah's humility toward Joseph	v. 24-31
Sympathy for Jacob, Benjamin's father	v. 19-23



2. Last week we witnessed a change in Judah when he told Jacob he would protect Benjamin to and from Egypt. In verses 18-34 Joseph is witnessing a changed Judah. How is Judah different from how Joseph probably remembered him?

Experience 2: Genesis 45:1-28

1. Read Genesis 45:1. Why does Joseph finally decide to reveal himself to his brothers?
2. In Genesis 45:2 Joseph has a deeply emotional response. Describe it.
3. Read Genesis 45:3-4. What is the first question Joseph asks after revealing his identity? What does this demonstrate about his deepest concern?
 - a. Joseph's brothers are speechless in verse 3 when they hear "I am Joseph." Imagine for a minute what must have been going through their heads. Write your thoughts below.

The word “dismayed” in Genesis 45:3 means to disturb, alarm, terrify, hurry, be disturbed, be anxious, be afraid, be hurried, be nervous. (www.blueletterbible.com, Strong’s Hebrew Lexicon H926 - bahal. Genesis 45)

- b. In verse 4 what does Joseph do to reassure his brothers? Why might they need reassuring?
4. After Joseph tells his brothers he is Joseph, he reminds them of what they did to him previously. Read Genesis 45:5-8. Notice the first two words in the beginning of verse 5: “but now.” The word *but* cancels out what was said before it and signals something important is coming next. Here we see Joseph give a very gracious response to his brothers’ previous mistreatment. Who does he credit with the decision to send him to Egypt?
- a. We know that God is not the author of evil. Explain Joseph’s response within this truth. Read Job 1:6-12 for further understanding on evil and God.
- b. List the three reasons Joseph believes he was sent to Egypt.



- c. Explain how Joseph's response is an example of forgiveness and reconciliation.
5. Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-21. We are told that we have been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, and that we have been given the ministry of reconciliation as ambassadors for Christ as though God were pleading through us. How was Joseph an example of this as an Old Testament believer?
6. Joseph is very concerned about his father, Jacob. He immediately tells his brothers to go home and share the good news with their father. Read Genesis 45:9-13. What are the reassurances that Joseph tells his brothers to share with Jacob?
- a. What command does Joseph give his brothers in verse 13?
7. What does the emotional but genuine response seen in Genesis 45:14-15 say about the relationship now between Joseph and his brothers?



TIME STAMP

Before the digital age, when important paper documents were received, a clerk would use an ink stamp to mark the time and date on them to stand as an official record of an event. It has been said that life events can also be like “time stamps” upon our hearts. Incidents that happen in life, both good and bad, leave an indelible stamp upon us and are not easily forgotten.

Joseph has many “time stamp” moments in his life. As you look back on this week’s lesson, what events would you say are “time stamp” moments for Joseph?



ACTING on God’s Word

Forgiveness:

To grant a pardon for an offense, cease to feel resentment against an offender, and/or cancel a debt against another person

1. Joseph understood that all that happened to him was allowed by God. With this understanding, he was able to more easily forgive his brothers. How does our focus on God instead of focusing on who is wrong or right help in our ability to forgive someone who has wronged us?



1. In today's verses we saw Joseph exhibit forgiveness and reconciliation with his brothers. Reconciliation happened after Joseph saw an undeniable change in his brother Judah's heart. Explain the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation. Can one happen without the other? Explain.



D DELIGHTING in God's Word

From today's verses, how has the Lord prompted you to pray?

Write a verse from the chapter that God has spoken to your heart.

Close in Prayer