

Genesis 50:15–21

The Place of God

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Main idea: God’s complete forgiveness in Christ means that His complete rule over all things frees us to love Him and others

¹⁵ When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him.” ¹⁶ So they sent messengers to Joseph, saying, “Before your father died he commanded, saying, ¹⁷ ‘Thus you shall say to Joseph: “I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you.”’ Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father.” And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

¹⁸ Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, “Behold, we are your servants.”

¹⁹ Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? ²⁰ But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. ²¹ Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.” And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Introduction

1. The guilt that can control you, v15

- a. Guiltiness (“this is because...” 42:21)
- b. Suspicion (“what is this that God is doing to us” 42:28)
- c. Wrong responses to situations (dismay at Joseph’s presence 45:3)
- d. Fear. Maybe it was just dad. Lie. Not even willing to come themselves at first.
- e. Some of you are living with these things! This fear is what Jesus died to destroy (Heb 2:14–15). What a horrible thing it is to have a guilty conscience! To always be wondering whether people know. To always be worried that payback is coming. To be unable to respond rightly and healthily to situations because you’re focused on navigating the consequences of the sin that hasn’t been dealt with. To live not with the unflappable confidence and joy of a child of the king but the constant insecurity and fear of a criminal on the run.
- a. Let us keep short accounts with men and shorter accounts with God. Come clean! There is absolutely certain welcome for you in Jesus Christ.

2. The God that can forgive you, v16–19

- a. Joseph’s weeping over loss/dishonor to his dad, over their not trusting him, but especially over their not trusting God for forgiveness (cf. 45:5–7). Very lonely picture: Joseph w/messenger
- b. Am I in the place of God? = I don’t have the power to take away the three things in v17
- c. Am I in the place of God? = I don’t have the prerogative NOT to forgive. “If you were really his servants, you would know that.”
- d. Some of you act as if others are in the place of God. But you will find no one willing to forgive you like God is!
- e. Some of you are putting yourself in the place of God toward others. Refusing to release bitterness. Or refusing to respond to repentance with reconciliation (not the same as trust).

3. The good that forgiveness guarantees, v20

- a. God is wise and powerful to work all things together for good (cf. Rom 8:28). Joseph’s first comfort is the honor that is coming to God through all of this!
- b. God is forgiving and merciful to do this for believers (cf. Rom 8:32). If you are not a believer, God is actually working all things together for your condemnation. But if you are a believer, you are in v20. For from Judah would come Jesus, Who saves all who believe in Him! Joseph could rest and rejoice in the truth all of his suffering had glorified God Whose goodness was done and shown in it. And Joseph could rest and rejoice in the truth that God was working that suffering together for good *for all whom God is saving*.
- c. God is generous to do this through believers for others. It may not be primarily about/for you! You too, dear believer, can rejoice over this in your trials. God is in His proper place. God is working His good and will be shown good, as He glorifies Himself by your trial. And He is doing a variety of good to a variety of people through your trial. The good that He is doing you may be just the tip of the iceberg by comparison to the great good that He may be doing to many. Often in our trials, we want to know how they are working together for good for us, but we forget that in God’s wise providence, the good that comes from our trial may end up being primarily for others.
- d. God’s intentions, Christ’s intentions. cf. Luke 22:32. Jesus’s prayers for you are perfect! The Spirit’s prayers for you are perfect!

4. The forgiving-ness that comes from this good, v21

- a. Patience/persistence. Repetition of “Do not be afraid.” The need for restoration (cf. 2Cor 2:8)
- b. Generosity of action. “I will provide.” Something even to be done for enemies in the release of bitterness.
- c. Tenderness of manner. “And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them”
- d. Forgiveness starts with the forgiving-ness of the heart. Knowing God’s forgiveness and good intentions toward you frees you to give it. And forgivingness of this kind is seen in specific behavior.

Conclusion

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are welcome to listen to the audio recording, which you may find via tinysa.com/hopewellarp)

We come to worship God now in the hearing of his word preached. Can you turn in our copies of that word to Genesis chapter 50?

Genesis chapter 50 our portion this morning by God's help is verses 15 through 21, so let us ask for that help.

Our glorious speaking God. Creator of all things ruler over all things. We thank you and praise you that. As you would be pleased to save us by your word as you would be pleased to sanctify us by your word as you would be pleased. To have us worship you in the reading and hearing and singing and praying and preaching and hearing preached your word.

So you created all things by the word of your power. And in that word, you tell us that you uphold all things. By the word of your power. We confess that we when we come near in the reading and hearing of your word have. Often failed to appreciate the infinite wayness the.

