

Sermon Series: “Embracing Forgiveness”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—6/3/2004

Title: “Forgive and Forget”

Text: Genesis 45

Intro.: *Ills.: quote for Charles Swindoll book: Forgiven and Forgetting*

Theme: Forgiving and forgetting is not something which we do, but something which God accomplishes in us and through us as we embrace the forgiveness which he freely gives to us in Jesus.

A history of past baggage

- Joseph’s story (Genesis 37-50)
 1. Favoritism and unrequited love
 - a. **Print and read Gen 37: 3-4**
 - b. Generational sin handed down **Ills.: Lessons from Israeli and Palestinian conflict**
 2. Bitter jealousy and unchecked pride
 - a. **Print and read Genesis 37:10-11**
 3. Unconfessed sin and guilt driven action (brothers dealing with imprisoned Simeon/Benjamin live under fear)
 - a. **Print and read Genesis 42: 22-28**
- Our story
 1. A *tangled web of deception* and lies which extended the hurt for years to come
 2. A *nursed grudge* from a childhood hurt held to an opportunistic future date of revenge
 3. A *wounded heart or mind* that vacillates between guilt and grief over loss because of another callous sin

Unpacking the baggage so that you can settle down

- **Ills.: How soon do you unpack the bags when you get home from a trip?**
- In Christ *confronting the moment of confrontation* so that you can let go of the sin
 1. Joseph did not enable but diffused future-past sins against him (**Print and read Genesis 45: 1-4**)
 2. Learning and living the art of godly confrontation
- In Christ *reconciling yourself* to the other
 1. *"If you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. Matt5:23-24*
 2. Train yourself and others to see the “**God at work**” signs right in front of your nose
 - a. **Ills.: Creative Road Work Ahead — why does it take so much to get our attention**
 - b. **Print Genesis 45: 5-8** (three times [5,7,8] Joseph acknowledges how God used bad to the good of his plan)
 - c. Can God actually turn evil/sin/hurt for your good?
 - d. *"As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. Genesis 50:20*
 3. Show demonstrative acts of unconditional love (**Print Genesis 45: 14-15, 21-23**) — actions speak for your faith
 - a. *But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." James 2:18*
 - b. Forgetting another’s sin is an act of faith in God who can redeem/reconcile/recover every sin & its consequence
- In Christ *rescue others from destructive habits* of their past sin
 1. Never say, “that’s o.k.!”
 - a. Often we do that because we don’t won’t to do the heavy lifting of forgiveness, reconciliation, and forgetting
 - b. It takes even more work to stay angry at another and never be the first to cross the battle line in truce
 - c. We pay the price by giving the other permission to do it all over again and reopen the wound
 - d. **Ills.: Don’t pick at the scab—let it heal**
 2. Joseph understood the benefit of *reordered living*

- a. He gave his brothers a positive, healthy assignment (**Print and read Genesis 45: 9-13**)
 - b. He pro-actively warned them against the pitfalls of the past (**Print and read Genesis 45: 24**)
 - c. **Print and read 2 Tim. 2:23-26** (*refuse assumptions, must not be quarrelsome, patient, with gentleness*)
- In Christ *focus on God's blessing* upon your imitation of his divine forgiveness (**Print and read Gene 45: 16-20**)
 - 1. Joseph saw God use Pharaoh to offset whatever Joseph may have given away
 - 2. *Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. Philip. 4:8*

Forgiving and Forgetting

Forgiving is setting the prisoner free from bondage, only to discover that the prisoner was you! **Charles Swindoll, *Forgiving and Forgetting*, copyright 1991, Waco Texas: Word books.**

Gen 37: 3-4

Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic. His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms.

Genesis 37:10-11

He related it to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?" His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

Genesis 42: 22-28

Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not tell you, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen? Now comes the reckoning for his blood". . . and their hearts sank, and they turned trembling to one another, saying, "What is this that God has done to us?"

2 Tim. 2:23-26

But refuse foolish and ignorant assumptions, knowing that they produce quarrels. The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

Genesis 45:1-28

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

⁴Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come closer to me." And they came closer. And he said, "I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt.

⁵"Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶"For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. ⁷"God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. ⁸"Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over 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 delay. ¹⁰"You shall live in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children and your flocks and your herds and all that you have. ¹¹"There I will also provide for you, for there are still five years of famine to come, and you and your household and all that you have would be impoverished." ¹²"Behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth which is speaking to you. ¹³"Now you must tell my father of all my splendor in Egypt, and all that you have seen; and you must hurry and bring my father down here."

¹⁴Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. ¹⁵He kissed all his brothers and wept on them, and afterward his brothers talked with him. ...²¹Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them wagons according to the command of Pharaoh, and gave them provisions for the journey. ²²To each of them he gave changes of garments, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments. ²³To his father he sent as follows: ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and sustenance for his father on the journey.

¹⁶Now when the news was heard in Pharaoh's house that Joseph's brothers had come, it pleased Pharaoh and his servants. ¹⁷Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: load your beasts and go to the land of Canaan, ¹⁸and take your father and your households and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you will eat the fat of the land.' ¹⁹"Now you are ordered, 'Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father and come. ²⁰'Do not concern yourselves with your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.' "

²⁴So he sent his brothers away, and as they departed, he said to them, "Do not quarrel on the journey."