

TRANSITION:

PAUSE FOR TECH LEADER... Good morning. If you have a Bible or Bible app with you and I hope you do, go ahead and make your way to **Genesis 50/Genesis 50 vv.15-21**. We're continuing our **"Truth Myth"** series AND today looking at the life of another one of these all-important, yet very flawed, Patriarchs/these OT leaders/starting with Abraham, who we caught a glimpse of a few weeks ago, that together, helped establish the Jewish nation by tribes and ultimately became the first proprietors of God's message of salvation, to be taken to the rest of the world. And the guy we're looking at today is named Joseph. The great-great grandson of Abraham and son of Jacob, who you might recall we looked at on Easter...And Joseph's story is a long one. Actually starts in **Genesis 37** and climaxes here in **Genesis 50**. So 14 chapters reserved for Joseph. And to put that in perspective: The entire creation account of the Bible only gets 2 chapters. The flood account of Genesis, which some have called the RE-creation account gets 4. But Joseph gets a whopping 14 chapters or over 25% of Genesis...Why?...BECAUSE, as you'll see, Joseph's story is really one of: learning to live with peace no matter what comes your way, which is why I've titled this message, **"Peace No Matter What."** Cuz that's really our struggle isn't? Ever since Adam and Eve, we've been struggling to find peace in what seems like a peace'less world. I'd even go so far as to say that life since the Fall...is suffering: Us asking questions like, *"Why me? Why's this happening to me? My family? These people around me?"*¹...But ya know, the question behind ALL those questions that you REALLY have to contend with in times of suffering is, will the suffering strengthen...or sink you?...Even more, will WE as a church be a community to which our friends and neighbors can turn in the midst of their suffering and say, *"How do YOU live with peace no matter what, cuz the best the world seems to give me is a kind of toxic positivity? How do you do it?"* And we'll be able to share with em truths like the ones found in this passages today...So let's listen to the reading of God's word together. And as you are, be thinking about 3 headings/or really beliefs this passage tells us are beliefs of a person who has the ability to live at peace no matter what. They are: **1) Believing that *Your Sin Is Deeper Than You Can Imagine*; 2) that *God's Sovereignty Is More Important Than You Think*, and 3) that *Jesus' Salvation Is More Expansive Than You Could Hope...***³ Beliefs that people who live at peace, hold. Let's listen to God's Word together... **Harry Intro's Self > Genesis 50:15-21...**

TEXT:

Thanks **Harry**...So as I mentioned, our text is the climax of a 14 chapter story. So let me recount it for you,² after which we'll draw out those 3 beliefs I mentioned... But if you were to go back to Genesis 37/the beginning of Joseph's story, you'd see that Joseph was 1 of 12 sons of Jacob, who of course had those 12 sons by two different wives: Leah and Rachel, with Rachel being the favorite. And Rachel had two of the sons, Benjamin...and Joseph, which MEANT that Jacob very obviously favored Joseph over the rest of his sons. And to make a long story very short, BECAUSE Joseph was favored, it really poisoned the family. Parents, I don't know if you've ever thought about it, but I think we all know that you can love your children too little and that of

¹ SIN, SUFFERING, AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD - Genesis 50:20 - February 16, 2014 - For the Love of God - David Platt

² Story explanation adapted: "THE SAVING OF MANY LIVES - A Public Faith" - Nov. 17, 2013 - Gen. 50:15-21 - Tim Keller + "God is With Me" (Joseph) // Genesis 50:15-21 // The Whole Story, #8 - J.D. Greear

course bring all kinds of devastation. My own experiences in ministry for going on 14 years now/not to mention just the percentages tell me that many of you today are likely the product of a parent or parents that sadly loved you too little. It's certainly possible to love your children too little...But did you know that you can actually love them too much and that also bring about devastation?³...And by that I mean when you/with good intentions, put your kids at the center of your life. For example, you: You refuse to discipline em, cuz you don't want to hurt their feelings, but in the process minimize their understanding of sin, holiness and obedience...Or when you simply fill their day with activity, cuz you think that experiences and stimulation, rather than intentional discipleship in God's word, with God's people, is what they need most... Or just when you take a kind of kid-directed approach to parenting where, sure you wanna help em discover their passions and keep em safe, but in the process, you can easily begin to communicate to your children that THEY/not God are the center of the world...It's not just possible/it's likely that we love our children too much and in-so-doing bring about just as much, if not more, devastation as loving them too little.

