

Forgive Us Our Debts No Pain, No Gain

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SERMON DESCRIPTION

Your spiritual advancement is directly related to your tolerance of increasing pain and your ability to forgive others, despite what you have experienced.

SERMON QUESTIONS & OBJECTIVES

1. What do they need to know?
 - Spiritual advancement and forgiveness are connected.
2. Why do they need to know it?
 - Forgive others, be intentional and stay clean in your heart.
3. How should we apply it?
 - Practice forgiveness.

OPENING LINE

Forgiveness is a spiritual muscle that must be developed. Your capacity to forgive others must be increased within your life as you grow in Christ.

CENTRAL TRUTH

The secret of your spiritual advancement depends on your ability to increase your tolerance for pain and the ability to forgive others.

INTRODUCTION

Principles Of Forgiveness

1. Forgive others even if they do not initiate it.
2. Be kind to those who do not deserve it.
3. Bless those who spitefully use you.

TRANSITION STATEMENT

If we are going to operate in the principles of forgiveness, we are going to have to increase our tolerance for pain.

The secret to life is the ability to stay sweet in the sour. ~Pastor Rick Ciaramitaro

MAIN PASSAGE

Genesis 41:50-52

⁵⁰ And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. ⁵¹ Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: "For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." ⁵² And the name of the second he called Ephraim: "For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

Psalms 66:18-20

¹⁸ If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear. ¹⁹ *But* certainly God has heard *me*; He has attended to the voice of my prayer. ²⁰ Blessed *be* God, who has not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me!

MAIN POINTS

Principles From the Life of Joseph

While Joseph was in Egypt, two sons were born to him. The names of his two boys are very significant as they demonstrate the work of grace in his life and what God has accomplished within him. Ephraim and Manasseh are the signs of great victory and overcoming power in Joseph's life. Long before his brothers and his father arrived in Egypt, Joseph's heart had been healed and restored.

How Do We Increase Our Pain Tolerance?

1. Recognize that there is a greater plan at work

- a. Unless we understand that God's hand is upon us and they're all things are working together for our good we will not embrace the pain of any season. We will see the pain is a waste a useless thing but in the purposes of dealings of God he does not waste the painful seasons.
 - Most of the things that we receive from God in the New Testament come from suffering in pain.
- b. Joseph understood that there was a greater plan at work; through it all, God's hand was with him.
- c. If you see people as the source of your pain, you will become a victim. If you see God as the source of your pain, you will become a victor. The source of your pain – you will invite a victim mentality
 - Do you believe that God allows things, or do you believe that God orchestrates them?
 - Get your eyes off people and put them on God.
- d. **Romans 8:28** And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

2. Forget the hardship of the past

- a. The word forget does not mean that Joseph had amnesia or memory loss – nothing could be farther from the truth. This is proven to be true because when his brothers show up in Egypt Joseph knows who they are, and what they have done. In fact, he deals with them according to their past behaviour.
- b. The term 'forget' means that Joseph was able to move on from the troubles of his father's house and all that his brothers had done to him.
 - He was no longer paralyzed by the pain and grief that they caused him.
 - He was able to overcome his agony and become fruitful.

3. Be fruitful in the place of affliction

- a. A trademark of Joseph's life was that he was able to prosper and be fruitful despite his painful circumstances. Whether it was being sold into slavery, being a servant in Potiphar's house or as a prisoner, Joseph always found a way to rise above his circumstances.
- b. Increase your capacity to forgive others
- c. Despite your pain – push through (illustration: give me five more)
- d. Bear the fruit of the Spirit which is the character of Christ
- e. Bear fruit worthy of repentance. In other words, there must be evidence to your forgiveness.
- f. Joseph is known as a man of integrity and forgiveness
 - **When we do not forgive others, it is an indication that we have forgotten what we have been forgiven for**
- g. Modern day fruit of Christianity has been melted down to the ability to make money and be successful. But many people that display this have no godliness within them at times.

