

Joseph Wept and Displayed Marvelous Patience

by James Jennings

This sermon delves into the story of Joseph in Genesis 45 and 50, highlighting his remarkable patience and gracious response towards those who wronged him, showcasing his deep belief in God's sovereignty. Joseph's forgiveness towards his brothers, even after 17 years of suspicion and doubt, serves as a powerful example of extending grace and kindness to those who may not deserve it. The sermon draws parallels between Joseph's actions and the graciousness of Jesus Christ towards His enemies, emphasizing the importance of trusting in God's control and responding with love and forgiveness.

Scripture: Genesis 45:5, Genesis 50:19, Luke 12:32, Romans 8:28, Ephesians 1:11, Isaiah 45:7, John 14:9, Joshua 23:14

Topics: "Forgiveness", "Trust in God's Sovereignty"

Description

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Transcript

We'll turn over to Genesis 45. I want to speak something that really stood out a couple of weeks ago in the morning as I was reading on Joseph wept and displayed marvelous patience. And I hope to show you that from Joseph's life.

It's incredible. His response, his patient response towards those who questioned his love and distrusted his sincerity. And that's just not amazing, but we're going to really ask the question, how? And why did he respond in such a way? Because there was a truth he believed that was essential for him to respond in such a gracious way as he did.

And I could give you this message and show you Joseph's patience, and you could leave here and say, well, I want to show that type of patience as well. But if you miss this truth that we're going to see that was why and how Joseph could respond in the way he did, you will not see any change in your life. So, I wanted to mention that.

So let's pray. I'm just going to give a brief look at the history. There's 13 chapters here dealing with Joseph.

We're not going to read all of it. That would get a little wearisome. Let's pray.

Father, Lord, I thank You. Lord, I thank You for Your Word that is indeed a light unto our path. And Lord, here we are.

So many of us, Lord, we're positionally sanctified and we're seeking to continue to be progressively sanctified. And Lord, we want to be made more like Christ. And Lord, here we have Joseph as one character in the Old Testament who so many ways points to You, Lord Jesus.

And Lord, I just pray that You would encourage the brethren. I pray, Father, You would convict us this morning of areas in our lives where we are still lacking a Christ-like patience, forgiveness. Lord, work in us a greater degree of likeness to Your Son, Father.

And Lord, we pray again that You'd be with those teaching our kids, that You'd raise them from the dead. Give them life. We look to You in Jesus' name, Amen.

So we're going to look in a moment at Genesis 45 and Genesis 50. But just in case some here are new Christians and you don't know your Bible, or you've forgotten some about Joseph, I just want to mention a couple of things to get a context specifically of what type of violence and suffering against him that he endured. Because if you don't know the backdrop of what leads a man to display a certain type of forgiveness and continue showing that forgiveness, it won't mean a lot.

But when you hear what he went through, it will help you really appreciate the grace that he showed. So at 17 years of age, Joseph was sold into slavery. Seventeen.

Sold into slavery. Or you could say in today's terms, he was a victim of human trafficking. And who was he sold by? Because that matters, right? Getting sold into slavery is one thing.

The who is another. That kind of ups the ante on the seriousness of the trial. He was sold by his own brothers.

His brothers were jealous of his father's love towards him, of their father's love towards him, and they wanted to murder him and kill him. But Reuben got involved. A different discussion happened.

He got put in a pit. The plan was to kill him and throw his body in the pit. In the cistern.

And I guess cover it up. In the end, they didn't murder him. They sold him into slavery.

And it says in Genesis 37, they hated him. They couldn't speak peacefully to him. It says they conspired against him to kill him.

But they sold him into slavery. Now, his trial didn't end there, right? He gets sold and now he's away in Egypt. And what happens next? He gets a job in... He gets bought by Potiphar and he's serving in Potiphar's house.

And the hand of God is with Joseph. And Joseph raises up in his position in that household. Things appear to be looking good.

And then he has another serious trial. Here he is overseer at Potiphar's house. And Potiphar's wife falsely accuses him of attempted rape.

And Joseph is put in prison. That's pretty significant. Especially in our day and age.

I mean, you think of all that goes on. If you had a false charge, nothing happened. I mean, Joseph was working, avoiding these things, and here these false accusations against him come and he gets put in prison.

