



Sermon
Rev. Dr. Lang Yang

“The Power of Forgiveness”

St. Michael’s Lutheran Church
Richville, MI
2-24-19

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Genesis 45:5 *“And 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.”* (NIV) This is the word of God. (Cross reference – Philimon 1:15, Genesis 37:28; 45:7-8,; 50:20, 2 Samuel 16:11, Psalm 105:17)

Illustration “Outlive” (Show forgiveness)



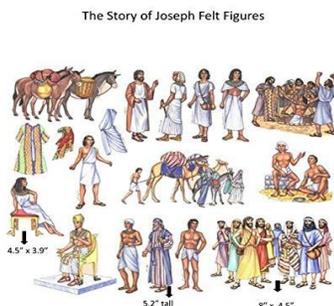
One Sunday a Preacher’s message was about forgiveness. Hoping to have made an impact, towards the end of the sermon, he asked his congregation, “How many of you have been able to forgive those who offended you?” About half held up their hands. Knowing he had more work to do, he preached another 20 minutes and asked again. This time all raised their hands except one elderly lady seated at the back. “Mrs. Jones?” inquired the preacher, “Are you not willing to forgive your enemies?” “I am ninety three years old now and don’t have a single one” she said. “Wow that is very unusual” said the Preacher and asked if she wouldn’t

mind coming before the congregation to share her testimony of how the Lord helped her to forgive. Mrs Jones agreed and hobbled slowly down the aisle, turned around, faced the congregation and said “It’s simple – I outlived all the old hags.” <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/forgiveness-is-not-a-choice-reggie-corfield-sermon-on-forgiveness-187194?ref=SermonSerps>

I. Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. (Show forgiveness is for you)



Forgiveness is not about outliving someone else. Hopefully, this we will learn from the story of Joseph about forgiveness. There is too much pain and brokenness in many families what it means to forgive. Perhaps you are saying “God, I have harbored bitterness in my heart for too long and find it so hard to forgive.” The greater the offense, the harder it is to forgive. The more we suffer the harder it is to forget. Forgiveness is for you so you do not have to carry the burden. (Show Joseph life story)



Let me remind you the story of Joseph. Joseph went from his father’s favor, to the pit, and into slavery. In Potiphar’s house, he went from his master’s favor to false accusation to prison. In prison, Joseph went from the warder’s favor, to the forgetfulness of his surviving former cell-mate: but at last the LORD intervened, and Joseph was raised from prison to the position of Prime Minister of the land! In the passage before us, we see Joseph’s brothers on their second visit to Egypt. They were totally unaware that the powerful man who had been toying with them, seemingly seeking occasion against them, was their despised brother of so long ago.

Neither were they aware that he understood every word they were saying. (Show Joseph and brothers)



Then “Joseph said to his brothers, *“I am Joseph! Is my father still living?”* But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence. Then 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! And 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.”* (Genesis 45:3-5)

II. When we hear how Joseph told his brothers not to be distressed and not to be angry with themselves, he had already forgiven them what they had done to him. (Show past, present, future)



In today society, we live in a sinful world that to forgive someone who had hurt us is unimaginable. How is forgiveness possible? Forgiveness is possible when we put the past behind. If you read the story of Joseph, you will see he didn't spend the rest of his life blaming his brothers. He got on with life. Joseph didn't become bitter. He didn't spend the rest of his life trying to get revenge. Instead, he kept his mind focused on the future and how God could use him to help others. The past was past. It couldn't be changed. For Joseph the future would not be tainted by grudges or malice toward those who wrong him. (Show Phillipians 3:13)



The Power of Forgiveness is possible when we are willing to put the past behind. We can't change the past. It's already happened. There's nothing we can do about it. We can't change it. The question is, will we let the past change us? Will we let the past change us by making us bitter, illwill, or hardhearted? Will we let the past change us by tainting the future with grudges or hard feelings? The Apostle Paul writes to the Phillipians, “... *Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,*” (Phillipians 3:13). Forgetting what is behind and focusing on what is ahead.

The teen whose life sentence for killing a playmate stirred national debate over Florida's treatment of juvenile criminals pleaded guilty to second-degree murder Thursday, finalizing his release after three years in prison. (Show Deweese and Lionel Tate)



▲ Deweese Eunick-Paul, the mother of Tiffany Eunick (inset), who was killed by Lionel Tate, sits with her attorney Ken Padovitz, in a Fort Lauderdale, FL, courtroom moments before Tate was released.



FORT LAUDERDALE - There is no hatred for Lionel Tate in Deweese Eunick-Paul's heart. Tate killed her 6-year-old daughter, Tiffany Eunick, but the victim's mother forgives him and says she never wanted him to serve life in prison for a crime committed at age 12. "There's no reason to be angry. If you're that angry you can't move on," Eunick-Paul told the South Florida Sun-Sentinel in an exclusive newspaper interview Friday. "For God

to bless you, you have to forgive." She has a compassion for her daughter's killer that is rare among victims' families. And even though she signed off on the plea agreement that will free Tate from prison next week, readers frequently call or write to question if that is what she wants. "I want him to be

rehabilitated. We won't know if he is rehabilitated if he doesn't get a chance to show us," Eunick-Paul said. "I would like him to have a good life." (Orlando Sentinel: http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2004-01-24/news/0401240440_1_lionel-tate-accept-responsibility-paul)

