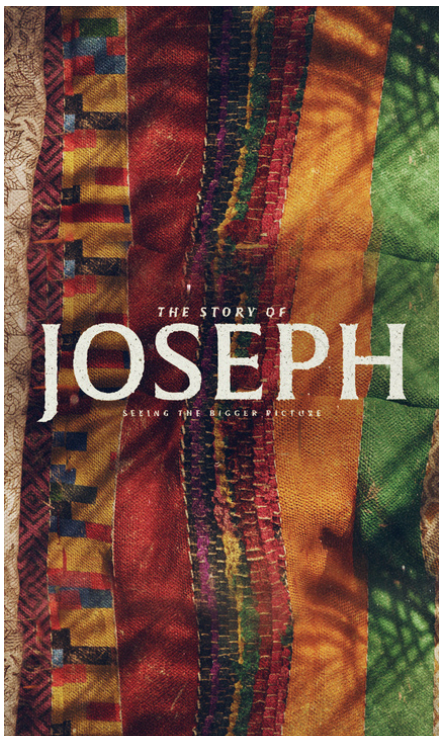


SERMON STUDY GUIDE



Part 7 // Grace Instead of Vengeance



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mission Sunday/Lunch: WHAT IF YOUR NEXT CHAPTER WAS YOUR GREATEST MISSION?

On Sunday, October 18, we're welcoming missionary, author, and speaker Bryan Webb, Area Director for Pacific Oceania, for a special Missions Sunday across all three Newbreak campuses.

Whether you're a student dreaming about your future, in the middle of your career, stepping into retirement, or simply wondering how God might use you, your next chapter could be an opportunity to make an impact for His Kingdom.

Following services, we'll gather for a Missions Lunch hosted at the Tierrasanta Campus at 12:45pm. The lunch is open to anyone interested in learning more about missions and ways to serve. Childcare is available for kids through 5th grade.

ICE BREAKERS

- If you had to compete on a reality TV show, which one would you have the best chance of winning and why?
- What is something that helps you reset when life feels busy or overwhelming?

WARM UP:

SAY: Imagine it's Christmas morning when you were a kid. As a group, use the five senses to build the scene. What are the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and things you might physically feel that immediately come to mind?

SIGHT:

SOUND:

SMELL:

TASTE:

TOUCH:

TRANSITION: It's amazing how one sight, sound, smell, or moment can suddenly bring memories rushing back. As we read Genesis 42, Joseph experiences something far more significant when his past suddenly walks right back into his present. Scripture says that when he sees his brothers, he recognizes them and remembers the dreams he had many years before.

READ IT:

Genesis 42:3-28, 43:26-34 (NLT)

When Jacob heard that grain was available in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why are you standing around looking at one another? 2 I have heard there is grain in Egypt. Go down there, and buy enough grain to keep us alive. Otherwise we'll die."

3 So Joseph's ten older brothers went down to Egypt to buy grain. 4 But Jacob wouldn't let Joseph's younger brother, Benjamin, go with them, for fear some harm might come to him. 5 So Jacob's[a] sons arrived in Egypt along with others to buy food, for the famine was in Canaan as well.

6 Since Joseph was governor of all Egypt and in charge of selling grain to all the people, it was to him that his brothers came. When they arrived, they bowed before him with their faces to the ground. 7 Joseph recognized his brothers instantly, but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them. "Where are you from?" he demanded.

"From the land of Canaan," they replied. "We have come to buy food."

8 Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they didn't recognize him. 9 And he remembered the dreams he'd had about them many years before. He said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see how vulnerable our land has become."

10 "No, my lord!" they exclaimed. "Your servants have simply come to buy food. 11 We are all brothers—members of the same family. We are honest men, sir! We are not spies!"

12 "Yes, you are!" Joseph insisted. "You have come to see how vulnerable our land has become."

13 "Sir," they said, "there are actually twelve of us. We, your servants, are all brothers, sons of a man living in the land of Canaan. Our youngest brother is back there with our father right now, and one of our brothers is no longer with us."

14 But Joseph insisted, "As I said, you are spies! 15 This is how I will test your story. I swear by the life of Pharaoh that you will never leave Egypt unless your youngest brother comes here! 16 One of you must go and get your brother. I'll keep the rest of you here in prison. Then we'll find out whether or not your story is true. By the life of Pharaoh, if it turns out that you don't have a younger brother, then I'll know you are spies."

17 So Joseph put them all in prison for three days. 18 On the third day Joseph said to them, "I am a God-fearing man. If you do as I say, you will live. 19 If you really are honest men, choose one of your brothers to remain in prison. The rest of you may go home with grain for your starving families. 20 But you must bring your youngest brother back to me. This will prove that you are telling the truth, and you will not die." To this they agreed.

21 Speaking among themselves, they said, "Clearly we are being punished because of what we did to Joseph long ago. We saw his anguish when he pleaded for his life, but we wouldn't listen. That's why we're in this trouble."

22 "Didn't I tell you not to sin against the boy?" Reuben asked. "But you wouldn't listen. And now we have to answer for his blood!"

23 Of course, they didn't know that Joseph understood them, for he had been speaking to them through an interpreter. 24 Now he turned away from them and began to weep. When he regained his composure, he spoke to them again. Then he chose Simeon from among them and had him tied up right before their eyes.

