



Mountain Ridge Church

Crazy Normal • Forgiving for Good • genesis 37:1-8; 50:19-20 • 05/12/2019

Main Point

Our ability to forgive others is dependent on our confidence in God who leads us.

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What do you think healthy relationships look like? What is the healthiest relationship you've seen or been a part of?

What keeps us from cultivating healthy relationships with other people?

Relationships aren't easy because every relationship is entered into by two sinners. It is inevitable that we will sin against those we care about most, and that they will sin against us. If we hope to honor God in our family relationships, we must submit to His design for them. Today, we will be challenged to do so by letting go of unforgiveness, jealousy, favoritism, and guilt. In so doing, we will discover how the reconciliation that Christ provides between us and God can bring hope and reconciliation to our family relationships as well.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| Genesis 37:1-8 and 50:19-20.

Jacob fathered twelve children with four different women. His family gives us a picture of the difficulties that blended families face.

How did Jacob feel about Joseph? How did Joseph's brothers feel about Joseph's favored status? How did they respond?

What might Joseph have been thinking or praying as he was betrayed by his brothers and carried off as a slave, separated from his father?

The favoritism that Jacob extended to Joseph caused a rift between Joseph and his brothers. This, combined with the arrogant way in which Joseph shared his dreams with his brothers, resulted in Joseph's brothers being so consumed with anger that they threw him in a pit, sold him into slavery, and told Jacob that Joseph had been killed by wild animals. Through God's providence, Joseph went from being a lowly slave to being second in command in Egypt. God blessed Joseph's leadership and used him to preserve the nation during a great famine. Thus, when Jacob's family was afflicted by the famine, he sent his sons to buy grain in Egypt. When Jacob's brothers learned that Joseph was still alive and had risen to a place of power in Egypt, they feared for their lives.

What was Joseph's answer to his brothers' fear? How did God use Joseph to bring healing in Jacob's family?

What impact might Joseph's testimony of God's grace have had on his brothers' lives?

| Have a volunteer read Ephesians 4:31-32 and Romans 8:1-4.

How might a lack of forgiveness damage our family relationships?

How often do you think on God's forgiveness when you consider forgiving others?

Could any sins committed against us be greater than the sins we have committed against God?

Forgiving literally means "acting with grace." Paul pointed out specifically that this is a God-like quality. Because He forgave in Christ, we are to extend forgiveness to others.

How might reflecting on the cross affect your readiness to forgive? How might forgiving others provide us with opportunities to share the gospel?

Look at Romans 8:1-2. How would you define "condemnation," and what does it have to do with a person's relationship with God? Why is there no condemnation for people in Christ Jesus?

What specifically does this mean about the way we forgive others who hurt us?

God has declared us to be forgiven. When we hear words of condemnation, they don't come from God because He wouldn't contradict what He's already told us. When we accept that we are completely forgiven in Christ, it changes the way we live. We can completely release our past and we can boldly look to the

future with confidence. In the present, the forgiveness of Jesus empowers us to extend forgiveness to other people in our lives. After all, if God has not held our sin against us, who are we to hold sin against other people?

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Is there anyone in your life you are withholding forgiveness from? How can we pray for you in that situation?

How might we be proactive in guarding our hearts against showing favoritism to others?

What is one way you might extend grace to a family member or friend who feels neglected?

What practical steps can you take to prioritize cultivating God-glorifying relationships with friends or family members?

Pray

Close in prayer, asking that the reality of His forgiveness of us lead you to forgive others.

Commentary

| Genesis 37:1-8 and 50:19-20

37:2-4 The account begins with a description of 17-year-old Joseph, the central human figure in this section. Jacob's unequal treatment of his sons aroused great jealousy, so that Joseph's brothers hated him. The robe of many colors probably marked Joseph as Jacob's chosen successor for clan leadership, especially since he was the firstborn of Rachel, the only woman Jacob had ever intended to marry.

37:5-11 Like his father Jacob (28:12-15; 31:10-13), Joseph received two dreams from God during his lifetime. Both portrayed Joseph as gaining a position of supremacy in his family, though the symbols differed greatly. The first dream used an agricultural image (v. 7). The second, more important and wider in scope than the first, was astronomical (vv. 9-10). The pairing of dreams with a shared meaning meant that God would certainly make the events happen (41:32).

51:19-21 Joseph acknowledges that he is not in control of history's measures. Divine purpose prohibits Joseph from exacting personal vengeance, yet personal experience with the providence of God through difficult circumstances confirmed for him that he could never usurp God's sovereign design by taking the lives of his brothers into his own hands. It was God, after all, who had transformed the brothers' evil intentions into good, achieving the deliverance of many peoples.

| Ephesians 4:31-32

In contrast to the six vices found in earlier verses, here are three virtues by which believers are to relate to one another. These are God-like qualities He has extended to us. “Kind” means caring or showing love practically (see 2:7 for God’s kindness). “Compassionate” (tenderhearted) refers to being moved in one’s insides in response to a need and then acting. “Forgiving” is literally “acting with grace,” and forgiving the offenses of others is certainly one of the best ways to extend undeserved favor. Paul pointed out specifically that this is a God-like quality. Because He forgave in Christ, we are to extend forgiveness to others. Forgiving is literally “acting with grace,” and forgiving the offenses of others is certainly one of the best ways to extend undeserved favor. Paul pointed out specifically that this is a God-like quality. Because He forgave in Christ, we are to extend forgiveness to others.

| Romans 8:1-2

8:1-2 Paul’s “therefore ... now” occurs this way only here in Paul’s epistles. Coupled together, the two particles call attention to a turning point in Paul’s epistle (see 5:1 and 12:1 for other major turning points signified by “therefore”). The main text of Paul’s argument can be seen most clearly by skipping from 7:6 directly to 8:1: “But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code” (7:6). Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (8:1).