Honor and glory that you display in your word. As you display yourself as you deal with us. So we pray for the help of your spirit that he would open our eyes. He would open our ears that he would give light to our minds and life to our hearts that you would be glorified before us now as we come to you in the reading and hearing of your word.

And we pray that. He would make our hearts fertile soil not just that we might absorb concepts and respond rightly. But you would make our hearts tender to yourself that you would come now and meet with us. That you in your son our Lord. Jesus Christ would address us from heaven by the ministry of your spirit now.

Oh God. It has been a long time. Since your church is in this land. Knew your power. And had one of those seasons of unusual awakening and refreshing. We pray O God that. Whatever you would be willing to do in the broader culture and the broader church. That you at least come down now come down here come down with us.

And meet us in your word we ask. By the work of your spirit, which we ask through your son our Lord Jesus. Amen. So let us rise. As we hear the word of God read.

Genesis 50 beginning in verse 15, these are God's words. When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead. They said. Perhaps Joseph will hate us. And may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him. So they sent messengers to Joseph saying. Before your father died, he commanded saying thus you shall say to Joseph.

I beg you please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin. For they did evil to you. Now please forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father. And Joseph what? When they spoke to him. Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face and they said bold we are your servants.

Joseph said to them. Do not be afraid. From I in the place of God. As for you you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good. In order to bring it about as it is this day to save many people alive. Now, therefore, do not be afraid.

I will provide for you. And your little ones. And he comforted them. And he spoke kindly to them. Amen, thus ends this reading of God's inspired and inherent word. Please be seated.

Several of you know that. A few days ago. South Carolina one of the elders of the ARP Church in Rock Hill 70 year old man and his wife and two of his grandchildren a nine-year-old and five-year-old and a man who was just there working on his house. Were murdered.

By a fellow who is former NFL player doesn't matter what he was in his vocation. He. His parents were neighbors the same neighborhood as this ARP elder man was a physician. It started several clinics in the area. It's a great grief and sorrow. The man who is his pastor is gonna miss him very much and his teaching and his leadership in the congregation.

You can imagine his grief not only over his own loss, but.

For the parents of the children and who had in one fell swoop lost not just mom and dad but their nine-year-old and five-year-old that they didn't know that that would be the last time that they would see them in this world. When they dropped him off at Grandma and Grandpas.

And the family has released. A marvelous statement. Of hope and God. Confidence in God's goodness that they can be sure of because he gave Christ for them. And their refusal to nurse bitterness and hostility. And hoping that the man who had done these things. Would find forgiveness and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yes. What? Can enable someone who goes through something like that. To respond in a way like that. The answer is knowledge of the God who proclaims? Himself to us in these seven verses this morning.

Because as we look at Genesis 50 verses 15 through 21 and at first at the brother's response to their father's death. First thing we'll notice is the guilt that can control you.

And then as we see especially Joseph's response to their request for forgiveness. We'll see you in the second place the God that can forgive you.

And as he continues when his with his brothers explaining to them what God has done. We'll see you in the third place the good. That God's forgiveness of us guarantees us. And then as we see. How he concludes in responding to them in verse 21, we'll see the forgiving nests.

That comes from having confidence in God's goodness. Because of God's forgiving us the forgivingness that we'll see in Joseph that comes from his confidence in God's goodness. Because he knows God to have forgiven him. So the guilt that can control you 15, although we'll bleed a little bit into the verses that follow from there the God that can forgive you verses 16 through 19 the good.

That his forgiveness guarantees us verse 20 and then the forgivingness that comes from confidence in his goodness.

When Joseph's brother saw that their father was dead. They said. Perhaps Joseph will hate us. And may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him God the Holy Spirit gives us in verse 15 a moment of eavesdropping on the conversation between the brothers it's not the first time he's done this for us you remember with Joseph in the pickled how he let us listen to the brothers conspiring together and and at that time it was Judah praise God for the grace that we've seen in Judah by this point because at that time it was Judah who said, you know, we could turn a prophet and not.

Have to get a. Our hands our own hands dirty so let's sell him we won't have the blood on our hands it was expected that he would die in Egypt anyway, and so they let us the Holy Spirit let us in on that conversation it's it's not the only time these two conversations and others where we hear the way unbelief and we hear the way that sin reasons so that when we hear our own hearts and our own minds reasoning in such ways we can recognize.

Our warning of the Holy Spirit against the remaining sin in us or perhaps even exposing to us that we are not believers in Jesus Christ at all, one of the places that this is clearest and most helpful to me in the scripture is when the Pharisees when the Pharisees are trying to figure out what to do they say or how to answer Jesus and they say well if we say that John the Baptists, Preaching was from heaven then he'll say then what and to believe him especially why didn't you believe him about me that I am the Lamb of God who takes away this into the world but if we say that it was merely from man, they say well all the crowds really like and they think he was a prophet.

