

The Detour of Pardon

Genesis 50:15-26

Introduction

Pardon is that act of extending forgiveness to someone who has wronged you. An unwillingness to forgive is one of the things that can hinder believers from their destiny. Even when you have been unduly wronged, you can take solace in the fact that while God does not endorse evil people or situations, He can use them to benefit His children. Joseph was able to forgive his brothers because he could see that God used the evil actions of his brothers for his own favor and the general well-being of his family and a whole nation. When you choose to have the perspective that God is always up to something behind the scenes, and that even the pain caused by people can be used for your favor and benefit, you will find that forgiveness becomes easier.

The reality is that there is a crisis of forgiveness. Even when you want to have the right perspective and believe that God is at work on your behalf – pain is REAL. Forgiveness does not imply that it doesn't hurt or that it doesn't require a process of healing. However, forgiveness is still a decision – a decision to release a debt that has been incurred because of an offense that has come to you. Forgiveness for many of us will be an ongoing decision we make each day to let it go.

When we forgive, we are rewarded because we are no longer held hostage, regardless of the actions or decisions of others. Forgiveness doesn't mean forgetting. It means that we can decide to move away from the pain as we experience the healing power of Jesus in our hearts and the current and future favor of God in our lives. Forgiveness allows us to no longer be owned by the event or people that perpetuated the pain.

Releasing the debt requires a shift of focus. The decision and the act of shifting your focus from the source of the pain to the Source of your provision are not always easy. But know that it can be done. What helped Joseph to release his brothers from the debt they owed him? He focused on what God was currently doing and had already done in his life. We, too, can choose to look at what God has done, and what we believe He will do for us... even in the midst of a life situation when people seem to be against us.

Don't let unforgiveness keep you from realizing your destiny because you refuse to see how God is using bad for better and overall good. Focus on what is right because God is always up to something great!

Getting Started

1. What one point resonated with you from this morning's sermon?
2. Many times we know that we *should* forgive but we need practical application for *how* we do it! In what practical ways can we forgive? What does "letting it go" look like?

Let's Get Personal

1. Have you been able to experience the power of forgiveness in your life? Share with your group to encourage your brother or sister in the faith.
2. Are you currently struggling with unforgiveness? Share your concern with your group and allow your group to pray for you in this area of difficulty.

Take the Next Step

1. Utilize one of the practical ideas for "letting it go" this week. Share with your group how you intend to put this week's sermon to work!
2. Take a moment practicing "shifting your focus". Tell your group what God is doing that is *good* in your life.

Renew Your Mind

"As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good..." Genesis 50:20