That's what Jacob did with Joseph, and it'd poisoned the family. On the one hand, caused Joseph's brothers to be filled with anger, resentment, and jealousy. But on the other caused Joseph to start becoming this really arrogant/self-important adolescent, headed straight for the kind of miserable life that people like that have. Cuz at one point in the story, Jacob's given Joseph this, what the text calls "*coat of many colors.*" And in those times clothing obviously wasn't manufactured the way it is today. So to have a coat, much less a multi-colored one was to have a kind of high-end, custom garment - like wearing Louis Vutton or Gucci or something. And so for Jacob to give Joseph this coat, it was the equivalent of a dad lavishing money on ONE of his children, but not the others. Favoritism!...And it started going to Joseph's head. He kinda starts rubbing it in his brothers faces; at one point telling em about a dream God had given him in which he was gonna rule over them. And to be sure, God had given him the dream, but also Joseph was about 13 at the time, which means it's not a stretch to assume that his "sharing" of the dream was probably more like "*Nanna nanna boo boo. I'm gonna rule you!*" - Insensitive...So poisoning this family, you've got favoritism, insensitivity, rivalry, and ultimately...scandal. And I say scandal because the more Jacob loved Joseph, and the more Joseph was being Joseph, the more his brothers grew not just resentful, but enraged. And Genesis tells us that at one point the brothers are all in this remote place away from everyone, and they see it as their chance to finally rid themselves of Joseph. So...they sell him to some traveling slave traders, who were on their way to Egypt...THEN take his coat, kill an animal, wipe the animal's blood on it, and bring it back to dad, telling him that Joseph's dead, no-doubt hoping that, after a time of mourning, dad would eventually turn his attention and affection to them...I kid you not. This is in the Bible! And NOT because the Bible is in anyway affirming this stuff, but because unlike other religious texts, the Bible is utterly realistic about life and wants to show you that ANYTIME you live contrary to God's will and ways, it ALWAYS brings destruction!

³ <https://itunes.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewPodcast?id=1000270128470#episodeGuid=94112939-ff83-4f31-b00c-1a32504022d4>

So meanwhile, as the family's slowly disintegrating, Joseph's not only living as a slave in Egypt to a guy named Potiphar/who was the captain of the Egyptian army, but living in prison, because of a false sexual assault claim by Potiphar's THIRSTY wife...AND if that's not enough, while in prison and after doin' the dream thing and successfully interpreting the dream of a cellmate, who happened to be Pharaoh's butler, he's simply forgotten and left to rot...UNTIL...Pharaoh has a dream of his own; hears through the grapevine that Joseph's pretty good with dreams; sends for him, and asks him if he can interpret his; to which Joseph says, "*Nope! But I know the God in heaven can.*"...And I'll just tell you, if the story had a soundtrack, what you'd hear at that point would be the loud screech of a car crash. "*Errrr!*" Cuz Egyptian Pharaohs, you understand, they believed THEMSELVES to be God. And so you don't tell the most powerful man in the world, who thinks he IS God, that he's not, unless you're fueled by a kind of inner peace FROM God.

So shockingly, Pharaoh says, "*Ok, well go talk to God and get back with me,*" which Joseph does and comes back saying that the dream means that God's gonna send 7 years of feast and 7 years of famine on Egypt and that the nation better get ready by using the years of feast to prep for the years of famine....And so that's what Egypt does. Super wise move ALL because of Joseph's wisdom, which of course Pharaoh recognizes and rewards by promoting him to the office of Prime Minister/2nd in command in all of Egypt...so that when, about 10 years later, the predicted famine has come and things've gotten really bad, and the whole region's starving; Egypt has food to sell...So you catchin' the scene? Joseph over in Egypt having faced years of humiliation but THEN exultation. And his family back in the homeland wasting away...to the point that daddy Jacob sends his others sons to Egypt to buy some of that food.