The actual fact. Of what John had said and what John had said about you it didn't matter to them, they're just trying to figure out how to manipulate the situation and to continue looking good in the eyes of others and so we too can learn from something like that and we could say, When I come into a situation and what's actually true and what is actually the right thing to do doesn't matter as much to me as what people might think of me and what I might be able to get out of it by saying the one thing or doing the one thing then that's one of the ways that the Holy Spirit exposes to us the condition of our hearts often it's in these narrative portions because we're so quick to let ourselves off the hook when he just directly tells us things that he holds up the mirror of God's word.

To us and the thing that he's holding up the mirror to us and showing us in verse 15 is especially the guilt that can control us it's been 40 years. Since they stripped Joseph of his of his fancy cloak that his father had given him and put him in the pit and then sold him into slavery in Egypt, but some 19 years ago that first visit during the famine you remember when when they went down and and Joseph recognized them but they didn't know it was he and Joseph said a lot one of you go back.

And then the next day he says, you know what I fear God, I'll just keep one of you and we'll send the rest back but you gotta bring the youngest you gotta bring the youngest to prove that you are who you say you are you gotta bring back Benjamin and they said this is.

And you can hear. You can hear 21 years of guilt at that point they had done something they had held on to the sin they had hidden it from their father, they had never dealt with it with God or with man and and now when they have to bring Benjamin back.

We did we not hear? Pleading and crying. Is he guilt can control you you try to ignore it from yourself you try to hide it from others. You do other things and you think that time and other perhaps obedience and service will decrease it somehow. But it's still there.

Remember a few verses later the the brothers had left Simeon behind they get to their their waypoint and instead of the the bottom of his sack remember that servant had put in one of the brothers sacks his money in the mouth, so they they stop on the way back home and he opens it and he finds the money they say, oh what is their God has done to us?

You see when you have that guilt before God and his providence is not what you had hoped it was in fact sometimes in his providence, there are things that are very painful and very difficult. But when you have not dealt with your sin and your guilt before God use you respond to moments of frightening providence by saying what is this that God is doing to us so there's guiltiness and there's suspicion.

Awful thing to have to go through life suspecting every moment that now it's coming back to me now. God has finally repaying me for what I have done. Makes you respond in foolish and unhealthy ways. See this a couple of times don't we here we see it in the passage before us this morning, but we also sought when Joseph said,

Why children when they hadn't seen their brother at least as far as they had known and in 22 years at that point? And they see their brother uses. I am Joseph why were they like the father in the parable of the prodigal son running and falling on his neck and hugging him and kissing him why wasn't that their first response?

Was because they were guilty. The last thing they had done to Joseph was sin against him and sell him into that slavery hoping that he would die. And so we read and checked for 45 that when he said I am Joseph they were just made his presence completely. Free it unhealthy reaction because of their guiltiness.

And isn't it a wicked and unhealthy reaction they have here to their father's death when Joseph's brothers saw. That their father. Was dead. They said perhaps Joseph will hate us and may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him. They did not have now thought for how to honor their father and their father's God whom of whom they claim and another verse or two to be his servants, they were not thinking.

Jacob is now gland as the patriarch the duty now especially lies upon us we are the leaders of this household of faith now this family of all the families on the earth the whom God has given his his promises let us lead our children and train them to know this.

God who has promised mercy to sinners and who is going to bring that mercy to all of the families in the earth through our family. Those would be right and healthy responses wouldn't they to the death of Jake? But Jacob died and the funeral is over. And how do they respond well, they respond very similarly?

I'm afraid to the way lots of families respond. When there's sin that hasn't been dealt with hasn't been confessed and there hasn't been forgiveness and there hasn't been reconciliation. And the funeral is over and the last deviled egg has been eaten.

And then the family breaks down. Because they're dealing with unrepentant unrepented unresolved conflict and sin and bitterness. And guilt is controlling some and unforgiveness is controlling others the guilt that can control you. And so they're afraid. We know they're afraid not only from what they say. Joseph will hate us and they actually repay us.

But from Joseph's double and servers 19 and verse 21 Joseph said to them do not be afraid and then he gives logic to support their not being afraid and concludes again verse 29 21 now therefore, do not be afraid. Guilt can make you live in fear. Fear of being exposed.

Fear of being paid back fear that the consequences will finally come back and get you. There is a story that is told of a. Private investigator who part of the way he made money when he didn't have particular cases was he had a little stipend whenever he was exposed to felony from the from the local district attorney and so he would go house to house and he would just knock on the door and flashing a badge and say I'm investigating unsolved felonies and I don't have to tell you why I'm here do I.

And. On a fairly regular basis. The person would turn white as a sheet. They're breath and sometimes they would even. Start to spill to him, how did you know? I thought that I had and they would go on and give enough details that the BI could turn over into more leading statements until he had all that he needed and go to the the DA and they contact law enforcement and case would be built.

Many of us live that way with our sin before God.

Not having come clean to him to get clean of it this God who is faithful and just you come to him in Christ his faithful and just not only to forgive you of all your sin, but to cleanse you from all your trespasses. How many live in this fear of being exposed even before God and so you have tried in prayer and in your inner thought life to make it sound not so bad as it is you've given yourself excuses you've even perhaps looked at ways that God has been merciful and said well God was using it for good and you said well grace has increased and you've let yourself off the hook for the sinfulness of it.

Perhaps you compared yourself to other sinful men instead of to the holy holy God in order to try and let yourself out from under the weight of it. Live like this people guilty of the penalty waiting for the other shoe to drop. Your face to turn white and your jaw to fall and draw in your breath.

This fear is what Jesus died to destroy. Hebrews 2 verse 14 and 15 tells us that Jesus died on the cross to destroy the devil. Who had the power through constant fear of death.

If you think it's bad now. Wait until it comes time to die. And you realize that death is the wages of sin and you haven't come to God through Jesus Christ and enjoyed full and free forgiveness and you've done all this minor league sin ignoring. That seemed like such a big deal to you and then you come to die and what will your care be like then?

As you realize you're leaving this world. You don't know how long. I didn't sit down with the role and try to do the math on how many five-year-olds and how many nine-year-olds. Good ARP family. You don't know when you're leaving this world, do you? And so when you're sin before God produces this guilt that can control you you need to come to him who offers you complete forgiveness in the Lord Jesus and be done with the guilt.

So that you're no longer even afraid to die because Jesus on his cross has destroyed the power of the devil to make you afraid of death. You may even look forward to it. Because he who has made it Christ for you to live has made it gain for you to die.

Now many of us parents have believing children have grown less childlike over time in our faith. And we've expressed something about fear of death and had that believing child just issue forth what wasn't even meant as a rebuke. It's okay mommy if you die you go to be with Jesus.

And she's exactly right.

Because Jesus died to kill the control that guilt can have over you to rob the devil. Of what power he thought he had in death. Hebrews chapter 2 verse 14 and 15, so the first thing we see here is the guilt that can control us and the second place we see the God the God who can forgive us.

So, they sent messengers to Joseph you see how afraid they were? They really thought Jesus that Joseph might get them back now didn't they? They didn't even go themselves. They wanted to test the water as it were. It's like Adam who was not deceived first Timothy 2 tells us allowing Eve to get into this conversation where she eats to see if she will surely die.

And here they send the messengers the messengers are the only thing they come back with you can see at the end of verse 17 is we deliver the message and nekrude. The brothers knew oh well Joseph cries a lot, doesn't he? He cried when he thought he was in secret and and everyone heard him and he came out and cleaned up and ink cried when he revealed himself to them and even when they were membered him in the pit they said did we not hear him crying?

And then he cries when he sees his daddy is. So the messenger's come back and they say. He cried and the brother said, oh it's all it's still the same Joseph we we can go now and then verse 18 then his brothers also went and fell down before his face.

So they sent messengers to Joseph afraid at first to go themselves saying before your father died he commanded saying thus you shall say to Joseph one wonders if they didn't know about the private audience that Joseph and Manasseh and Ephraim had had that Joseph would have known that if Dad had any messages for Joseph he would have called Joseph.

And told told him that there are some perhaps you should know who you think that maybe Jacob really did send this message by way of his brothers, it seems a pretty plain in the passage that that he didn't. Thus you shall say to Joseph I beg you please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin for they did evil to.

You. There's perhaps a little bit of evidence for why it would have been Jacob this would be the first time that we read of in these last. 13 chapters or so where they would have actually recognized it as trespass and. Sin and evil. They hadn't named what they've done as wicked before.

And that is something that you need to be able to do when you are coming to God you've recognized the guilt that could control you and you want to come to the God who can forgive you. One of the things that you need to do is you need to name what you have done as sin as trespass.

You've crossed the boundary of transgressed God's command and sin. That which is a opposite. God's design and God's prescription it misses the mark to use not Hebrew word, but a Greek word that means in and evil that which is opposed to God and harmful to man. But you can know those words.

Even if you hadn't been repentant.

They come and they name. Trespass and sin and Evil.

Now, please forgive they say verse 17 the trespass of the servants of the God of your father. And Joseph what? When they spoke to him. Why is Joseph weeping?

