

Sermon Notes

The Impact of Providence by Destin Garner

Genesis 50:15-21

Sunday, September 21, 2025 RPC Central

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Genesis ***What do we do, how do we move through life amid evil - done to us or all around us?***

Joseph a great character to be studying because, for most of us here today, Joseph had more evil done to him than most of us have experienced.

Conspiracy to commit murder, assault and battery, human trafficked, enslavement, forced labor, sexual harassment, false accusation, wrongful imprisonment, no legal justification, no due process, forgotten and neglected.

Gen 42 – Brothers to Egypt b/c famine, don't recognize Joe,

Gen 45 – Joseph Reveals Himself / forgives them / brings family to Egypt / Jacob overjoyed

Gen 48/49 – Jacob Blesses sons and grandsons / He dies after blessing his sons

Gen 50 - With Pharaoh's permission his family bury Jacob in Canaan - the land of promise.

Gen 50:15-21 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead (when the full reality of their father's passing dawned on them), they said, "It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him." So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this command before he died (doubtful): 'Say to Joseph, "Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you."' And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

Why tears? Ultimately don't know...guesses:

- He realizes it's a fabrication (they haven't changed all that much)
- This is what they think of him (a killer seeking retribution)
- Relieved that they finally confess (call it transgression, sin and evil)

His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for 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, as they are today. So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them." (He's a better man than I am)

How can you get there? the Providence of God!

Different than a miracle, where God works directly by interrupting/suspending natural law to see it to.

What is PROVIDENCE? ("To see to it")

- Providence – God is where God work indirectly, He works through natural law, to see to it.
- Providence - is the unceasing activity of the Creator whereby, in overflowing bounty and goodwill, He directs everything to its appointed goal, for His own glory.
- Providence - is God working His own ends no matter what the intention of people - good or bad. God will even use man's evil purposes as an instrument for bringing about His ultimate good beyond the knowledge, desire, or realization of the human agents involved.

Ch 45 (big reveal) You sold me / God sent me. "It was not you who sent me here, but God"

"God's not reactionary, he's not just responding to evil. Gen 50:20 does not say, "God took evil and made it better," as though God were a cosmic repairman scrambling to fix what sin has broken. It says, "God meant it for good." The

Hebrew verb used here for “meant” is the same word for “weave” or “plan.” This is not accidental good. This is *intentional, sovereign, redemptive good*.

Not, “You planned it, and God heard about it, and God came up with a response.”

No... When you were planning, God was planning. When you were scheming, God was scheming. When you were up to something, God was up to something.

God doesn’t do evil / God doesn’t cause the evil / God doesn’t call the evil good

From the beginning, He chose to incorporate it, to weave plans for evil into his plan for good. Evil was still done. Still pain, hurt and consequence but God achieve His intent.

Scriptures about God’s Providence and Sovereignty

- God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases. Psalm 115:3
- The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps. Pr 16:9
- I know that God can do all things, that no purpose of His can be thwarted. Job 42:2
- Who has spoken, and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it? Lm 3:37
- Whatever the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven & on earth, in the seas & all deeps. Ps 135:6

God’s providence can rob evil of its desired outcome, it can strip evil of its power, completely repurposes the ultimate intent. With God, evil never gets the last word. Evil will never thwart God’s ultimate plan.

Yes, we can run to God for COMFORT. You need to run to God for comfort? By all means please do, He will comfort those who mourn. But please know, God is more than our security blanket for when we feel sad or hurt. He is a mighty warrior, Lord of all, reigning supreme, over-all things...You can run to him for comfort, but more than that, you can run to him for HOPE! I knew before the foundations of time, but it will not have the last word, it will not thwart my ultimate plan. I will weave their evil intent into my tapestry of good.

*You might not ever get to see God’s intent for good (22 yrs before Jospeh said that).

*God’s definition of good often conflicts with ours. We want ease; He wants endurance. We want comfort; He wants Christlikeness. We want deliverance from pain; He wants deeper holiness.

“Ignorance of providence is misery; the highest blessedness lies in the knowledge of it.”

Alternative to PROVIDENCE is PESSIMISM – There is no God or He just can’t/won’t do anything about evil, so evil reigns, no purpose in pain, no hope for redemption, good to come out of evil (Ignorance of providence in misery)

Believers, still feel, experience, grieve and mourn the effects of sin and evil but we grieve differently, nor as those without Hope (the Highest Blessedness). Hope is that God knows, aware, cares. He’s done something about it, He’s doing something with it - suffered for you, is with you and working in you.

How can that help me here today? Three ways:

1. Providence of God makes forgiving others palpable (empowers you to forgive)

- “If you take nothing else from the story of Joseph, take this: find a way to forgive.”
- Joseph didn’t minimize the gravity & weight & seriousness of the offense in order to forgive. He called them on it – “You meant it / planned it / intended it.” This was no accident. But I’ve got too much purpose to be petty. And my faith in God’s providence empowers me to forgive you. So in spite of the memory, I’m erasing the debt.