And so at this point it's like in that early 2000's movie "Crash" with Don Cheadle, Sandra Bullock, Thandie Newton and others where you go the whole movie thinking you're watching all these different, parallel stories, until at the end, they all merge. That's what's beginning to happen here. Cuz according to the text, when the brothers arrive in Egypt, Joseph recognizes em, but they don't recognize him; prolly cuz they thought he was dead AND as Prime Minister, he was prolly covered head-to-toe in royal robes and such. But either way when Joseph sees his brothers, we're told he's so overcome with emotion that he reveals his identity, and says, "*It's me, Joseph...go get Dad and let's be reunited.*"...And they are! Joseph has effectively saved Egypt, his family, and the future of Israel, so that his father Jacob can die peacefully in old age... THAT brings us to OUR text where as **vv.15-18** tell us, the brothers send Joseph a message asking for forgiveness - no doubt thinking that with Dad gone, Joseph might turn on em and get some long-overdue revenge...But look at what Joseph says, **vv.19-21** - Just an incredible amount of peace to have a response like this. He says, "*Don't fear, am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive...So do not fear; I'll provide for you...!*" **And he spoke kindly to them.** "**Clearly, this is a man who'd learned to live at peace no matter what!**" And if you look at what he says, you see it's because he had 3 deeply held, you could call em, peace-inducing beliefs:

First, He believed that **Sin Is Deeper Than We Imagine**: You notice in **v.20** he tells his brothers that he KNOWS they "*meant evil against him.*" And the word "*evil*" there's important, cuz it

shows that Joseph isn't minimizing anything. He doesn't say, "*Ya know guys, I know I was kind of a brat growing up,*" or "*I know dad really didn't love you well,*" or even, "*Ya know, it's all good, cuz God worked it out.*" No! He calls their actions "*evil,*" and not just cuz they resulted in evil, but because, by definition, they were actions reflective of how the Bible defines evil; namely, taking a "good thing," like wanting a father's love, and making it a "God-thing"/ something you have to have!... You remember Adam and Eve, who are representative of all of us? That was their sin! They didn't just disobey God/they did, but MORE than that, they believed they needed something OTHER than God to be happy, which is what MADE them disobey. That's how the Bible understands sin! Not just doing wrong things but taking good things and making them ultimate things! Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones described it well. He said, "*It doesn't matter what it is, anything that you and I set up as the big thing/central thing, in our lives, the thing about which you think and dream, the thing that engages your imagination, the thing you live for, or which gives you the biggest thrill; if it's anything other than God, it's sin.*"

This is why, as easy as it is to do, we can't distance ourselves from this story by thinking, "*Well I haven't sold anyone into slavery, or faked a death, or shown favoritism, so I'm good.*" You're not and neither am I, cuz though THAT might be true, it doesn't mean you're not still taking "good things" and making them "ultimate things!" ***Just ask yourself:***

- Is there anything you worry about MORE than being close to God?...
- Is there anything you fear losing more than a sense of God's love for you?...
- Is there anything you comfort yourself with more than God's acceptance OF you?...
- Is there anything you look to to give you a sense of value, worth or identity more than how God feels about you?...
- Is there anything you pray about, that if God didn't answer your prayer for that, you'd seriously consider turning away from Him?⁴

I think if you see sin in that light, you realize, not only that it lurks deeply within ALL of us, but that if it's not dealt with, no matter how good, educated, and put together you are, it'll ultimately blow everything up just like it did Joseph's family, who by all accounts and on the surface looked like this really nice, big, prosperous family/part of the people of God... It's like Mt. St Helens before May of 1980 or recently The Fagradals in Iceland, which until last week had been dormant for 6,000 years, but is NOW spewing lava⁵. As permanent and great as those mountains looked, lurking below the surface was something that ultimately blew their tops off. That's sin!

And ironically, simply BELIEVING in sin like that, helps fill you with peace. Because listen - it keeps you from two equal, but opposite errors: ***One, Idealism.*** If you have a friend who's an idealist or maybe you're more of an idealist, you know, they're NEVER at peace, cuz in real life, things never go according to the ideals do they? If Joseph had been an idealist, he never woulda made it through, much less end up with the perspective he did. YET simply believing in the reality of sin as making good things ultimate things, kept him/and keeps you and me from being

⁴ Diagnostics adapted from David Powlison in a blog by Jared Wilson

⁵ Illustrations from THE HIDDENNESS OF GOD - The Gospel According to Joseph—June 1, 2003 - Genesis 37:2b–13; 23–34 + <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/iceland-volcano-fagradals-mountain-eruption-dormant-for-6000-years/> respectively

an idealist. Cuz in a way you expect brokenness, and then aren't shattered when you experience brokenness...But **Two**, it keeps you, not only, from Idealism, but **Fatalism** too. Ya know Fatalism is that view, which says that things are irreparably broken and that's just fate. So there's nothing you can do about it/like a doctor diagnosing an illness, but because he or she can't name the illness, they can't give a prognosis, which of course is bound to make you anxious, if not bitter and cynical right? But if you believe in the reality of sin, ironically, that's more hopeful because it allows you to diagnose the problem, and then move to find a prognosis. **Can you admit that sin in the form of making good things God things, is your deepest problem?** If you can, like Joseph, you'll START to have the ability to live at peace no matter what, because you won't be an Idealist or a Fatalist...You'll be...a Realist.