You know, you don't just have to pick one answer. And it would be very strange if there was just one answer. Many times we weep because there are so many things that just the accumulation overwhelms us. He's just lost his father. And now his father and his God are being used by his brothers their names.

Are being used by his brothers to try to manipulate him.

Here they continue to have this guilt he had actually not only told them first time that they visited I fear God. So I'll only keep one of you trying to provoke them to fear his God as well, but to remember in chapter 45 when they were dismayed how he had responded he'd responded very similarly to how he does here, he says do not be angry with yourselves.

Remember that so don't be angry with yourself. God sent me here. God sent me here and in fact. I'm a father to fair and I'll go tell dad that. I'm dead to Pharaoh. He had land for them to see the the goodness of God and the glory of God that he's worthy to be feared worthy to be obeyed that his providence and wisdom even in that which is wicked and and that which is harmful in a temporary and earthly way is designed to do as good.

This is not the first time that he's tried to point them to God. Now those of you. Who know God as your Savior and who have you ever forgiveness from God and you have siblings you don't. You see why? Joseph who for the last 21 years of his renewed relationship with his brothers has been trying to get them to trust in God and His promise and His sacrifice for forgiveness.

And now the language of Father promised and we are servants of God of your Father is being used. Because they're obviously still guilty. And they obviously haven't known that forgiveness. You can feel it can't you? The pain of Joseph who's been praying and laboring for his dear ones to come to Christ.

May even be. Relationally for himself. It's a very lonely picture. Messenger. Waiting to see what the responses. Brothers not even there. All Joseph has their words. Why? They still don't trust him. Do you ever? Loved. Someone who and served them and you've been faithful for 20 years you've treated them consistently and they still don't trust you.

That can be very hurtful to there's a lot of reasons that Joseph is crying here is weeping here, but the greatest I think is the one that he deals with in the rest of his response. Particularly when they come down and they fall down before his face and they offer him restitution as it were.

They had sold him into slavery and they said okay now we will be your slaves but notice how the language has changed. No longer they saying we are the servants of the god of your father, they say we are your servants in in verse 18. So Joseph is weeping and what does he say?

Joseph says to them, do not be afraid. Why? For am I in the place of God. Now that cuts two ways, doesn't it? He says you what me to forgive trespass and sin and evil to use their words from verse 17. I can't forgive trespass and sin and evil.

Because it's not ultimately against me. Remember David and Psalm 51 and we've often wondered together someone who has sinned against so many how can he say against you and you only sinned and to God is because there is an ultimate way in which sin is really against God. It's against him as our creator it's against him as our king it's a violation of his law, it's a rejection of his character, which is perfectly applied to us in his law.

This is why we can never give you ultimately what you deserve. Even the civil magistrate is a reward or punisher for the evil and good. He is not giving what you deserve he is acting as an agent under God carrying out justice in God's world. But he can't cast into hell.

In fact no one but God can. So God says don't be afraid of men. Be afraid of God who after killing the body can just after destroying the body can cast you into hell and they in terms around and when you've been sinned against he says, don't take revenge.

Do not repay evil for evil. That's why it's never an excuse children mom or dad asked you did you do something such and what do you always say well he was or even ask you the question will catch you doing it. It will say did you just or what did you just do even and you're into them what did you just do what question by backing up enough steps that you think you'll be justified and say well I was blah blah and then he came and blah blah and.

When you were pay evil for evil, you're still doing evil, aren't you? And it never excuses your sin why? Because God is the one who pays evil. And the marvelous news for us who have committed it and it's all of us. Does that mean God is the one who can forgive evil.

And you don't have to wonder. If you'll forgive you.

Because he has become a man. The infinite eternal unchangeable. God who cannot stop being God. Has added humanity to himself. An infinite humiliation. That the creator. Would become a creature. Would take our form. Who were created to be in his image. Would bear our guilt. For breaking his law.

Would suffer his wrath for our sin. He's not just the God who can forgive you. Joseph says am I in the place of God because it's not Joseph's to avenge and it's not just Joseph's ultimately and an ultimate sense to forgive only God can. But God isn't just the God who can forgive you he's the God who will forgive you.

The world's himself up to you and his son he holds the cross of Jesus Christ out to you. God upon God the son you have become a man specifically so that he could die on the cross. He says you can be absolutely certain that you will be forgiven of all of your sin.

When you come to this God through this savior.

You come humbly. But not doubting.

You see the brothers came humbly, but doubting. They came with a superficial act of humility because they weren't sure still. If Joseph would forgive them he said you've come to the wrong king.

Am I in the place of God, I don't have the power to take away the three things that you've identified in verse 17, he also doesn't have the prerogative not to forgive them himself. Is he God ties these two things together often in his word, doesn't he we see it probably most famously immediately following the prayer that he taught the disciples as a pattern for their praying.