III. Forgiveness is possible when we have faith that God will provide. **(Show God with Joseph)**



God was with Joseph. Genesis 39:2

Forgiveness is possible when we continue to trust that God will take care of us. Even after Joseph had been carted off to a foreign country, he believed that God was looking after him. Genesis 39:2 writes, *“The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master.”* In our Old Testament reading today, Joseph said, *“... God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.”* (Genesis 45:7). Joseph was able to forgive because he had not lost his faith. He trusted that God would provide no matter how badly he was hurt.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, even if you are hurt by someone, your lives are still in God's hands. God still cares, God still provides, God is still in control. When you realize that they are more to forgive. This trust in God that enables us to forgive. **(Show love and forgiven)**

*Loved
&
Forgiven*

Charlie Hainline is a layman at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He is a man who radiates the love of Christ, and is serious about sharing his faith with others. One year, his goal was to lead 1650 people to faith in Christ (5 a day)! Once, he was out witnessing with a couple of other folks, and though he didn't share the gospel, he sat there and smiled broadly as a teammate did. When the teammate was finished and asked if the person would like to trust Christ and receive the gift of eternal life, the person replied, "If being a Christian would make me like

him (point to Charlie), I want it!" Charlie's life wasn't a bed of roses by any means. His daughter was kidnapped, killed, and her head was found floating in a canal. When the murderer of his daughter was caught and convicted, Charlie went to jail in order to witness to the man.

<https://bible.org/illustration/witnessed-daughter%E2%80%99s-killer>

Forgiveness is possible when you believe that God will make something good come out of a bad situation. It is easier to forgive when you realize that God can turn our negatives into positive, our disadvantage into advantages. Let us watch a video about the power of forgiveness.

(Show the Power of Forgiveness video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2BITY-3Mp4>



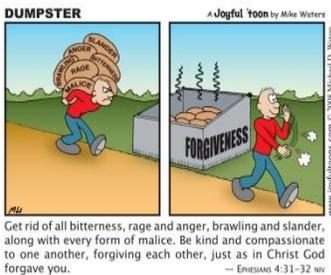
2-24-19 The power of forgiveness - YouTube - 3.29.wmv

(Skip articles – Go to Show Ephesians 4:31-32 – The video already explain everything)

MINNEAPOLIS - In Minnesota, a young man was murdered and his killer was sent to prison. Then, as CBS News correspondent Steve Hartman reports, the story took a surprising turn. In a small apartment building in North Minneapolis - a 59-year-old teacher's aid sings praise to God for no seemingly apparent reason. Indeed, if anyone was to have issues with the Lord, it would be Mary Johnson. In February 1993, Mary's son, Laramiun Byrd, was shot to death during an argument at a party. He was 20, and Mary's only child. "My son was gone," she says. The killer was a 16-year-old kid named Oshea Israel. Mary wanted justice. "He was an animal. He deserved to be caged." And he was. Tried as an adult and sentenced to 25 and a half years -- Oshea served 17 before being recently released. He now

lives back in the old neighborhood - next door to Mary. How a convicted murder ended-up living a door jamb away from his victim's mother is a story, not of horrible misfortune, as you might expect - but of remarkable mercy. A few years ago Mary asked if she could meet Oshea at Minnesota's Stillwater state prison. As a devout Christian, she felt compelled to see if there was some way, if somehow, she could forgive her son's killer. "I believe the first thing she said to me was, 'Look, you don't know me. I don't know you. Let's just start with right now,'" Oshea says. "And I was befuddled myself."

Oshea says they met regularly after that. When he got out, she introduced him to her landlord - who with Mary's blessing, invited Oshea to move into the building. Today they don't just live close - they are close. Mary was able to forgive. She credits God, of course - but also concedes a more selfish motive. "Unforgiveness is like cancer," Mary says. "It will eat you from the inside out. It's not about that other person, me forgiving him does not diminish what he's done. Yes, he murdered my son - but the forgiveness is for me. It's for me." For Oshea, it hasn't been that easy. "I haven't totally forgiven myself yet, I'm learning to forgive myself. And I'm still growing toward trying to forgive myself." To that end, Oshea is now busy proving himself to himself. He works at a recycling plant by day and goes to college by night. He says he's determined to payback Mary's clemency by contributing to society. In fact, he's already working on it - singing the praises of God and forgiveness at prisons, churches - to large audiences everywhere. "A conversation can take you a long way," Oshea says to one group. Which explains why Mary is able to sing her praise of thanks -- to her audience of one. (Love Thy Neighbors: Killer Son's Move Next Door - <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/love-thy-neighbor-sons-killer-moves-next-door/>) (Show Ephesians 4:31-32)



If you still carry any bitter, anger, and unforgiven than you need to let it go. The Apostle Paul writes to the Ephesians, "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." (Ephesians 4:31-32). Luther wrote in his Large Catechism, "We must always forgive our neighbor who does us harm, violence, and injustice, and who bears malice toward us." The power of forgiveness is possible when we trust God with our lives.

Joseph lived long before the Messiah was born Yet, he believe in a gracious and forgivng God. Because he knew God was merciful, he had mercy on his brothers. (Show Luke 6:37)



He forgave them not even realizing that Jesus would be the descendant of his brother Judah. Joseph lived the words of Jesus, "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven." (Luke 6:37). Forgiveness isn't easy, but it is possible. It is possible because of God's grace, which enables us to put the past behind. His grace enables us to trust the future with him. The Power of Forgvieness is possible because we have our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ first forgiven us. Amen. Now may the peace of God which passes all understanding keep our heart and mind in Christ Jesus. Amen.