But then **Second**: You gotta believe that **God's Sovereignty Is More Important Than You Think**: Ya notice in **v.19** Joseph says, "*Don't fear. Am I in the place of God?*" And then in **20**, "*(the) evil (you meant) against me, God meant for good.*" And what he's declaring there is his belief in...the sovereignty of God. You know what sovereignty means? It literally means "supra + reign"/God's ability to rule in, through, and OVER everything, so that, as J.D. Greear says, "*there's not one wasted event; not one wasted second; (not) one spurious molecule in all the universe.*"⁶ And you say, "*That can't be true. A lot of Joseph's story feels wasted or at least gratuitous - all the suffering and hardship?*" And it's true: God's sovereignty doesn't mean that He only gives or allows nice things. No! It means that He doesn't WASTE anything/that He can take even horrible things and override or work them for good. **Romans 8:28** our corresponding Missional Family Meeting passage for this week, says it this way, "*We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*"...Think about it: Joseph's story is packed with apparent coincidences right? Like when the brothers sell Joseph into slavery, he "happens" to be picked up by traders heading to Egypt. Or when he's in Egypt, he "happens" to be sold to Potiphar, so that when he's imprisoned, he "happens" to be imprisoned with powerful people's prisoners like Pharaoh's butler...who then "happened" to bring him into Pharaoh's courts, where Pharaoh's dream was interpreted, Joseph's "talent" recognized, and Joseph lifted up to a high administrative post, where he could create this massive hunger relief program that saved thousands of lives...including his own by the way, since where it not for all these "coincidences," Joseph's own character would've never been redeemed. If God had saved him upfront, he likely woulda been more lost down the line... **You see?** All these things might look like coincidences, but unless every one of em happened EXACTLY the way they happened, in the order they happened; everybody dies - tens of thousands in Egypt, Joseph's family, and ULTIMATELY the entire messianic line...from which Jesus came! Every single, tiny, little detail/each of these "coincidences" couldn't have been a coincidence, because if any ONE of them doesn't happen, it all dies!⁷...Joseph knew that, which is why he says, "*what you meant for evil, God meant for good.*"

⁶ "God is With Me" (Joseph) // Genesis 50:15–21 // The Whole Story, #8 - J.D. Greear

⁷ Explanation adapted from "The Saving of Many Lives: A Public Faith—November 17, 2013 - Genesis 50:15–21 - Timothy J. Keller, [The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive, 2012-2013](#) (New York: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013). + The Hiddenness of God: The Gospel According to Joseph—June 1, 2003 - Genesis 37:2b–13; 23–34 - Timothy J. Keller, [The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive](#) (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013).

And you see, knowing THAT, is in-part, what allowed him to be at peace! Cuz think about the peace you'd live with, if you really believed that no matter what came your way, God was working it for your good...It's like Corrie Ten Boom, the Dutch Christian who was put into a German concentration camp during WW2 for helping Jews escape. Apparently one of the worst aspects of her suffering were the fleas that inundated the camp and made life filthy...so that one day when Corrie was feeling pretty hopeless, her sister Betsie said, "*Corrie, you should thank God for the fleas.*" And Corrie said, "*There's no way God can make me grateful for a flea.*"... Until a few days later...when she and others met in secret to have a worship service, which of course, if they'd been discovered, they woulda been beaten/maybe killed. But as they're meeting the guards never even walked in. They actually peered inside the barracks and walked right past...And it dawned on Corrie why: They didn't wanna go in...because of the fleas! Even in the fleas, God was at work!⁸ ***Can you thank God for even the fleas in your life?...Are you willing to step down from your high perch of thinking you know what's best for your life and trust God's sovereignty?*** Cuz that's what Joseph's doing when he says, "*Am I in the place of God?*" He's saying, "*Only God's sovereign. So I'm not gonna assume a position of authority that doesn't belong to me.*" In this case, holding a grudge against his brothers, since when you hold a grudge, what you're really doing is assuming that you know what someone really deserves, when the truth is, only God knows...People, like Joseph, have the ability to live at peace no matter what, because they KNOW that God being sovereign doesn't necessarily mean He'll work everything out, to your understanding, in your lifetime, BUT that He WILL work everything out, for your good, in the grand scheme of history...Or to say it another way, Joseph's story tells you and me, that often, when things look the most wrong, God is most working the most good. Which means if you reject God because you look at the surface of your life and can't see what good He could be bringing out of it, you might be making one of the worst mistakes OF your life.⁹...Believing God's sovereignty brings REAL peace. ***Do you believe that?***