For a few do not forgive others your sins their sins neither will your father in heaven forgive you in fact he taught us to pray forgive us our debts as we forgive others and I'm sure that many of you as you say those things with your mouth are immediately in your heart crying out, oh God help me to forgive others.

And help me to forgive them the way that I want to be forgiven by you.

So this am I in the place of God it cuts two ways doesn't it first of all Joseph can't actually do for them what they're looking for in verse 17 only God can do that and Joseph doesn't have the right to deny them. He is commanded to let go of all BURNES.

All hostility. Will towards them. So if you knew what you were saying when you said now, please forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your Father. And Joseph comes back in verse 19, he says, I'm a servant of the God of my Father. I'm not in the place of God.

So neither am I the one who you must need to forgive you nor may? I the servant deny you what my Master requires that I give.

Some of you act as if others are in the place of God with respect to your own sin. The thing that you're most concerned about when you've committed it is that somebody might find out. And the thing that you're most concerned about when somebody finds out is what they might do to you or what they might think of you.

And you forget. That the one who matters most in your having sinned is God. You may even be a believer who needs to keep coming and keep confessing the way first John chapter 1 teaches you to do. And one of the reasons why you're you are stuck in the swamp of your sin and unable to move.

Is because you're treating what others think of you and how others respond to you as more important as how you are dealing with the living God and how he is dealing with you, but if you came to him in the way that you talked to confessing yours and not pretending that you have no sin and their call it by calling God a liar but confessing your sin, you're reminded from his own word that he's faithful and just every bit as much as he was to forgive you when you first came to Christ he is still now faithful and just to keep cleansing you.

And so because you're forgetting that God is in the place of God. And you're not dealing with him first and you're not dealing with him. You're not enjoying this walking with him in which he's cleansing you from all unrighteousness. Why? Because he's gonna bring you all the way home and you need to have that holiness without which you won't see the Lord.

And so what you will be has not yet appeared, but you know that when he appears you'll be like him and you're purifying yourself even as he is pure. And in our experience it all starts, doesn't it? With dealing with God first.

Some of us. Are putting ourselves in place of God on the other end. Refusing to let go of the bitterness. Refusing to love and forgive in the way that we will see in verse 21.

God is in the place of God. This doesn't mean. That you have to go around trusting everyone. Whoever does that is not being conformed to the image of Christ. He didn't entrust himself to men because he knew it was in men. You're commanded by your God to let go of all bitterness and malice ill will and hostility.

But don't you give to them what belongs to God alone? Which is unquestioning trust. That's not forgiveness. Many of them will ask for it. Don't give it to them. They're asking to be in the place of God, aren't they? I said I was sorry, why don't you trust me?

Because you're not God. Trust is earned. And when trust is broken, it's twice as much work or more isn't it for trust to be re-earned. Don't put yourself in harm's way. By trusting those who haven't returned it because you've confused that. With the biblical forgiveness that we're talking about here.

But don't refuse to give up that bitterness and don't refuse to give up that malice on that ill will. Because you're confusing it with the trust either. You're not in the place of God. You do not have the right to retain the bitterness.

So we see the guilt that can control us verse 15, the God who can forgive us verses 16 through 19 and the good the good that forgiveness guarantees. To join us on a long time to think about this. Maybe not so much when he was busy running Potiphar's house.

Linens up in prison. I'm sure there are some things to do in prison especially if you know the captain of the guard in the prison has recognized that he he's got a prisoner who's so good he can put him in charge of the whole thing call it a day.

But Joseph's had a long time. To think about what God is doing. Perhaps in those lonely days after the cupbearer forgot him. And then came the day when he was cold out of the prison. And he had a shave and a shower and a new set of clothes. His called before Pharaoh and he told Pharaoh the same thing, right?

Pharaoh said, I've heard that you can and Joseph basically says nope my mind in the place that God is the one who gives dreams and their answers. At that point, he's learned, hasn't he? But he's describing here. And he wants his brothers to learn it to. He wants them to be able to say even if Joseph.

Take his revenge. Use it for good.

She says verse 20 as for you you meant evil against me, horrible thing. Horrible thing because God is the avenger of evil and if we haven't come to him for forgiveness, it's not a comfort that God is in the place of God. But if we do have that forgiveness you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring it about as it is this day to say many people alive.

So the first thing is as all things work together for good for those who love God are the called according to his purpose. He has amazing how. You know, we read and memorize and repeat Romans 8:28 and here we are and you know, one of the Old Testament versions of that.

And we forget that for a believer the best part of the whole thing is that God is glorified. He is the one who is wise enough to plan how all these things will work together for good. He is the one who is powerful enough to exercise his plan. You see what he's saying?