Wouldn't you be a little bitter? Maybe? So he was being tested by the Word of the Lord. Psalm 105, 19 says that. And this is going on for a period of 20 years.

He's being tested by going through slavery, prison, and in prison. The people forgetting him when they get out after he interprets their dreams. And eventually, Joseph is raised up to a position of supreme power.

Just as God said would happen. It just took a little while to get there. He had to be patient and believe that God's Word would come true because our God never lies.

And then, there's a famine in the land. As you know, his brothers end up coming. And they don't recognize Joseph.

Joseph recognizes them. Joseph recognizes his brothers. And he is rough with them.

We don't necessarily see patience and graciousness here. There's a roughness with his brothers because Joseph is testing and examining them to see if there's any type of guilt. And it comes out, if you've got your Bible open, you can look real quick at 42, verses 21.

You can see this with your own eyes. If you even look at verse 7, Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke roughly to them. Where do you come from? And he questions them.

Then you move down and you look at verse 21. And then they said to one another, obviously in a language they did not know Joseph knew, in truth, we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul when he begged us and we did not listen. That is why this distress has come upon us.

And Reuben answered them, did I not tell you not to sin against the boy? But you did not listen, so now there comes a reckoning for his blood. They did not know that Joseph understood them, for there was an interpreter between them. Then he turned away from them and wept." So Joseph at this point, he's tested them.

There's a sense where he realizes they've got some guilt here. They feel some sense of what they did was wrong. We could ask, what if none of that even came to light? How would the story have unfolded? I don't know.

So, Joseph wept there. Now, events go on and eventually to their shock, in his second visit, what happens? He reveals himself to them. I mean, you can only imagine.

I mean, that would be shocking. It's their brother. And he's Lord, it says, of Egypt.

I mean, what a shock that would be. And so that takes us to chapter 45. We're going to read these 15 verses in chapter 45.

This is Joseph revealing himself to his brothers. And here we're going to see this initial expressed forgiveness that he makes to them. Then Joseph could not control himself.

You'll love that. He's not stiff. He's got emotion.

This is real. This is life. Before all of those who stood by him, he cried, make everyone go out from me.

So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud so that the Egyptians heard it and the household of Pharaoh heard it. And 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. I mean, they're in shock. So Joseph said to his brothers, come near to me, please.

And they came near to him. And he said, I am your brother Joseph whom you sold into Egypt. And now, isn't this amazing? And now, do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here.

For because God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to keep alive for you many survivors.

So it was not you who sent me here, but it was God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh and Lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry up and go to my father.

Say to him, thus says your son Joseph, God has made me Lord of all Egypt. Come down to me, do not tarry. You shall dwell in the land of Goshen.

You shall be near me, you and your children, and your children's children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. There I will provide for you. For who? His father? His brothers? For there are yet five years of famine to come so that you and your household and all that you have do not come to poverty.

And now your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my mouth that speaks to you. You must tell my father of all my honor in Egypt and of all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here.

Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept. And Benjamin wept upon his neck. Look at verse 15.

Joseph takes initiative. And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them. He kissed just a couple of them? Reuben? No, all of them.

After that, his brothers talked with him. You can't imagine a more gracious response from Joseph. I mean, what could we add here that would make it all the more glorious of his kindness to them? He's taking initiative.

I mean, they don't know what to say. Is he about to say off with our heads? Send them to the lions or whatever they did back then in Egypt? And even when he says in v. 11, there I will provide for you. That

message is going to his father, and that provision includes his father's children, meaning his brothers.

He's going to provide for his brothers. He's not just saying bring father here. He tells them not to be distressed.

He knows they're going to be distressed. And as we're going to see, he really acknowledges God being in sovereign control in this whole situation here. So this is amazing.

This is incredibly gracious. He doesn't just offer them crumbs. You look at v. 20.

Pharaoh is saying to Joseph, and you, Joseph, are commanded to say v. 19, say this to them, v. 20, have no concern for your goods. For the best of all the land of Egypt is yours. Have no concern.

No concern. There is full provision. There is a full covering.

There is forgiveness here. You think about the prodigal son. When he came back, who took initiative to come and weep and kiss his son? It was the prodigal's father who took initiative here to come and kiss and weep on all of his brothers.

The brothers who conspired against him to kill him, who threw him in a pit, and when they took him out of that pit to settle him into slavery, it says he begged for them to not do it. And they did not listen to him. And this is the way he responds.

This is amazing if you think about it. It's incredible. But it doesn't end here.

It does not end here. And what we're going to look at, what is more incredible, is Joseph's response in chapter 50. So what happens from here, so we don't have to read every verse, skip to chapter 47, verse 28.

47, 28. Jacob gets down there to Egypt and he says, and now I will die. Right? Now I can die.

That could kind of make you think he lives how long? Like a couple months or something? But what does this text say? How long was Jacob alive there with Joseph? And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt 17 years. He didn't just get there and die months later. Seventeen years.

So, Joseph, we have this initial forgiveness, and then we've got a period of 17 years. And in that 17 years, there's nothing in the Scriptures that give us any reason to think that Joseph's attitude of forgiveness towards his brothers and towards everyone has changed. There's nothing there that would make us believe that is the case.

So now let's go to chapter 50. We're going to read verses 15-21. And this is going to be the main area we're going to think about.

Actually, let's start in v. 14. After he had buried his father. So his dad has died.

The 17 years have gone by. Joseph returned to Egypt with his brothers and all who had gone up with him to bury his father. So they've already buried their dad.

Their dad's already been dead. He's not alive. And look at v. 15.

When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said... So this is after their father has died. A fear grips them. It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him.

So they get this conclusion after their dad's died, after they've had this funeral, and they've gotten back from the funeral, this fear grips them. And you could look at v. 50. Joseph fell on his father's face and wept over him and kissed him.

I mean, imagine watching this. Joseph's grief. And it even says here in v. 11, when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the morning on the threshing floor of Atab, they said, this is a grievous morning by the Egyptians.

They were really grieved. There are serious tears going on here. If you're Joseph's brothers, you're saying, whoa.

Wow, man, he really loved our dad. Not that they weren't grieving. And so they get back from this funeral and they say maybe he's going to hate us.

Maybe he's going to pay us back. Maybe now that our dad is gone, our dad was the only reason we had protection and now he's going to kill us. He's going to get us back.

He's going to put us in prison. Who knows what means they were thinking he might do this. V. 16, so they sent a message to Joseph saying, your father gave this command before he died.

Say to Joseph, please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin because they did evil to you. And now please forgive the transgression of the servants of God of your father. Now, pause real fast.

Did Jacob really say that to his sons? V. 15, when Joseph's brothers saw their father was dead, they said, when did Joseph's brothers come to have this fear? Was it before? Does the text indicate it was before their dad died or after their dad died? After. After. Dad's not alive anymore to go to him and say certain things and share it with him.

My point is, I tend to think this is a lie. And here's another reason why I think this is the case. He says here, your father gave this command.

Okay, he gave this command. Look at 49:33. When Jacob finished commanding his sons. And if you read all those commands prior to that, there's nothing here about Jacob saying, Joseph, you've had bitterness all of these years.

You need to go and forgive your brothers. And then if you go down, verse 12, thus his sons did for him as he had commanded them. So they did everything he commanded.

Did he have an extra command behind closed doors to his sons? Does Jacob have that type of distrust for his son where he would think that Joseph is bitter and all of these years he never tell his son you need to be reconciled to your brothers? And in chapter 45, is there anything that indicates there that Joseph is hoping he's going to be able to pay back his brothers? Now, whether or not they are lying or not, we're still going to get the same point, okay? So if you believe they're telling the truth here, they did talk to the father, we're still going to get the same point here. So look back at verse 17. How did Joseph respond? How did Joseph respond when his brothers made this statement that questions his character, that questions his sincerity, that questions his motive, that questions his love for them after 17 years? It's a long time.

How does Joseph respond? Joseph wept when they spoke to him. We're going to consider why I think he wept in a moment. Let's read the rest of these verses.

His brothers also came and they fell down before him and said, Behold, we are your servants. Joseph said to them, Do not fear, for am I in the place of God. As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good to bring it about that many people should be kept alive as they are today.

So do not fear. Don't fear. I will provide for you and your little ones.

Thus, he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. Joseph does it again. He has a gracious response when you would think he could respond differently.

And this is after 17 years. So what I want to focus on in these verses and the rest of our time is I want us to think about what's going on here. Joseph's patient response to his brothers who are questioning his love.

The fact they would even ask the question they did, and ask them, are you going to pay us back? That speaks they were insecure. There is a lack of assurance there about one who's made promises to them. We're going to look in the end how that sometimes is the Christian, right? The Christian, even after 17 years of being a believer, they're reminded of some guilt, of some sin from years ago.

And they all of a sudden have this struggle here. And we're going to see there's ways in which Joseph's response reflects Christ's response to the struggling Christian who wrestles with assurance. So what did the brothers do? As I mentioned, I personally think they lied.

When the brothers saw their father died, then they said this, so then they get a messenger to go to Joseph. I just don't see when did they have an opportunity to talk to their father. If the fear came after their dad died, after the funeral, if that's when the fear gripped them, and why would Jacob not go to his own son? But either way, Joseph wept.

Joseph wept. One sec, gathering my thoughts. Okay, so first, let's think of this.

Think a little more. What does this imply they believe about Joseph? Their response of saying to him that maybe that Joseph will hate us and pay us back, of them thinking that, what does that say they believe about Joseph? It says they're suspicious of how Joseph truly feels about them. They're suspicious.

They lack trust in him. They don't think he's sincere. They're wrongly judging his character.

They're believing after 17 years that Joseph is still capable of vengeance. And if you heard that from someone, does that comfort you to know that this person you've loved and given all these promises to, that 17 years later, they still think you're capable of lashing out in vengeance? You kind of feel like your character is being assaulted. Like that's not true of me.

Right? Now look, you could say this wasn't out of the possibility because in Genesis 27, it says this, the days of mourning for my father are approaching, then I will kill my brother Jacob. So Esau thought that way. Right? My dad dies, so I'm going to kill that man who got that birthright.

He's going to die. He's going to pay. That is how lost men reply.

They don't know the reality that ultimately, in the ultimate sense, vengeance is God's. You know what also is happening here? What does this imply they believe about Joseph? They are assuming that their brother's prime motive was his father and not God. Okay? So we can test this.

You want to know a man's motive? Find a place in his life where his father is not there. Because if his father is the prime motive, he'll only obey and show face when he's around his father. Can you think of a time in Joseph's life where his father is far gone, and there Joseph is, and we see who he really fears? Is there any place like that in this account? Yeah, a slave at Potiphar's house.

Potiphar's wife, it says he flees from her and says, how can I do this great wickedness and sin against my father? No. How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? Joseph's motivation was not his dad. It was God.

And they're wrongly assuming his motive. You think of Jesus' words in John 14.9. Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know Me, Philip? Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, show us the Father? I mean, you feel like Joseph would want to say, that guy, have you been with Me so long for 17 years to know Dad is dead and gone, and that doesn't mean I've hidden a hatchet in the ground and I'm finally going to take it out and get vengeance.

Vengeance! You could really get defensive here if someone assumes these things about your character. You could respond in a very ungracious and non-patient way. Joseph doesn't do that.

His brothers, in a way, have a difficult time to receive forgiveness. Often, the wrongdoer who is treacherous himself, he suspects the same is true of others. This person, they place wrong motives upon people for the good they do to him because that person himself has wrong motives.

So, he just assumes the worst about everyone because he knows himself that he does everything with a wrong motive. Maybe some of that's going on here with his brothers. We don't know if his brothers are Christians, if they've been saved here in the Old Testament.

We don't know. Some of the blessings, it seems like curses, are pronounced upon some of his brothers here in chapter 49. So, that's what that implies.

So, imagine you're already going through the grief of your dad dying, and you get home from this funeral, and then you've got this situation where your brothers come and they reveal they have a fear that you're going to pay them back. I mean, you've already got the grief of your father dying. You're kind of in a time where there's a lot of emotions going on.

Joseph weeps a lot if you read through these chapters. He cries a lot. Seven times I think at least.

And even then, Joseph responds in a patient way. He doesn't lash out. He responds in patience.

