



Harvester Groups

JOSEPH: *Staying Faithful in the Unexpected* | Group Questions for Genesis 44,45

Prepare: Read Genesis 44-45 several times before your group meeting. Write down any questions or observations you want to discuss.

Discuss*

- In Genesis 44:18-34, Judah pleads his case to Joseph in an attempt to secure freedom for Benjamin. This brings Joseph to tears (45:1-2). Speculate for a minute about what might have brought Joseph to tears? Remember, people are people and it is okay to assume that Joseph, or any other human being, has a similar emotional experience as we tend to have.
- Part of what brought Joseph to tears was probably seeing the change in his brothers in their attempts to protect Benjamin. Have you ever seen a deep change in a person who wronged you that brought you to tears? How do you think God feels about us when we act on or live out our own transformation for the benefit of others?
- Read Genesis 45:5-8. Joseph, throughout his story but especially here, is seen as a type of Christ to his family. Talk about some of the similarities you see in Joseph's life and Jesus' life. (Beloved of their father, wrongly accused, falsely imprisoned, betrayed, etc.). What does this say about God's sovereignty, knowing that he had Joseph's life play out as forerunner of Jesus' life some 1500 years or so earlier than Jesus' birth?
- Both Joseph and Jesus suffered struggles and sorrows for the benefit of others. Read Isaiah 53:10-12, particularly focusing on verse 10. Compare those verses with Joseph's reply to his brothers in 45:5-8. What does it mean that "the Lord was pleased to crush"? How can we reconcile this truth, that God was pleased to crush Jesus for our benefit, with the sorrow and sufferings of Joseph's life? With the sorrows and sufferings of our own lives?
- As we have seen throughout our study of Joseph, he has kept an eternal focus in all of his sorrows and struggles. He seems to believe that his own suffering is worth it for the sake of his people (45:5-8). Read Hebrews 12:2. Do you see this same attitude in Jesus? Do you see this same attitude in yourself? Talk about the places you see this attitude in yourself and the places you wish you saw it in yourself.
- Read some or all of the verses below:
 - 1 Peter 5:10
 - Isaiah 40:31
 - Romans 8:28-29
 - Psalm 3:2-6
 - 2 Corinthians 4:17-18
- Looking at these passages, do you think we, as the church, have a heavenly perspective on the difficulties and sorrows of this life? How can we find and keep the perspective that Joseph had, that Jesus had, without becoming delusional and denying the reality that life is hard and sorrowful or becoming so self-focused that all we see is our hardships and sorrows?

Apply

- Take a few moments and jot down some names of people who you know you can share the struggles of life with. Not simply sin struggles but the struggles of sorrow and hardship and difficult that pull your perspective from eternity to the what Paul calls these light and momentary troubles (2 Corinthians 4:17-18).
- Reach out to those people this week and create a support network of people that you can share the sorrows and struggles of life with but that will also help you refocus on the truth of eternity in the here and now.
- Become part of someone else's support network and do the same for them.
- Live more focused on the truth of God's Kingdom here and now.
- As you face the challenge of forgiving and releasing others, what do you find most challenging about the example of Joseph?

**Use these questions to guide your discussion. Don't feel like you have to go through all of them and make sure you take time to talk through any questions and observations from the group.*