He's not just saying oh my dear brothers. If you would just join me in my faith, then we will be spiritually happy and healthy and wealthy. That's true. A spiritual health and wealth preacher praise God because that's what he offers in Jesus Christ. But it's not the first thing.

He's a don't you see the wisdom of God. Don't you see the power of our God. Don't you see the salvation of our God? You see the moon you and I are conformed to the image of Christ the Lord we will love the glory of God. Jesus who everything he does and he comes and he prays from the night that he's betrayed and the start and the heart of the prayer is the display of his father's glory.

The first good that all the things work together for for us, who love God is that the God whom we love is glorified.

And so Joseph's first comfort is the honor that is coming to his God through all of this. It's always as if he says, I can't be bitter against you because I'm too busy praising God. For what he has done. You meant evil you are evil you did evil. You need forgiveness.

God can give it to you. But that's not pro already one for me. Because you're just not that important next to God. He meant good. He is good. He has done good. And do you see how infinitely greater the goodness of God is? I comparison to the evil of the brothers.

Or the evil of the devil. Or the real evil. That many wicked people have done to many of you. And it is not less real. But it is infinitely dwarfed. By the goodness of your God.

God is forgiving and merciful to do this working of all things together for good not only to believers but through believers. If you're a believer not only has Joseph been benefited by all that God has done and not only have the many that he's talking about which is probably here, although there is all of Egypt and all of Canaan in involved here, but the many here is especially the covenant family.

The many of you. I can't refuse forgiveness because God won't let me forget refuse forgiveness. God has saved the many of you the 70 years so well many more than that right because that was 17 years ago the hundreds of you not gonna not kill you who God has kept alive.

But also you. You who are here alive in Jesus Christ not dead in your sins because it would be from Judah wouldn't it that Jesus would come who saves all the believe in Him. And Jesus says He says to bring it about as it is this day to save many people alive and that which Joseph knew in a nutritional and economic sense at the end of Genesis 20.

How much more do you know it at the beginning of well a third of the way through how time flies of 2021 the multitudes. Who have been brought to faith in Jesus Christ. That assembly of the firstborn the sou ls of the just made perfect with whom we this morning gather this day the cloud of witnesses who fall from afar what we do not even have yet because it is God's will whom he is saving coming to its final fullness together at the resurrection on the last day.

So that if Jesus carries and you end up in the yard you're gonna come up out of there and Jacob and Joseph and Leah and Abraham and Sarah and Isaac. And Rebecca. Are gonna come up out of the cave of Mcphila at the same time on the same day many who've been kept alive through this.

He were rehabbing Romans 8:28 for ourselves today. Because we've just rattled it off so many times and we've already said hey never have really grappled with how the joy of that verse is the display of the glory of my God's wisdom and my God's power and by God's plan and my God salvation.

But did you notice that? Joseph sees the trial that he went through as worth it not primarily worth it for himself.

God meant it for good not that I had become a of the zero in Egypt not that I'm married with children and you know hear about his grandchildren so forth next week not about stuff for himself, but stuff for others. You see? Is working through your trial is always good for you if you're a believer everything is good for you if you're a believer but what he is specifically doing and your child may not actually be all that much about you.

Because he's doing so much in the all of his creation and his people's lives.

That you may go through something that is extremely painful and hard and measurable and sanctifying praise God. And in terms of what you see come out of it then this life. Very little of it was actually for you. Because there are multitude of other believers. Who became believers through your trial or who are strengthened in their faith through your trial.

We're so narrow. In the way we read these verses and think about them because we still have so much of that fleshliness. In which we put ourselves in the place of God, but how great is that good that God's forgiveness of us in Christ guarantees? So that whether it's another believer's trial or my own trial or whether the good is coming to me, or it's coming to another believer comes to us from God because of Christ.

So yet slap 32, you go all the way to 32 when you start verse 28 that God who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all. Freely gives us together with him all things so that all things are ours as he would tell the Corinthians why because we are Christ.

Now things are Christ's why? Because God's. Choice for how to display himself and his glory is in his son. All things are yours. Everything you hear about on the news if you still watch news. Lord have mercy to you. Everything you see tweeted if you've ever done Twitter God have mercy on you.

Everything is for you the birds tweets for you the wind blows for you it's hot for you it's cold for you the pastors late for you finishes early for you, maybe one day.

For you. There's not a bird that falls to the ground apart from the knowledge of your God that falls to the ground for you here is his number. Numbered to display the glory of his wisdom and the glory of his power the glory of his salvation his goodness to you and even through you.

And praying that God would turn the hair grayer. Help us all. Honor his word. God is forgiving and merciful to do this for believers, he is forgiving and merciful to do it through believers. God's intentions are like those of Christ. You know, we would spare ourselves the trials. Because we're too foolish to plan them.