Finally and Very Briefly: you gotta believe that **Jesus' Salvation Is More Expansive Than You've Hoped:** When Joseph says in **v.20**, that "*God meant the brothers' evil for good,*" you notice he doesn't say that generally, which is what we often do in saying things like, "*Oh it'll all work out/there's a purpose for everything.*" No! He says it specifically...that the "*good*" God was bringing, was the salvation of many. See that? In other words, he's letting us in on an unbelievable truth, which he understood partially, but which WE, who have hindsight, understand fully...that is: God doesn't just overcome evil by stopping it - He does at times, but other times doesn't - He overcomes it, primarily, by thwarting its destructive purposes, and using it to further His SAVING objectives.¹⁰...Frankly, that's really the main point of this story: not to amaze you with Joseph's ability to live at peace, or tell you that no matter what bad things happen to you, as long as you press on you'll be Prime Minister or something...No! It's to show you that if you'll simply admit your sin, and surrender to God's sovereignty, then He'll

⁸ Illustrated adapted from citation in "God is With Me" (Joseph) // Genesis 50:15-21 // The Whole Story, #8 - J.D. Greear

⁹ Idea adapted from Reconciliation - The Gospel According to Joseph—June 29, 2003 - Genesis 50:12-21 - Timothy J. Keller, *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive* (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013).

¹⁰ Thought adapted from "The Saving of Many Lives: A Public Faith—November 17, 2013 - Genesis 50:15-21 - Timothy J. Keller, *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive, 2012-2013* (New York: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013).

graciously work all things for your salvation!...Cuz ya know what? That's actually what He's already begun doing: Since Jesus you understand, is the ultimate example of good being brought out of evil¹¹...Cuz Jesus, just like Joseph, was betrayed by his brothers; lied about; and falsely condemned. Just like Joseph, Jesus was, in a sense, sold into slavery, but not JUST sold, HE/ unlike Joseph, was put to death. And like Joseph, Jesus was then raised to the highest throne; a throne from which, instead of exacting vengeance, He now uses His position to forgive and save brothers and sisters like you and me, if only we'll "send Him a message" asking for forgiveness...***How much peace could you enjoy by simply believing that though your sin is deep, God's loving sovereignty and gracious salvation is deeper still!...What would it look like for you to agree more with the Bible's understanding of sin, sovereignty and salvation in such a way as to walk in greater peace today?***... Take a moment to consider that, after which we'll move into our breakout rooms.

APPLICATION:

At this time we're gonna move into breakout rooms for just a few minutes, so that you have an opportunity to begin applying, with others in your Missional Family, that question you just thought about...If you're not connected to a Missional Family, no worries - we invite ya to remain here and enjoy just a low-key time to just connect and ask any questions if you have em...But after a few minutes discussing that question that'll be onscreen **NOW**...we'll re-gather back here for a short time of celebration and sending...Ok? Ok!...

- ***This Sunday's Application Questions: What would it look like for you to agree more with the Bible's understanding of sin, sovereignty and salvation so as to walk in greater peace?***
- ***CHARLIE BREAKOUT: Welcome > Connected? > Q&A / Abridged Covenant Card***

CELEBRATION:

Welcome back. I hope that gave you a chance to start a conversation that we hope you continue during your respective Missional Family Meetings this week, as that's REALLY where we have opportunity to discuss and apply the Scriptures together...But in the meantime, before I send you out with a blessing, would anybody be willing to come off mute and just BRIEFLY share any Aha's, or ways God working in your life, so that we can celebrate with you? Anyone?

SENDING:

Church as you are SENT into your week, receive this blessing, again from **Romans 8:28**, "*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*" Go in peace, believing that though your sin is deep, God's loving sovereignty and gracious salvation is deeper still! Thanks. **You are Sent Together!**

¹¹ Reconciliation - The Gospel According to Joseph—June 29, 2003 - Genesis 50:12–21 - Timothy J. Keller, *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive* (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013).