25 Joseph then ordered his servants to fill the men's sacks with grain, but he also gave secret instructions to return each brother's payment at the top of his sack. He also gave them supplies for their journey home. 26 So the brothers loaded their donkeys with the grain and headed for home.

27 But when they stopped for the night and one of them opened his sack to get grain for his donkey, he found his money in the top of his sack. 28 "Look!" he exclaimed to his brothers. "My money has been returned; it's here in my sack!" Then their hearts sank. Trembling, they said to each other, "What has God done to us?"

Genesis 43

26 When Joseph came home, they gave him the gifts they had brought him, then bowed low to the ground before him. 27 After greeting them, he asked, "How is your father, the old man you spoke about? Is he still alive?"

28 "Yes," they replied. "Our father, your servant, is alive and well." And they bowed low again.

29 Then Joseph looked at his brother Benjamin, the son of his own mother. "Is this your youngest brother, the one you told me about?" Joseph asked. "May God be gracious to you, my son." 30 Then Joseph hurried from the room because he was overcome with emotion for his brother. He went into his private room, where he broke down and wept. 31 After washing his face, he came back out, keeping himself under control. Then he ordered, "Bring out the food!"

32 The waiters served Joseph at his own table, and his brothers were served at a separate table. The Egyptians who ate with Joseph sat at their own table, because Egyptians despise Hebrews and refuse to eat with them. 33 Joseph told each of his brothers where to sit, and to their amazement, he seated them according to age, from oldest to youngest. 34 And Joseph filled their plates with food from his own table, giving Benjamin five times as much as he gave the others. So they feasted and drank freely with him.

DISCUSS IT:

- More than 20 years have passed since Joseph's brothers betrayed him and sold him into slavery. His life looks completely different now, but Genesis 42 tells us that the moment he sees his brothers, "he remembered." Joseph's circumstances had changed, but seeing them brought his past right back into his present. Why do you think unresolved experiences from our past can still have such a powerful effect on us years later? What can happen when we simply try to ignore, bury, or move past them?
 - **ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Think of unresolved hurt like trying to hold a ping-pong ball underwater. You can keep pushing it down, but the moment you loosen your grip, it comes right back to the surface. We can do the same thing with pain, anger, guilt, or disappointment, pushing it down because we don't want to deal with it. But when something resurfaces, instead of immediately pushing it back down, we can allow God into it and give Him the opportunity to bring healing.
 - **ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 147:3 (NLT) "He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds."
 - **ADDITIONAL QUESTION:** Do you believe that bringing the things we've pushed down or buried to God can actually bring healing? Why or why not? If you're comfortable sharing, when have you experienced God bringing healing to something you had been carrying?

- More than twenty years later, the brothers immediately connect their present circumstances to what they did to Joseph: “We saw his anguish when he pleaded for his life, but we wouldn’t listen.” For the first time, they’re openly acknowledging the harm they caused and their responsibility for it. What is the difference between conviction and shame? How can each one affect the way we respond when we recognize that we’ve hurt someone or done something wrong?
 - **ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Sometimes we picture God correcting us with disappointment or anger, but Scripture says it is His kindness that leads us toward repentance. God doesn’t draw us toward change by humiliating us; His grace gives us a safe place to be honest about what needs to change.
 - **ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE: Romans 2:4 (NLT)** *Don’t you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can’t you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?*
 - **ADDITIONAL QUESTION:** How does believing that God meets us with kindness change the way we approach Him when we know we’ve messed up?
- Joseph now has the power to retaliate, yet we begin seeing him move differently: he returns their money, provides supplies, asks about his father, weeps over Benjamin, and eventually feeds his brothers from his own table. Importantly, he isn’t pretending the betrayal never happened or immediately restoring everything to the way it was. What do you think it looks like to extend grace to someone who has hurt you without minimizing what they did or pretending the hurt didn’t matter? What does choosing grace require us to surrender?
 - **ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Choosing grace doesn’t mean deciding that what happened was okay; it means deciding that revenge is not ours to carry out. When we’ve been deeply hurt, there can be something in us that wants the other person to hurt too—to understand what they did, experience consequences, or finally “get what they deserve.” Scripture invites us to release that judgment into God’s hands, trusting Him with what is just.
 - **ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE: Romans 12:19 (NLT)** “Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, ‘I will take revenge; I will pay them back,’ says the LORD.”
 - **ADDITIONAL QUESTION:** Be honest: when someone has deeply hurt you, what does “getting even” tend to look like for you, even in subtle ways? How might surrendering revenge to God change the way you respond to that person?

APPLY IT:

Genesis 42:25 (NLT)

“Joseph then ordered his servants to fill the men’s sacks with grain, but he also gave secret instructions to return each brother’s payment at the top of his sack. He also gave them supplies for their journey home.”

SAY: Joseph couldn’t change what his brothers had done to him, but he could decide that their actions would not determine his own. Throughout this chapter, we see God bringing both hurt and guilt to the surface, not to leave anyone trapped in the past, but to begin moving them toward healing, repentance, and grace. God can do the same in us! We don’t have to keep burying what hurts, hiding what we regret, or allowing someone else’s actions to dictate who we become.

ASK: This week, ask God to show you one part of your past that still has too much influence over your present. Is there a hurt you need to bring to Him, something you need to own, or revenge you need to surrender? Whatever He brings to mind, don’t push it back down; invite Him into it and ask, “God, what would grace look like here?”

PRAY:

- How can we be praying for you this week?