

SERMON-BASED STUDY: EVIL FOR GOOD

Genesis 50:15-21, ESV – ¹⁵ When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him." ¹⁶ So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this command before he died: ¹⁷ 'Say to Joseph, "Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you." ' And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸ His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? ²⁰ As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. ²¹ So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Notes:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

ENGAGE WITH THE MESSAGE

- 1 What can we learn about dealing with guilt and seeking forgiveness from the actions of Joseph's brothers?
- 2 Why do you think Joseph wept when he received his brother's message?

- 3 What did Joseph mean when he said, *am I in the place of God?* How did this affect his response to his brothers?

DIGGING DEEPER

A **Jeremiah 29:10-13, ESV** – ¹⁰ *“For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.*

Romans 8:28, ESV – ²⁸ *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

- 4 How does God’s promise of restoration for the Israelites relate to His sovereignty and foreknowledge?

- 5 What is difference between *all things are good* and *all things work together for good*?

- 6 How does the command to build lives in Babylon, even in exile, challenge our understanding of God’s will in difficult situations?

B **Ephesians 4:31-32, ESV** – ³¹ *Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

Colossians 3:12-14, ESV – ¹² *Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*

- 7 What is the relationship between putting away negative behaviors and embracing positive ones? Is one a prerequisite for the other?

8

Looking at Colossians 3:12-14, how can these virtues impact your relationship with others?

9

How does love function as that *which binds everything together in perfect harmony*? How does this relate to forgiveness?

TAKING IT HOME

This week, we were reminded that God uses all of our circumstances for His good purposes. How can we apply these verses in our relationships with family, friends and others? What changes do you need to make to see things more from God's perspective and less from your own?

PRAISES AND PRAYER REQUEST

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FOR FURTHER STUDY

Matthew 5:43-48; 10:26-33