So let's consider Joseph's response. Because this type of response, when it fits the situation, I want us to be those who respond with such patience when people come to us and they question the sincerity of our love when we've maybe not given them one reason to do so. So Joseph's response.

First thing he did, he wept. He wept. I mean, you hear what they're saying and you just weep.

You weep. Was it that Joseph had years of bitterness building up, and finally he hears that dad wants me to forgive my brothers, and so he just starts weeping because he realizes I've been bitter all of these

years. No, I don't buy that.

I don't think that's what's going on. I think Joseph, number one, he wept because he was hurt that they questioned his love. He was hurt.

The fact that they would distrust him and fear him, it hurt him. Because he had not given a reason for that to be the case. And if he lied, if the brothers were lying, then I think that's part of why he wept.

Why would you feel the need to lie? Our dad's already died. Think about John 21. Christ was questioning Peter's love.

Do you love Me? What did Peter feel? It says Peter grieved at Christ's question. Peter grieved. Peter was grieved at Christ questioning him.

So as one commentator says in a clear way, he says this, I think he wept because he suddenly saw that his brothers still didn't trust him. Even after 17 years of what Joseph thought was a restored relationship, they were trying to use their dead father's influence to protect themselves when there wasn't any need for protection. Some of you, think of your relationships right now.

You might have had a relationship where there was some sin and it hurt the relationship and there's been forgiveness. Imagine fast-forwarding 17 years and you think that relationship has been restored and then the other person drops a question on you that all of a sudden reveals to you this whole time, maybe not this whole time, maybe something happened recently, but they're afraid of you. Wouldn't that be hurtful? You would feel hurt.

But, there's no need for you to feel that way. And so Joseph responds. He weeps.

And then look at the first thing he says. He wept. He weeps, and then his brothers also came and fell down.

So he's weeping and they fall down before him and say, behold, we're your servants. Kind of like the prodigal son in a way. We'll come back and serve you, Father.

Behold, we're your servants. And look what Joseph said. He said to them, do not fear.

And then he somewhat corrects them for am I in the place of God? Meaning his brothers were wrongly making it appear like Joseph was in the place of God. That Joseph had the place where vengeance was his because of all the wrong they did. And Joseph says, no, none of that.

I'm under God just like you are. And he says, do not fear. I mean, he says that quickly.

Joseph weeps, and then the first thing he says is do not fear. He doesn't try to sneakily say all these hard things at first and then finally say do not fear. He right out of the get-go says do not fear.

And then he corrects their thinking for am I in the place of God? And then he says, as for you, yes, you meant evil against me. What you did was evil. But God meant it for good.

I mean, he already told them this 17 years ago. Worded a little different, but he told them this exact reality 17 years earlier. It's like, did you guys forget? God meant it for good to bring it about that many people should be kept alive as they are today.

And then he says again, so do not fear. Do not fear. Do not fear.

I will provide for you and your little ones. Thus, he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. He comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Incredible. Incredible. Joseph does not lash out.

These are the brothers who hated him and they could not speak peacefully to him. And here he speaks peacefully to them. Joseph was not easily offended at his brother's suspicion.

He didn't say how dare you think that about me? How dare you assume that? After all the love I've done for you, you would dare think that way about me? That's not a justifiable response. He doesn't do that. He's not easily offended.

He restates the promise. If you remember in 45, he tells them to go tell his father that for you and your children, verse 45-11, I will provide for you. He said that 17 years ago.

He lived the promise out for 17 years and then he restates it. Verse 21, do not fear, I will provide for you. He already said that 17 years ago.

And now he says it again. I will provide for you. He comforted them.

Again, pointed to the fact that God is the One who allowed this to happen. So, let's think. Well, one other thought on that.

Joseph's mindset was not to get even. Don't a lot of people, their mindset is I want to get even with that person who wronged me. Joseph did not have that mindset.

Joseph is at a place in which his groveling brothers could be told to do anything. He sways such power based upon the past and present circumstances, and he does not choose to take advantage of that power in any way. Because he realizes he actually doesn't have that power.

He says I'm not in the place of God. Vengeance is not his. But there's other people Joseph could have sought vengeance on that he didn't.

