

BROOKLAND BAPTIST CHURCH
Bible Study
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Lecture VII

November 29, 2023

Forgiveness: A Key to Unlocking Your Divine Destiny
Case Study: The Account of Joseph
Ref: Genesis 37 – 50
(Part 4)

Signs of True Forgiveness

In the previous study we took a cursory look at how Joseph was able to move forward, continue on with his life, even though the thought of what his brothers had done to him was always with him. We noted in scripture how things got progressively worse for Joseph before they got better. No one would have probably fault Joseph if he had snapped or became enraged due to the injustice that was brought upon him by his brothers, Potipher's wife, and even the chief cup bearer who caused Joseph to serve two additional years in prison because he forgot about him.

We also concluded at the end of the last session that Joseph was able to endure the hurt and pain inflicted on him by his brothers some 15 years earlier simply because the scripture revealed to us at multiple points that, "God was with him". This reality allowed Joseph to continue to forge ahead towards his divine destiny despite the severity of the offense because God ultimately had a purpose and a plan for Joseph amid the pain. Joseph survived succumbing to the hate, anger, malice, rage, desire for revenge and/or vengeance that oftentimes accompanies an offense because he trusted God and cared more about the fidelity of his relationship with God than appeasing his flesh.

Joseph steadfastly demonstrated to us how we ought to carry ourselves when, not if, an offense occurs in our lives. Especially an offense that hurts us deeply. Joseph undoubtedly held on to the belief that all things do work for the good of those who love the Lord, even when the hurt is so painful that your rational mind can not discern anything good coming out of the situation. But it is in moments like these that we must learn how to forgive, and in reality, God expects us to forgive. Because as we studied earlier, forgiveness is the divine mechanism God chose to put in place to help us move forward after an offense has taken place...regardless of the level of hurt. Case in point, we would be hard-pressed to find an occasion greater than the physical pain Christ suffered on the cross or the emotional pain he endured when he was abandoned and rejected by his own disciples...but yet he forgave them all. This speaks to the intentionality of forgiveness, and as Jesus and Joseph displayed, forgiveness is a required component in helping us to reach our divine destiny.

Now we know how forgiveness played out in the life of Jesus in him reaching his divine destiny, so let us close out this case study by highlighting a few truths about forgiveness taken from Joseph's situation.

- You know you have truly forgiven and moved on when you still allow God to use the gift he gave you even when it seems as though the gift contributed to the offense occurring
 - Joseph had the gift of interpretation of dreams (chap 39, v5-11)
 - Joseph did not refuse to use his gift in prison (chap 40, v8-22)
 - Joseph did not refuse to use his gift in the palace (chap 41, v15-36)

- You know you have truly forgiven when do not seek revenge on the one(s) who hurt you when you have the power and authority to do so
 - Joseph never goes after Potipher's wife for her false accusation
 - Joseph never goes after the chief cup bearer for forgetting about him
 - Joseph never goes after his brothers for selling him into slavery

- You know you have truly forgiven when you can look back over the ordeal and give God praise for having gone through it
 - Joseph marries gets married and names his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim (chap 41, v51-52)
 - Manasseh means – “to forget”
 - Ephraim means – “fruitful”

- You know you have truly forgiven when you can see the one(s) who offended you on multiple occasions without constantly bringing up the offense
 - Joseph saw his brothers in chapter 42 and again in chapter 43
 - He chose not to reveal himself until chapter 45
 - After he confronted his brothers about the offense in chapter 45 he never brought it up again

- You know you have truly forgiven when you recognize that the personal pain you endured was part of God's providential plan to bring about deliverance
 - Joseph came to realize that God orchestrated everything that happened in order to save his people (chap 45, v5)

- You know you have truly forgiven when you refuse to make the matter public, but instead work to keep things private
 - Joseph cleared the room before displaying his emotions and confronting his brothers about the offense (chap 45, v1)

- You know you have truly forgiven when you can treat your offender with such love and compassion as though nothing happened
 - Joseph was able to look his brothers in the face, break bread with them, show them hospitality, and provide for their needs without thinking twice (chap 43, v31)

- You know you have truly forgiven when you no longer blame the offender but instead you bless God for what you endured
 - After Jacob's death, Joseph reassured his brothers that he would not seek vengeance or payback
 - What they meant for evil...God meant it for good (chap 50, v20)

So this account ends with Joseph and his brothers being reconciled. It took time, almost 20 years but the breach between Joseph and his brothers was repaired. The forgiveness Joseph had in his heart overrode the hurt and pain that also resided there. And because it did, Joseph was not only able to save the lives of his family, but also he set the stage for the proliferation of the nation of Israel. Without a doubt, forgiveness was a key that Joseph used to unlock his divine destiny...and the key of forgiveness will work in our lives to do the same.