And we're too weak to make them work together for good, but our God isn't. There's amazing some of you probably. Have been reading in the ends of the gospels, whether it's because you start in the Gospels at the beginning every year. You come to Luke 22 and verse 32.

Peter is very proudly. Saying that he would never abandon Christ and. Jesus says Satan has demanded. To sift you like wheat, but I have prayed.

What did Jesus pray for? Isn't it interesting? He didn't pray. That Satan would be denied. He prayed that Peter's faith wouldn't fail. The Peter would be restored. And that when Peter was restored or converted to the King James says, That he would strengthen his brothers. Strengthen the disciples. Do you see?

In our Lord Jesus there. Picture of our God who plans good and does good even when the devil desires and plans and does evil it's a great evil that Peter would deny the Lord Jesus. So much greater good. That he would be returned to Christ and strengthened that his faith wouldn't fail that he would be able to strengthen others and we've all been strengthened by Peter that way heavenly.

How many times in the Gospels even in act even in Galatians have we read of how Peter was and God kept even Peter's faith from failing and he'll keep you to.

God's intentions Christ's intentions. And of course the greatest evil that has ever been done was done to Christ. By the plan and foreknowledge of God. Peter would preach.

The good that forgiveness guarantees in the last place the forgiving mess that comes from this good. Four things very quickly to point out. About what a heart set free by all of this truth looks like when it forgives first it's patient and persistent sometimes those who have sinned against us are very timid it's hard for them to believe that the bitterness has gone perhaps because they don't have that forgiveness from Christ that takes away the guilt that controls you so one way that we see the forgiveness come out of Joseph is that he persists.

Do not be afraid verse 19, he repeats it verse 21 now therefore do not be afraid he's urgent with them patient and persistent and urgent. Restoration requires affirmation second Corinthians 2 verse 8, when you remember the brother who was in sin and they had disciplined him and second Corinthians 2 verse 8, the the apostle tells him a firm your love for him don't just say we forgive you don't just let him come back to the table show him that you love him.

When your heart is freed by the God who does all things for your good because he's forgiven you in Christ, you can forgive like that. Generosity of action and not just spirit. Now therefore do not be afraid. I will provide for you. And your little ones Joseph loves covenantally because as God loves covenantally we've seen that so often throughout this entire book you and your seed after you.

You and your children I will provide for you and your little ones. They said please forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your Father they had said He said I will provide for you and for your little ones and as generosity of action. Romans 12 tells you to do the same thing, doesn't it?

It doesn't just say do not repay evil for evil. It says if your enemy is hungry. Feed him. If he's thirsty give him something to drink. It's very hard to extend your hand to do good to someone if your heart hasn't been freed to throw that hand out there.

But the doctrine that we have seen in this passage is what frees the heart to send the hand. So patience and action tenderness of manner. Tenderness and manner he comforted them. And spoke kindly to them. Tenderness of matter a gentleness and affection.

You see forgiveness starts with a forgiving nest of the heart and knowing God's forgiveness and good intentions towards you will free you to have this kind of forgivingness towards others.

Amen let's pray.

Our Father many of us came to this passage. Thinking that we would be identifying with Joseph. The finding that we have identified. Too much with the brothers. We thank you that you have given us first and foremost to identify with your son our Lord Jesus Christ. We praise you that you O God are in your proper place.

We thank you for the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, which guarantees us. The forgiveness that you alone can give if we come through Him I pray oh God that there would be no one in this room. Who persists and being controlled by their guilt and their heart-heartedness towards you.

When you are not only so able what so willing. Pray that your spirit would overwhelm them. That you would bring them dragging them. To come to you and find the forgiveness full and free in our Lord Jesus. Help us o God who are nursing bitterness and cannot find it in ourselves to let go of and make us we pray to find it in Christ to let go of it.

Help us we pray to love your glory. To love in the midst of our trials the honor that will come to your wisdom the honor that will come to your power through them. We confess to you not love your honor, like we should and we see how enriched we would be.

If we might be able to continually rejoice over that. Lord help us to love our brothers as Christ loved us. That as he willingly went to the cross. For our good that you would make us to rejoice at the thought that the trials through which you bring us are doing all of your people good.

Help us for our love for our brothers and sisters as. Small enough that we're not getting the benefit out of that knowledge that we might. And we pray that you would make us to be so free in our heart to forgive. That we might be able to insist and confirm and show affection and to show the forgiveness with action to show it and manner of tenderness and gentleness.

We thank you that you have done these things most supremely every one of them in our Lord Jesus. Is through him that we ask that your spirit would make us to be like him.