There's nothing recorded about it when he got into power that he sought vengeance on other people. It's incredible. Joseph does the opposite to those who wronged him.

And remember, they did feel their guilt. There was a sense. They saw their guilt as we saw earlier.

So, let's ask this now. Why could Joseph respond with such a forgiving spirit towards those who wronged him? Those he begged with tears to not sell him into human trafficking. What truth was he gripped with? And some of you might see something else, but I see something that stands out.

What is it? What truth about God was Joseph gripped with that allowed him to respond in such a way? What did he believe about the Lord? He believed the Lord is sovereign. You see that through this entire section. If you cross out every place where he acknowledges the sovereign control of God over all things, I guarantee you this, you will have different responses from Joseph.

How would he have responded in Potiphar's house if God was not all sovereign? God was all sovereign. God was there watching Joseph in that house. And he didn't want to sin against God.

And that same God who saw him in Potiphar's house when in an opportunity to gratify the flesh and he fled from it, is the same God who's watching him when his brothers come to him in this very emotional and sensitive time right after his father's funeral. They reveal to him. They do not trust him.

They're afraid of him. Very emotional. Very hard time.

And Joseph recognizes that same sovereign God that's here watching me right now. And he responds, incredible, with grace, patience. God is sovereign.

I mean, look at 45, how he words this here in v. 5. In v. 50, he says the same thing a little differently. And now, do not be distressed or angry with yourselves. And this is the reason he's not angry with them.

It's not just don't be angry with yourselves, but I'm not angry with you. Why? Don't be angry because you sold me here. Don't be angry at all of that.

For God sent me before you. He acknowledges the reason all this happened is God. God did it.

God allowed it to happen. V. 8, he goes on and he says it even a stronger way. So it was not you who sent me here.

They could kind of be like, no, we did send you here. I mean, we sold you. We did it.

Yes, and they did do it. But they were a means, even though what they meant for evil, what did God do? God meant it for good. God was in control working it all out.

And he said that to them. And then 17 years later, Joseph's theology had not changed. Did he believe in God's sovereignty 17 years earlier? He didn't get into older age and become an Arminian, so to speak, and not believe in God's sovereignty.

V. 50, Joseph said, Do not fear. Mind the place of God. Again, guys, he's like, as for you, you meant evil against me.

But God meant it for good. God did it. God was in control.

God was on the throne. So Joseph recognizes if I get angry at my brothers for what they did, I'm ultimately angry at God because God's the one who allowed it to happen. Amen? So if Joseph responds in a bitter way, that bitterness ultimately reflects an anger and frustration at God for what God allowed.

But he believes the Lord's sovereign. I mean, his belief of God's sovereignty is amazing in some way. I mean, you don't see him... Yes, the Word of the Lord tested him.

I can imagine in the prison at different points there were discouragements as he saw himself be forgotten in there when the man got out and was brought before the king and he was there still yet longer. I bet there was a test, as it says, and there was discouragement, but he believed the Lord. He believed the Lord.

Joseph believed, why am I in this trial? The Lord. Joseph believed, why do I have this position of power? Who put me here? The Lord. How do you get in a place with such power to be Lord of Egypt and yet not respond in a cruel way? Because you realize you didn't put yourself in that place, it was God who did it.

God did it. God was on the throne. The God who says in Isaiah 45, I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the Lord who does all these things.

The God who inspired Paul to write in Romans 8, for those who love God, all things work together for good. Not all things are good, but all things God will work it out for good. And the Lord did that here in Joseph's life with the false accusation of rape, with being sold into human trafficking.

The Lord worked it all out for good. Ephesians 1, His purpose, who works all things after the counsel of His will. Joseph believed that in his life, everything he was facing was working out perfectly for the counsel of the will of God.

And he did not want to do something that would display a distrust in the Lord. Joseph, when questioned about his love by his brothers, reveals he does not question God's love for him. That's amazing.

Why me? Why Lord? Why all of this? He really trusted the Lord. Incredible. Incredible.

God is always watching. God puts us in trials. God puts us in positions of power.

As Acts 7 says, but God was with Joseph. Joseph obviously walked in communion with the Lord. He not only walked in communion with the Lord, he walked in the truth of doctrine about who God is and he believed who the Lord is, that God is in control.

