

Discussion Questions: God's Good Intentions - Genesis 45:4-8, 50:19-20

Drawn from the October 22, 2023 sermon by Pastor Rick Dietzman

Opener: What are some positive traits that you learned from your parents? How about any negative ones?

The blessings and sins of our families impact who we are today.

Unconfessed sins of the parents continue to show up.

The LORD passed before Moses and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." Exodus 34:6-7

1. Pastor Rick mentioned the following in his sermon: What do you think? *How can God be forgiving in one sentence and "by no means clearing the guilty" in the next?*

The "guilty" are those who are not "forgiven"

You say, 'Why should not the son suffer for the iniquity of the father?' When the son has done what is just and right...he shall surely live. Ezekiel 18:19

Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit...Repent and live! Ezekiel 18:31-32

2. In this passage of Ezekiel, God is clarifying how the "guilty are cleared" and forgiven. How have you seen this principle at work in your own life or in people you know?

Here are three ways to embrace God's Good Intentions

I. Am I identifying and admitting my sadness and loss?

Classic Dysfunction – family secrets and lying, cutoffs, favored children, poor intimacy in marriages.

3. What are some dysfunctional dynamics of your family of origin that have caused sadness or loss?

If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:7–9

The following are some signs of spiritual renewal that relate to this passage:

- A. The first sign of spiritual renewal is deep dissatisfaction, followed by awareness of sin and shortcomings that are brought to light.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. Romans 12:2

- B. There is a new awareness of God's presence.

They who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles. Isaiah 40:31

- C. The Holy Spirit renews us and frees us!

He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior. Titus 3:5-6

After he tested his brothers and saw their repentance, Joseph was also moved to forgive them... *Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt!" Genesis 45:4*

4. Are there any dynamics or patterns in your family where the light of Jesus has brought transformation and renewal? What was the result?

5. Why do you think it is sometimes helpful to identify dysfunction and call it out like Joseph did, while at the same time offering forgiveness?

II. Am I discerning how God has been at work?

Now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you... to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. "So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. Genesis 45:5-8

6. Is there a situation in your life that you can look back on and say with confidence, "God sent me here"? How does that confidence impact your attitude and actions towards a current situation?

III. Am I moving ahead with forgiveness and healing?

"Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. Gen. 50:19-20

7. How do you think Joseph got the ability to forgive his brothers? When have you experienced the supernatural ability to forgive and break old patterns?

Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.
Proverbs 19:21

8. How can an insight into God's purpose impact the way you approach a situation? Can you give an example in your own life?

Group Prayer Time: Close in prayer, thanking God for His providence and purpose in our lives, from the smallest details to the biggest transitions, in the good and the bad. Ask Him to develop in us a Christ-like attitude of love and forgiveness as He works all aspects of your life—conflicts, circumstances, and relationships—for good. Ask that the reality of His forgiveness will lead us to forgive others.

For Personal Refection on your own:

List the life messages you received from your parents or caretakers growing up. (for example: Education is everything, you must achieve to be loved, don't be sad, don't make mistakes, always be nice, make a lot of money, don't trust people). How did these shape you positively or negatively?

List events that dramatically impacted your family. How did they affect you personally?

How have you interpreted God's purpose in all this?

Digging Deeper:

You are invited to start viewing the videos of the Adult Sunday Seminar; Emotionally Healthy Spirituality at <https://sequimcommunitychurch.org/adult-sunday-seminars/> If you get through session 3 and would like to continue, please email rick@sequimcommunitychurch.org and ask to be on the class email list.

You may also want to review Pastor Rick's May 21, 2023 message on Spiritual Renewal! found at <https://vimeo.com/scc98382/renewal>. Handout and discussion questions are available in the description.

Next week, October 29, we will begin a new five week series "Bedrock Beliefs" which covers the "Five Solas" - Sola Scriptura (Scripture Alone), Sola Gratia (Grace Alone), Sola Fide (Faith Alone), Solus Christus (Christ Alone) and Soli Deo Gloria (The Glory of God Alone)