

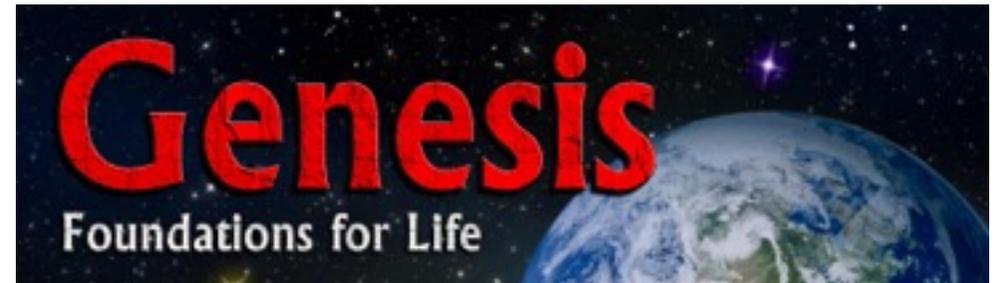
For GC Discussion

- What are the biggest barriers to us receiving the forgiveness that God has provided for us in Jesus?
- How can we equip ourselves to forgive those who wrong us, just as we have been forgiven ourselves?

Next Week: we conclude our series in Genesis as God's chosen family move to Egypt, ready for the events that will unfold in the book of Exodus.

Notes and Questions

For Worship: Listen to **'Not Guilty Anymore'** by Aaron Keyes. You can find it on YouTube, or on the Hill City Church blog on the website.



Week 21: Joseph Part 4 - Forgiveness Chapters 42-45

This Weeks Summary

This week we saw the unfolding of God's great plan to rescue His people from the worldwide famine. Joseph comes to understand fully why he had to go through so much to get him to this place for such a time as this.

For Study:

The verses below all have to do with the subject of forgiveness - both receiving the forgiveness that we need, and the ability to be able to also forgive others.

Receiving Forgiveness

- **1 John 1:5-10**
- **Isaiah 1:18, 43:25**
- **Hebrews 10:1-18**
- **Colossians 1:13-14, 2:13-15**
- **Micah 7:18-19**
- **Psalms 32:1-11, 103:8-18**

Forgiving Others

- **Ephesians 4:25-32**
- **Matthew 18:21-35**
- **Luke 23:26-34**
- **Mark 11:12-25**
- **Matthew 6:14-15**

This week we have focussed on Joseph's response to his brothers as his dreams of many years ago are fulfilled. Here are a few other areas touched by our text this week.

The Dreamer is Vindicated

It would be interesting to know just how much part those dreams played during Joseph's suffering. Joseph had been given a glimpse into the future - he knew that God had something amazing in store for him, but just like his forefathers before him it took far longer than he could ever have expected for it to come to pass. One of the huge messages that has come through in the lives of all of the patriarchs is that God never works to the timeline we think He ought to be using. When we receive a vision or a calling from God it's so easy to think that it will come to pass tomorrow, or next week - not 20 or 25 years down the line. Clearly God values patience far more than you or me do naturally, and this fact is explained further in James and even also linked to the idea of trials and suffering that we have been thinking about:

"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing." (James 1:2-4, NKJV)

I'm sure if we all naturally had our own way when it comes to becoming the people God has called us to be, then we would want it to come quickly and painlessly, but it just doesn't work that way. For us to become all that God has for us, and to receive all that He wants to give us it will take time, and it will take trials - there is no other way to fulfil the purposes of God in our lives.

The Brother's Journey to Redemption

What we don't tend to think too much about is the journey of the brothers between the time they sold their brother off into slavery, and when they find themselves prostrate before that same brother years later. It seems clear that one purpose of all that Joseph does when they come to Egypt is to test them, wanting to see if they are still the same brothers who chucked him in that pit, and sold him off, thinking they'd never see him again. What we see is a group of men who may well have been eaten up by guilt for what they did to their brother, and how it affected their father. So much so that when the possibility of something similar happening to

their other brother comes along, they act altogether differently - there is nothing they won't do to save Benjamin, even if it means they themselves have to suffer. What they show us is that they are not just sorry for what they did, but they have been genuinely changed by the experience. 2 Corinthians 7:10-11 says this:

For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.

Paul makes it clear to the church in Corinth that there's a way of being sorry for something that does absolutely no good to anyone - in fact it leads to death, because it's sorrow that leads to absolutely no change - we just feel bad for a bit, but then go out and do the same again. True Godly sorrow however will lead us to genuinely repent - and as in Corinth, will lead us to do whatever we can to rid ourselves of the sin that we've fallen into. Sin isn't something we play around with, it's something we flee from, and Joseph's dealings with his brothers seem to have shown him that they really had repented of the evil they had done to him. Whether Joseph was right to act as he did we're not told, but clearly his brothers learnt from their mistake, and we would do well to do the same.

Judah's Remarkable Act of Sacrifice

We've already seen a little of Judah's character in the book of Genesis, and he doesn't come out very well - however, faced with the possibility of losing another brother Judah does something that required a deep love both for his brother and his father - in fact, Judah here looks a lot like Jesus. In offering to be the one left behind in Egypt Judah could have been subjecting himself to a horrendous life - a life just as his brother Joseph had experienced (though Judah knew nothing of this up to this point). His act of self-denial for the good of others is exactly what Jesus did as He gave Himself for us on the cross, and it's exactly the life that God calls us to as followers of Jesus - we are to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and imitate Him as we seek to live a life dedicated to others and not just to our own selfish ambition. As we see in the text, this act of selflessness was the final straw for Joseph as he breaks down before his changed brothers and the chosen family of God is finally re-united together as one.