Believing God is in control will help you control sinful passions that might want to rear their ugly head. I mean, you sit there and you realize God's on the throne. No temptation has overtaken you.

It's not common to man. But God is faithful and He'll also provide the way of escape. Wait, so you're saying the Lord provides the trials? Yes, He doesn't tempt us, but He provides these trials and He always provides a way of escape.

And Joseph is there continually through his life believing in a sovereign God who controls all things, who's put him in these trials, who has not abandoned him, and that's how he responds in a gracious way. I mean, we could take chapter 45. You could even imagine in 45 Joseph's gracious response initially.

And some could say, yeah, 17 years later though, the fact they would question his love then, he really should have let them have it. No. And he didn't.

Because you know what the quickest way is to show them you have no love for them? Is to respond in a proud, insecure way. But the way he responds, if you're his brothers, you leave there thinking, man, I can't believe we doubted his character. Can't believe all the insinuations that were implied about what we thought of him.

So let's also just think for a moment. Consider how Joseph's response is a reflection of Christ's graciousness towards us when we lack assurance as Christians. I mean, look, is it possible a true Christian could fall into having suspicion of how does Jesus truly feel about me? You know, there's slanders from the enemy.

You see some garbage on the Internet about some false teaching and your mind just gets messed with and a suspicious thought comes in your mind about the Lord. He's already given His promise many, many years earlier. He gave it a lot more than 17 years earlier.

And you doubt it. You wonder, will He actually pay me back? Are His promises true? It may be that the Lord will hate us and pay us back for all that evil we did to Him 17 years ago. Brethren, if you're in Christ, that won't ever happen.

Brethren, all that wrath has been removed. He's adopted you as a son, as a daughter. He's not left you far off.

You've been grafted in. You're His. You're co-heirs with Christ seated in the heavenlies.

He's provided you a righteousness. If He did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how much more will He with Him not also graciously give us all things? I realize there's the reality of those who are false converts and they fall away and they take God's grace as a license for sin. I'm not speaking about that.

But if you're a true Christian and you have a suspicious thought about the Lord's character, be done with it. There's truth all over the Scriptures. Luke 12.

You think about Joseph saying here, do not fear. Luke 12. Fear not, little flock.

Why? It is your father's begrudgingly painful... he wishes he didn't have to give you the Kingdom. No. It's his good pleasure.

Don't fear. Reason. It's God's good pleasure to give you this Kingdom.

Joseph said this to his brothers after 17 years. Do not fear. I will provide.

I've been doing that 17 years. You feel it? Part of you just wants to say, come on, guys! He doesn't do that. He comforts them.

He speaks tenderly to them. As I've studied this, I just feel like I see in myself ways I respond. That's not like Christ.

Is there a place to be strong? Yes. Is there a place to speak roughly as He did years earlier when He was testing them? Yes. Think about Jesus.

I mean, here Thomas says He wants to see the holes on Christ's hands. I think Christ dealt with Thomas in a very gracious way too when He appeared to them in there. He allowed him to see that which he wanted to see.

Now Christ said, blessed are those who believe and have not seen Me. You could feel there's a little sting in there, a little reproof there. You should believe Me even though you've not seen Me in the flesh.

But He was very gracious with Thomas. He was very gracious with Philip. Our Lord is gracious.

He prayed for Peter that his faith not fail. And one thing we should ask ourselves is this, am I presently behaving in such a way for people to validly question my love? Right? Husbands and wives, you should ask that. Is there any way I treat my spouse where I give a possible provision for my wife to question the genuineness of my love? If we see something there, we should deal with it.

But God is faithful. He's the Lord. He says, I will not violate My covenant or alter the word that went forth from My mouth, lips.

He's the Lord who is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness. He is not man that He should lie or a son of man that He should change His mind. Has He said and will He not do it? Or has He spoken? Will He not fulfill it? And as Joshua 23 says, and now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one word has failed of all the good things that the Lord your God promised concerning you.

All have come to pass for you. Not one of them has failed. And so Christian, if you're here today and you have any suspicion of Christ's love for you after 17 years, after 10 years, after 7 months of being a Christian, you want to believe His sovereignty, that God's in control.

