



Life Group Study Notes

"Dreamworks"

Ps. Norman Nakanishi - October 1, 2017

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- Who did you "fight" with the most growing up? (Not necessarily physical fighting)
- Did you ever have a "fight" with your best friend? Did you remain friends? How?
- Do you have a friend now that at one time you didn't like? How did you become friends?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

Genesis 45:3-8 ESV *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. So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, please." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for 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 God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.*

Joseph had been a young, brash, unwise youth, who had provoked his brothers to the point that they wanted to kill him. Instead, they sold him into slavery. For the next thirteen years he went through further trials: slavery, false accusation and injustice, imprisonment, and neglect. Yet God used all of this to train Joseph's heart to forgive.

Forgiveness. Forgiveness is not something we feel; it is something we do. We can choose to forgive, because Christ has forgiven us of so much.

Colossians 3:12-13 ESV *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.*

Healing. Healing takes time. Forgiving others makes it possible to be healed by God; unforgiveness prevents our healing from past hurt. God promises to heal us. Christ bore our punishment that we might be healed in our souls and in our bodies.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-3 ESV For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal...

Reconciliation. Beyond forgiveness and healing, God desires reconciliation. Reconciliation requires the willingness of both parties. Sometimes one party may be ready and willing, but the other is not. We must allow God to work in our hearts to desire and seek out reconciliation.

Romans 12:16-18 ESV Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Transformation. God's ultimate aim is to bring about our transformation. His purpose is to conform us into the image of Christ. Joseph foreshadowed Christ. He not only relented from seeking vengeance upon his brothers, he went out of his way to bless them and do only good to them. God wants to so change us through the power of Jesus Christ that we are willing and able to do the same to those who have hurt us.

Genesis 50:15-21 ESV When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him." 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 the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." But 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; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose one of the points below, and discuss how the lesson applies to our lives.

- Is there anyone you have not been able to forgive from past hurts?
- What helps contribute to our healing from past hurts?
- Is there anyone God wants you to be reconciled with? What needs to be done?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Thank God for his forgiveness, healing, reconciliation, and transformation in Christ.
- Ask God to help you to forgive others and to pray for their spiritual transformation.
- Ask God for instruction about how to go about seeking reconciliation with anyone with whom he wants you to be reconciled.