

A photograph of a dirt path winding through a dense forest. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating bright patches on the path and a warm, golden glow. The path leads into the distance, flanked by tall, dark trees. The overall mood is peaceful and hopeful.

JOSEPH

Trailblazer for God

Joseph the Brother

Genesis 42:1 - 45:28

Genesis 42-45

When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, 'Why do you just keep looking at each other?' ² He continued, 'I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. Go down there and buy some for us, so that we may live and not die.'

³ Then ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt. ⁴ But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with the others, because he was afraid that harm might come to him. ⁵ So Israel's sons were among those who went to buy grain, for there was famine in the land of Canaan also.

⁶ Now Joseph was the governor of the land, the person who sold grain to all its people. So when Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground. ⁷ As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognised them, but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them. 'Where do you come from?' he asked.

'From the land of Canaan,' they replied, 'to buy food.'

⁸ Although Joseph recognised his brothers, they did not recognise him. ⁹ Then he remembered his dreams about them and said to them, 'You are spies! You have come to see where our land is unprotected'...

Surprises

- The story of Joseph contains many surprises
- The biggest was Joseph meeting his brothers
- Surprising outcome: Forgiveness & Reconciliation

The Setting: *Joseph in Egypt*

- Previous episode: Joseph fully integrated in Egypt
- About 8 or 9 years since appointment (40 years old)
- High position, many privileges, honoured (41:41-43)

The Surprise: *Joseph's brothers in Egypt*

- One day ... 10 brothers bowed before him!
- What went through Joseph's mind?
- His response starts a long journey

The Test: *A long journey*

- Joseph immediately recognized his brothers
- But then he put them through a series of tests
- He made them sweat blood (Gen 42-44)

The Reconciliation: *Joseph reveals himself*

- Final indication of change: Silver & Benjamin (44:18-34)
- Joseph could no longer hold it in, revealed himself
- Emotional reunion and reconciliation (45:1-15)

Genesis 45:1-15 (extracts)

⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Come close to me.' When they had done so, he said, 'I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt ... it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you ... to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives...

⁸ 'So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God ... ⁹ Now hurry back to my father and say to him, "... Come down to me; don't delay"

¹⁴ Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. ¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterwards his brothers talked with him.

We see both a picture of God's **forgiveness** and **reconciliation** and how forgiveness can be used by God to bring reconciliation between people

Lessons about Forgiveness

Forgiveness needs a God-perspective

- Joseph's forgiveness facilitated by his theology (view of God)
- God was behind all that has happened (3x in 45:5-8)
- Challenge: Make sure you have Biblical theology

Forgiveness is a choice

- Joseph could've nursed his wounds and fed revenge
- But he chose to forgive them
- Challenge: Choose to forgive

Forgiveness restores relationships

- The brothers could not reverse their actions
- Reconciliation required Joseph's forgiveness (45:14-15, 46:1 ff)
- Challenge: To reconcile you must forgive

Forgiveness is not the same as trust

- Joseph didn't forget, but he did forgive
- He did not trust them immediately, but tested them
- Challenge: We must forgive, but trust takes time

Forgiveness faces the hurt

- Joseph remembered (dreams, silver, younger brother)
- Forgiveness acknowledges the hurt
- Challenge: Acknowledge your pain, but then release (forgive)

Forgiveness ensures freedom

- “Violence begets violence” – see also Mt 26:52
- God was willing to let go – Jesus’ death
- Challenge: By forgiving, you select freedom

Forgiveness is the essence of the Gospel

- God is a forgiving God – seen in Jesus' death
- We, therefore, must also forgive (Mt 6:12, 14-16; 18:21-35)
- This is why we celebrate Communion!

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The Lord's Supper