One of the biggest things that leads people to struggle with assurance is circumstances in their life that are hard where they question why did God allow this to happen? Joseph, be like Joseph. Even if you can't see how God meant it for good yet. You might be in a place where it looks like it was just all for evil.

But you've got to believe God's going to work this out. There will be some purpose by which He will get glory in the end, and I've got to trust that even if I don't see it in this life. So Joseph's life in these chapters is an exhortation to all of us.

Is there someone that you or I are struggling to forgive? Did they dump you in a pit? Sell you into human trafficking? Jealous of you? Want you to die? Is there someone who's harmed you and you're struggling to forgive? Here, another exhortation to all of us is this. Do you believe God is sovereign? Have you ever loved a person and shown forgiveness towards them? And reaffirmed your love to them to only then have that person be suspicious, unsure, and doubtful of how genuine your love is? It's a very hurtful experience, especially if you've not given them a reason to lay hold of for the validity of those questions to be being asked. If that's you, you want to be like Joseph.

I hope you don't forget Joseph's response. I hope it stays with you the rest of your Christian life so that maybe you too will be in a very emotional period in your life where there was a funeral, and the last thing you need is another test thrown on your lap, right? Your dad's died, and then you've got your brother. Coming here, questioning your love, showing they distrust your character, they're being afraid, you thought the relationship was restored.

Remember this text. Be like Joseph. Acknowledge God's sovereignty.

Tell Him to not fear. Comfort them and speak kindly to them as it fits the occasion and those circumstances. I'm not saying that's always exactly how that response needs to be.

Depending on certain circumstances, it could vary. So, I guess in closing, just a couple quick things. As you read this, it's amazing how many comparisons there are between Joseph and Christ.

So I'll just mention a few of those. The father was well-pleased with Christ. So was Jacob pleased in Joseph.

Both Joseph and Christ were at home with the father in fellowship. Both of them were sent to their brethren. Christ to the Jews.

Joseph to his brothers. Both were delivered up by envy of their brethren. Joseph by his half-brothers.

Jesus by his fellow Jews who delivered him up for envy. They were both sold by those nearest to them. Christ by Judas and Joseph by his brothers.

Both were taken from the one they loved. The father forsook Christ. And here, Joseph was taken from his father.

Both suffered mocking. Joseph was told, we'll see what becomes of your dreams. And Jesus was told, come down from the cross and save yourself.

Both were condemned by crimes they did not commit. Joseph by Potiphar's wife. And obviously, Christ clearly condemned by crimes He did not commit.

Both who saw them in prison saw they were righteous men. The jailer saw that of Joseph. The centurion saw that of Christ.

And both were condemned with two by them. Joseph in the jail, one of which died, one of which lived. Christ on the cross, one thief died spiritually in hell.

And the other is in hell now. And the other is in paradise. Christ's death led to much fruit.

So with Joseph's death, it led to many being kept alive who came to Him for food. So it is as Christ is the bread of life. Both were raised up.

God raised up Christ and God raised up Joseph. And you could go on. I think A.W. Pink has a list of 90 things comparing Joseph to Christ.

But the thing I wanted to focus on this morning was that both displayed remarkable grace and kindness to those who did not deserve it. And you can't be more kind than the Lord Jesus Christ. One will scarcely die for a righteous man.

But while we're weak at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. Jesus went and died for His enemies to pay their full atonement. And if you don't know Christ, like Joseph, Jesus says, come closer to Me.

Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. And He will give you the strength to live out this reality of graciousness in the midst of an angry, bitter, harsh, unforgiving world. Let's pray.

Father, I just pray that You would, Lord, help people to apply these things correctly. Lord, that something wouldn't be taken to an extreme it should not be. But Lord, we feel like Paul.

We pray our love would abound more and more. Lord, would our love abound more and more. Do a marvelous work of grace in our lives.

Lord, help us in our relationships in the church and with family that we could have some sense of the gracious, forgiving, patient, acknowledging the sovereignty of God response that Joseph displayed not just once, but 17 years later. Lord, help us to be consistent in the long term with our beliefs and practically living those beliefs out even if like Joseph, we're in a place of power. Lord, help us to never become proud and lifted up and think we are above others.

But Lord, help us to lay low. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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