

Joseph the Merciful: Forgiveness in the Family

Sunday, August 16/20 --- Genesis 45

Now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life... 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 God. – Genesis 45:5f

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. – Colossians 3:12f

At its best forgiveness hopes for more. In general, when we give, we hope that gifts will in some way be reciprocated and that the exchange of gifts will give birth to friendship, even to mutual delight. Forgiveness is born on the wings of a similar hope. A wrongdoing has made a serious dent in a relationship, maybe even totaled it. We forgive in hope that it will elicit repentance and restitution, and that forgiveness will mend and restore the relationship... - Miroslav Volf

1. The Pathway to Reconciliation: A Closer Look at the Story of Joseph

- An Emotional Break through (45:1 – 2)
- A Private Exchange (45:1 – 3)
- A Drawing near to one another (45:4)
- A New Perspective from God (45:5 – 8)
- An Offer of Fresh Grace and Hope (45:9 – 13)
- A Cathartic experience (45:14 – 15)
- A Sincere Conversation (45:14 – 15)

2. The Sin that Needed Forgiving: A Closer Look at the Root of the Problem

- The Difference between Covetousness and Envy

3. The Forgiveness that Sought Restoration: A Closer Look at the Heart of God

- The Difference between true and false Forgiveness

4. The Restoration that Required a Response: A Closer Look at the Goal in Relationships

- The Difference between Repentance and Restitution

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

As you hear the message today what 'offence' comes to mind in your family or friendships?
What do you think God's grace might lead you to pray for and to seek out as a result?