

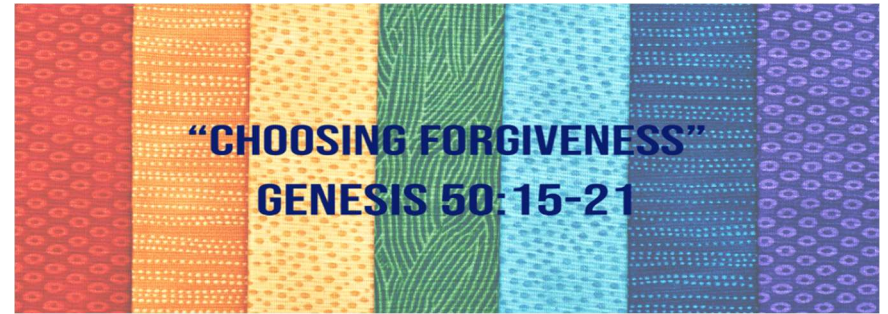


Stepping Stones

Genesis 50:15-21 New Revised Standard Version

¹⁵Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" ¹⁶So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, ¹⁷'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." ¹⁹But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. ²¹So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

Notes



"Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future." –Paul Boose

How much more could possibly happen to Joseph? In spite of his many lows, life was looking way up. He was second in command to Pharaoh and had started a family in the land of his misfortunate. There is a sense that Joseph had left the past behind and begun anew. Then it happened! His past returned. With the famine having reached as far as his place of origin, his father had sent ten of his brothers to Egypt to secure much needed provisions. Unbeknownst to them, they had to go through their brother whom they had despised and sold into slavery many years earlier.

We cannot possibly know how Joseph felt upon their arrival. The human side of us would assume there could have been hard feelings and maybe even anger. They were in desperate need of something which Joseph could provide. Would Joseph retaliate? Would payback be in order? Our world tells us this would be the logical response to the harms inflicted by others. We modify the Golden Rule so it states, "Do unto others AS they have DONE to you!" However, after a period of testing, we discover Joseph's answer was...forgiveness. Was it easy? It never is. As difficult as it may seem and as uncommon as it is within our world, it is the only answer to that which will otherwise destroy us.

1. We have to intentionally choose the unnatural response.
2. Retaining previous wrongs does no harm to another.
3. Choosing forgiveness begins to allow the heart to heal.

Prayer Pebble: Lord, you have forgiven me much. Soften my heart so that I might have the courage to extend as well as receive forgiveness. Amen.