4. Process: Allow God's timing to work things out

- a. Perhaps our greatest struggle is in timing. Can we trust God in this area?
 - By nature, human beings do not like to wait, and yet the Bible encourages us to wait on God.
 - The timing of the Lord is always perfect.
 - The struggle is waiting for God to move and work things out on our behalf.
 - Rarely does our timetable and God's timetable lineup.
- b. The BENEFITS of waiting on God's timing:
 - Time allows us to gain perspective on the situation
 - Time allows us to heal and to be ourselves, to centre ourselves once again
 - It allows the grace of God to work things out
 - Time does not heal all things, but it allows for the possibility
 - Do not push your own agenda.

QUOTES & STICKY STATEMENTS

The word "forget" does not mean that you have memory loss; but rather that you have advanced beyond the offense.

People are usually the cause of your pain, but rarely the source of your healing.

Those that are weak in intelligence, open themselves up to the influence of the demonic.

When we don't forgive others, it is an indication that we have forgotten what we have been forgiven for.

Most of the spiritual warfare for believers is in the realm of emotional intelligence; in other words, it's in the soul.

If you really understand the message of the Gospel; your flesh will not like it.

The church needs Jesus. ~Pastor Rick Ciaramitaro

Forgiveness will test your heart.

It is easier to avoid people than to forgive them.

We follow Christianity because we love Jesus, not necessarily the message of the cross.

ADDITIONAL NOTES & THOUGHTS

Joseph's Pain Was the Key to His Greatness

Joseph was the favorite son because he was the first son born to Jacob's true love, Rachel. One day Jacob gave Joseph a special gift in the form of fancy robe, or tunic. This robe was beautiful, ornate, had long sleeves, and extended down to his ankles. In comparison, Joseph's brothers likely had shorter, sleeveless tunics that allowed them to more easily do their manual labor.

Charles Swindoll writes in his book, "*Joseph: A Man of Integrity and Forgiveness*", "By giving Joseph this elaborate full-length coat, which was also a sign of nobility in that day, his father was boldly implying, 'You can wear this beautiful garment because you don't have to work like those brothers of yours.'" I'm guessing that this coat wasn't the first gift Joseph received that blatantly pointed out the favor he had with his father. Joseph was likely spoiled and coddled his entire life, until that fateful day where he was forced to leave his father's favor and blessings. His brothers' jealousy built up and eventually overcame them so much that one day they threw Joseph into a pit and eventually sold him into slavery. Talk about the end of a spoiled childhood! Once Joseph belonged to foreign people who paid to own him, his days of being favored and coddled were over.

*"The LORD was with Joseph, so he succeeded in everything he did **as he served in the home of his Egyptian master**" ([Genesis 39:2](#), emphasis added).*

Joseph had to learn to work because daddy was no longer around to let him off the hook. The beauty is that Joseph did work, and he worked hard. We see Joseph's gifts of administration and oversight start to bloom as "*Potiphar gave Joseph complete administrative responsibility over everything he owned*" ([Genesis 39:6](#)). We continue to see Joseph's hard work and his giftings developed as he worked hard and became in charge of the prison he was in and eventually over all of Egypt!

In the end, it was Joseph's God-given gift of administration and oversight that God used to save Joseph's family and the whole nation of Egypt from starvation. Going through the pain of losing his status of "chosen son" and having to work to earn his keep is the only reason that Joseph's gift was able to develop and grow in his life. Had he never had the hardship of being sold into slavery, he never would have tapped into that gift and consequently never would have saved his family.

SERMON CONCLUSION

God is always faithful to His word, and He keeps His covenant promises. Not only did Joseph excel and was promoted in the land of Egypt, but after more than 400 years his bones were carried to the promised land. God honoured Joseph even after he was dead and insured that his bones were buried in the land of promise.

400 years later – Joseph makes it into the promise land with Joshua and Caleb.

Exodus 13:19

And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How have you been able to “forget” painful things in your life?
2. How have you been fruitful despite hardship?
3. What has been your secret in increasing your pain capacity?
4. How has timing worked out God’s will in your life? Provide an example.
5. Who else can you name in the Bible that allowed the timing of God to work out in their lives?
6. What do you draw from the fact that the bones of Joseph were buried in the Promised Land? What does that tell you about God and his relationship with His people?
7. Discuss how Joseph was a beautiful blend of accomplishment and character.
8. What do you believe about the following statements:
 - “God allows things to happen and works through them”.
 - “Nothing happens without God orchestrating it”.