Unforgiveness:

Genesis 50:19 Puts ourselves in the place of God – **Do not fear, for am I in the place of God?**

- I'm not the judge, not the one you must answer to, you did evil to me but sin against God.
- "Implicit in the serpent's question to Eve, is that in essence he tantalizes her with, "Would you like to be in God's place?" Adam and Eve attempted to wipe out the dividing line between humanity and deity. Joseph refuses to try to cross that line - he is aware of the limits of his authority. Joseph will only be God's instrument, never his substitute."
- Is the highest form of arrogance – Christians have been forgiven but can't / won't forgive
- Unbearable weight to hold on to - drinking poison hope other person die
- ***Your faith in God is demonstrated in your ability to forgive those who hurt you.
- Your life isn't in their hands, your life is in God's hands. (Who do you need to forgive?)

2. Providence of God makes your own forgiveness possible (enables you to be forgiven)

A. Points the evil done to Jesus and how God planned/purposed/intended it for good.

- Was Judas' sinful plan not incorporated into God's plan to achieve God's ultimate good?
- Acts 4:27-28 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. 28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.
- "Pain and suffering are a kind of currency passed from hand to hand until they reach someone who receives them but does not pass them on. Jesus absorbs the blows."
- In doing so, in the evil done to him on the cross – now our forgiveness is possible

B. We, like the brothers, have sinned, all have fallen short. (we are part of the problem)

- We are enemies of God, sinned against God, done evil in his sight. Rebelled against him.
- ??? Will he hate you, and pay you back for all the evil we have done to him ???
- Jn 3:17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

C. We, like the brothers, must come before God and say:

Please forgive our transgressions, our sin we have done evil to you. He will say, "Do Not Fear – I will provide for you – I will forgive your sin and save your soul." (Have you done this?)

- Rm 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.
- Good = Christlikeness / those who love and are called = believers
- Only a promise for believers – come to Christ, be forgiven, rob sin of power, God will work all things to help you become more like Christ.

3. Providence of God makes the message of forgiveness your purpose (encourages you share the message of forgiveness)

- God meant it for good, (WHY?) to bring it about that many people should be kept alive
- One way that God plans/intends/purposes/means for good to come out of evil is that
- God wants you to use what you've been through to as a testimony for salvation of many.
- 2 Cor 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, (why) so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.
- "You ain't been through, what you've been through, just for you."

Corrie Ten Boom (a Dutch Christian who, with her family, hid Jews during the Holocaust, survived Nazi concentration camps, and later traveled the world sharing a message of forgiveness and faith in Christ). My life is but a weaving between my God and me. I cannot choose the colors that He weaves steadily. Often, He weaves sorrow; and I in foolish pride, forget He sees the upper and I the underside. Not til the loom is silent and the shuttles ceases to fly, will God unroll the canvas and reveal the reason why. The dark threads are as needed in the weaver's skillful hand as the threads of gold and silver in the pattern He has planned. He knows, He loves, He cares; Nothing this truth can dim. He gives the very best to those who leave the choice to Him.

Here today looking for real HOPE? Hope in the Providence of God, that evil never gets the last word, that God weaves even the sinful plans of evil into his ultimate plan for good.

HOPE & HEALING & MEANING - Be forgiven, and then be a conduit of forgiveness to others.

Sermon Discussion Questions

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Scriptures: Genesis 50:15-21, Job 42:2, Lamentations 3:37, Proverbs 16:9, Psalm 115:3, Psalm 135:6

Ask the quieter members of your group read the scriptures above aloud, prior to beginning discussion.

Icebreaker All of us have experienced unexpected blessings and disappointments. It could be an unexpected gift, a flat tire, hail damage, a neighbor moving, a phone call, a promotion, or the loss of a job or a loved one. How did something unexpectedly bless you or disappoint you this week?

1. What do we learn about the character of God from these scriptures?
2. How is providence defined?
3. Several phrases are repeated in this short passage of Genesis. What are they? How do “fear” and “forgiveness” function as the main idea of this section?
4. What are Joseph’s brothers afraid of? How does this relate to the gospel of Jesus Christ?
5. Discuss Joseph’s response in 17b, 19-21. Why do you think Joseph wept when his brothers came to him? What emotions might he have been experiencing?
6. How does Joseph's question, "am I in the place of God?" (Genesis 50:19), serve as a profound statement of humility and understanding?
7. Who does Joseph fear? How does Joseph’s response to his brothers point us to the gospel?
8. Joseph's powerful statement in verse 20, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good," is an important life lesson for all of us. What other examples can you think of in scripture where God overrules our sin for His glory and the ultimate good of mankind? Discuss.
9. Who can share about a difficult situation/season in your life, that though painful, ultimately led to growth in your relationship with and dependence upon Christ?
10. After forgiving his brothers, Joseph not only reassures them but also promises to provide for them and their children. What does this act of kindness teach us about extending mercy even to those who have wronged us?

For next steps

- Memorize Genesis 50:20 this week.
- Consider the quote, “you ain’t been through, what you been through, just for you.” If you haven’t written down how the Lord has provided, redeemed, sustained you through some difficult seasons, take a few minutes to do so and share with your group or a leader this week.
- How does this passage inform your mind and heart toward those you need to forgive?
- How can your faith and trust in God’s sovereign ways help you to be more forgiving and compassionate to those who hurt you?
- Pause and prayerfully consider what have you learned from this sermon series? Is there anything on your heart or in your mind that needs to be confessed? How has God used this series to grow you into the likeness of Christ?