

## **Joseph Forgives Genesis 50:15-21**

15 When 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." 16 So 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. 18 Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, "Behold, we are your servants." 19 Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? 20 "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. 21 "Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

- I. 15 When 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."
  - A. Here is a combination of fear and guilt that comes upon them.
    - 1. This fear may come from an actual recognition that you could expect retribution.
    - 2. Or it may come from what they think they would do in Joseph's place.
    - 3. Still we see that for years they have lived in fear simply because they had never made an open confession and sought their brothers forgiveness.
  - B. This is also their guilt speaking. For they know what they did and how wrong it was.
    - 1. This is a first good step in the restoration of a relationship.
    - 2. But most people cannot get around their pride to admit openly their sin.
    - 3. This seems to have been the problem.
    - 4. This was the subject that no one talked about. They pretended that it did not exist.
    - 5. They acknowledge their wrong, their sin, which helps with a healthy forgiveness.
- II. 16 So 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."

- A. They send messengers to Joseph.
    - 1. Here is their fear and guilt.
    - 2. Either they are afraid to speak to Joseph themselves.
      - a. It seems that the some of the brothers were the messengers.
      - b. Maybe Benjamin and Judah.
      - c. We do not know but we know that at least some of his brothers were there.
    - 3. Or they are so guilty they cannot face him.
  - B. Their idea is that maybe Joseph had restrained himself because of his father.
    - 1. Once again this is a subject they had never spoken of.
    - 2. It was the proverbial ax stuck in the ceiling that might fall at any time but no one had taken the time to pull it down.
    - 3. Our lives are filled with things like that.
    - 4. For years Joseph's brothers and danced around the elephant in the room because it would have been uncomfortable to deal with it.
    - 5. But now the time has come they are forced to face the issue of their sin and Joseph's forgiveness.
- III. " And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. 18 Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, "Behold, we are your servants.
- A. Joseph wept.
    - 1. Exactly why it does not say.
    - 2. But I think it is because it brought up for Joseph which was a dead issue.
    - 3. Joseph had not intention of treating them any different now that his father was gone.
    - 4. They had fail to believe him years before when he said that he had forgiven them.
    - 5. That is what unconfessed guilt will do to you.
  - B. We are your servants
    - 1. They had sold him as a slave and now they offer themselves as slaves.
    - 2. How wrong could they be about their relationship with Joseph.
    - 3. Sin a guilt are hard masters.

4. They take all that we will give them without mercy.
- IV. 19 Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God?"
- A. Joseph knew that God was forgiving.
    1. Therefore what Joseph knew of God he became to his brothers.
    2. We who love the Lord have nothing to fear from God.
    3. Perfect love cast away all fear.
  - B. But he could have done whatever he wanted.
    1. But it was the nature of Joseph that made it so they would not need to be afraid.
- V. 20 "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.
- A. Joseph knew that God was sovereign.
  - B. God works all things together for the good of those who love Him.
  - C. God had not only save Joseph's family but many people.
- VI. 21 "Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.
- A. Joseph had freely forgiven them.
  - B. Long ago, so all their worry was a wasted energy.
  - C. We are to forgive for our Heavenly Father has forgiven us.