

“The Good News of a Savior Who Brings Good from Evil”

Pr Jim Sprengle – Lent Midweek 6 – April 9, 2025

- I. **Genesis 50:15-21** – previously read
- II. **The world’s injustice can be difficult to watch.**
 - a. We look around, and the people who are faithful suffer... while the evil prosper and get ahead.
 - b. One the of the toughest things to see is when a person suffers because of someone else – not because they did anything to deserve it, but they end up on the receiving end of a truly unjust situation.
 - i. Today in our reading about Joseph, we have a story for the ages... in fact, I use this as an example about unexpected suffering all the time.
 - ii. As we look for the Gospel in our reading, we see how God can redeem even the most desperate and dire situation.
 - c. Joseph was special to his dad Jacob for a few different reasons.
 - i. First, Jacob was deceived into marrying Leah, the sister of Rachel, his true love... but eventually Rachel became his wife too.
 - ii. Unfortunately for Rachel, she couldn’t have kids like her baby factory of a sister, as Leah had given Jacob 10 sons ... until *finally* Rachel conceived in Jacob’s old age.
 - iii. When Joseph came along, Jacob couldn’t help but treat him as special... even giving him a robe of many colors.
 - d. Joseph’s brothers were jealous because of this special treatment, and before he even turned eighteen, they hatched a plan to get rid of him... as they took his robe and threw him in a pit.
 - i. The plan was to leave him there to die, but in a strange twist of fate, a group of Ishmaelites came along, and Joseph’s brothers decided to sell him off to them for twenty pieces of silver.
 - ii. They all ran back to Jacob and told him their little brother was attacked and killed by a wild animal...
 - iii. Stuff like that isn’t supposed to happen... brothers aren’t supposed to treat their own family like that... the injustice of it all is so sad... we feel bad for Joseph because the poor kid was like a lightning rod for his brothers’ hatred.
 - e. However, if we feel bad for Joseph... how much worse should we feel about Jesus?
 - i. When you think about it, Jesus went through a similar experience.
 - ii. Rather than being betrayed by His brothers, it was His friend Judas Iscariot who sold Him for thirty pieces of silver.
 - iii. Yet, what happened to Jesus went way further than anything that happened to Joseph – because Joseph was handed over to the Ishmaelites as a slave, while Jesus was handed over to be killed.

- iv. Even though nothing could justify what Joseph's brothers did to him... Joseph wasn't perfect... and he was probably insensitive to how his brothers felt...
- v. Jesus, on the other hand, did absolutely nothing wrong... He was never treated Judas badly... Jesus was literally the perfect friend.
- f. Injustice upsets us when we see it in the world... and the story of Joseph is one of the best examples in Scripture – except of course, the example Jesus.

III. **Joseph's story went from bad to worse.**

- a. He ends up in Egypt as the Ishmaelites sold him off as a slave to a wealthy official, Potiphar... and Joseph did so well, he was put in charge of Potiphar's whole household.
 - i. But once again, injustice comes out of nowhere as Potiphar's wife accused Joseph of things he didn't do... and he was tossed into prison.
 - ii. From one pit to another, Joseph had to be wondering why these things kept happening to him.
- b. However, it was far worse for Jesus.
 - i. After Judas betrayed Him, He went through a trial that was already decided long before He was brought before the religious leaders... then He was handed over to Pontius Pilate.
 - ii. He was like Joseph... falsely accused... but Jesus was condemned to death... He was tortured and beaten... and nailed to a cross.
 - iii. Even worse, the Bible tells us that Jesus was left alone and forsaken by the Father...
 - 1. In Joseph's story, while he was in prison, it says "the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love." (Gen 39:21).
 - 2. But on the cross, Jesus had no comfort as He cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Mt 27:46)
- c. Jesus was forsaken because He stood in our place, taking the justice we deserved for our sin and brokenness.
 - i. He was completely innocent... but out of His great love for us, He suffered and died on our behalf.
 - ii. The righteous One died for the unrighteous.
 - iii. As we step back and look at Joseph, it weighs on us that he suffered injustice at the hands of his brothers.
 - 1. As we step back and look at Jesus on the cross, it weighs on us that we are the cause of His unjust suffering and death.

IV. **Joseph was stuck in prison, but his troubles were about to change.**

- a. As the Bible does so many times, we see a God who flips the script and redeems the unredeemable.

- b. Somehow, God made a way for Joseph to interpret a dream for Pharaoh, and the result was a release from prison and a position as the second most powerful position of leadership in all of Egypt.
 - i. By God's grace and mercy, Joseph experienced a great reversal.
- c. But as great as that reversal was, nothing compares to the reversal we see in Jesus Christ!
 - i. As we say in our creed most Sundays, He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.... But on the third day, He rose again from the dead—and He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
 - ii. Yes, Jesus was forsaken on the cross for us... but He would not be abandoned to the grave!
- d. Another parallel of Jesus' redemption for the many is Joseph's redemption for the many as well.
 - i. Everyone in the land was suffering because of a famine, including Jacob and the family.
 - ii. Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream allowed Egypt to plan for this famine... and even provide for people outside of Egypt.
 - iii. So... along comes Joseph's brothers... sent by their dad to get some help... but it would not be help from just anybody... they would soon be face-to-face with the brother they sold into slavery because they were jealous and petty.
 - 1. Joseph does the unthinkable, he forgives his brothers and sets up the whole family to come to Egypt so they can live out their lives in peace and stability.
 - iv. Jesus is the same for us – instead of holding us responsible for His punishment and death... He intercedes for us like it says in Romans 8:34, and even works for our good.
 - 1. He reverses the sin of our broken relationship and makes things right again... and not because we've done anything to earn it.

V. **You see, in Christ, we have a Savior who brings good out of evil.**

- a. Joseph is a great example of God bringing good from evil, but Jesus is the ultimate example.
 - i. From the darkness of the land that fell over the cross, He brings us the light of His salvation... and from His suffering and death, He brings us life.
 - ii. The Bible promises that no matter how bad the injustices of our world get, nothing... and I mean nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- b. So, as the final day of considering Genesis and the good news that is found there – we can see Jesus threaded through all of Scripture.

- i. From the very beginning – all the way back to Adam and Eve and the first sin – God has been working with His great plan to redeem and restore.
- ii. In all things, God is working for our good—and with Him, there is always more good to come.
- c. May His name be praised forever. Amen.¹

¹ Sermon based on Concordia Pulpit Resources sermon series, *Good News from the Beginning: The Gospel in Genesis*, Copyright © 2025 Concordia Publishing House 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis