

Forgiveness, the Ultimate Cure (Part 2)

by K.P. Yohannan

The sermon explores the transformative power of forgiveness through the biblical story of Joseph and encourages believers to trust God's purpose in their suffering.

Scripture: Genesis 37

Topics: "Forgiveness", "Overcoming Jealousy"

Description

K.P. Yohannan emphasizes the transformative power of forgiveness through the life of Joseph, who faced immense suffering and betrayal from his brothers despite his innocence. He illustrates how jealousy can lead to harm, as seen in both Joseph's story and the biblical account of Cain and Abel. Yohannan encourages believers to focus on God's purpose in their pain rather than the actions of those who hurt them, suggesting that adversity can lead to character growth and divine blessings. He draws parallels with King David's response to scorn, advocating for a heart of forgiveness and gratitude even in difficult circumstances. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a shift in perspective, recognizing that God can turn our trials into opportunities for good.

Transcript

The following incident took place 1,730 years before Christ.

The life of Joseph is described in Genesis 37-50. This young man underwent a lot of pain even when it wasn't his fault. He was blameless in his words, thoughts and actions. He sincerely loved his siblings. Without questioning his parents, he obeyed. But his brothers envied him.

If you lead a good life, seeking God in every step and living in peace, then people may become envious of you. It's like when a bad person leaves all his bad habits and becomes a child of God. He starts living for Jesus Christ and his life changes--now there are no bad words, no problems and no alcohol.

But some people still have a problem with him. Whenever they see him they make fun of him: "Hey, look at the pastor with his book. This change will only last for a few days. Let's see how long you'll stay like this." The question is: why are people making fun of him? Jealousy.

This is the same thing that happened in the life of Joseph. Others couldn't bear his godliness, nature, behavior and way of dealing with others. This kind of jealous attitude didn't start today or yesterday. It was in the children of the first man Adam and his wife Eve.

Cain and Abel were brothers. Both of them wanted God to be pleased with them. Both of them gave offerings to God according to their own thoughts. God observed Abel's spirituality, behavior and his humble mind and blessed him.

But Cain believed in the religion of self rather than of God. He was neither accepted nor blessed by God. Because of this, Cain's heart was filled with bitterness and envy against Abel. Afterward, Cain killed his innocent brother.

Even if you lead a life walking with God, people will be jealous of you. They will hurt you. This is what happened to Joseph. His elder brothers hurt him. They sold him to a different place and lied about it to their father.

He worked in a house, doing all the household chores and cooking. Here he suffered again because he refused to commit a sin. He was blamed for a sin which he never committed and imprisoned for a crime he never thought of doing.

He spent thirteen long years chained in the jail. His hair and beard may have grown long during the lonely years.

But when the right time came, the sun rose in his life and God acted. Miracles happened in his life and he became the prime minister of Egypt.

His brothers were staying in their native place and a great famine affected their homeland. The famine was so severe that Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy grain.

They went to Joseph, who was now ruling over all of Egypt, but they didn't recognize him. They didn't realize they were begging for food from the brother whom they had made fun of, beaten and sold as a slave.

When they finally recognized him, they started crying, "God, it is a trap, he will kill all of us." But Joseph reassured his brothers and spoke kindly to them. "Don't be afraid," he said. "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. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children."

How can you develop a heart of forgiveness like Joseph? When others hurt us, we should think, "God will bless me through this situation. It is for good."

If we concentrate on the person who hurt us, our hearts will be full of bitterness. But if we change our focus, we will see that God is using the incident to improve our character.

Don't waste your time thinking about the person behind your pain. Instead crying over the issue, think about how you are reacting to the wound inside. That person may have gossiped against me or insulted me, but they are not the problem.

Start thinking, "Lord, how will you use this slander to improve my character? How do I need to behave? How will I use my own words?" Instead of being bothered by the problem, I think about how I am reacting. I should realize that through these adversities, God wants to do something good in my life; wants to teach me something.

This is what Joseph did. His brothers beat him, kicked him, deceived him, ditched him and took away his rights. They informed his father that he was dead and sold him as a slave.

In Egypt also, people blamed him and imprisoned him for crimes he did not do. In the difficulties, depression, pain and loneliness, he could have cursed everyone and said, "It's not fair. My brothers, my family and relatives should all perish in hell. I lived so many years for God and at last I get this."

But instead he prayed, "God, through my pain, fulfill your desire."

God's desire was that Joseph should be prime minister of Egypt for 43 years. This was the plan for which God put him in the furnace of pain for 13 long years, purified him and trained him.

There's another person like this in the Bible who acted appropriately in the midst of scorn. It was not a simple person; it was David, the king of Israel. We read about this in 2 Samuel 16.

The king was going through hard times and running for his life. Someone without rank or position started cursing him, making fun of him and throwing dust on him. Anyone who dared to spit, curse and use bad words in front of a king was usually considered crazy. But this man was not insane.

Someone standing next to the king asked him, "Lord, can I cut off his head for you?"

The king replied, "Don't be a fool. Allow him to curse me, but God will help me by looking into my pain and destruction." And this is the very thing that happened in his life.

What Do Pearls and Pain Have in Common?

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Like the wounded oyster, he mends his shell with pearl."

Pearl is very precious and people will pay a lot of money to buy it. Where it is made? Which company manufactured it?

It is made by an oyster living in the sea. When a grain of sand enters it, the oyster undergoes severe pain. Think about how painful it is to have a grain of sand in your eye.

The oyster goes through the pain silently--it does not conduct a political meeting, cry or curse its pain. Rather, in the moments of its excruciating pain, the oyster covers the grain of sand with its shell and eventually it becomes a precious pearl.

When people do something bad to us or create problems, consider that God is working through it. When people hurt us, cheat us or gossip against us, something good is happening through it.

Praise the Lord for the blessings which you will receive through these adversities. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, "Give thanks in all circumstances." Of course, it is easy to say that, but applying it practically is difficult.

When a mother-in-law is rude, will her poor daughter-in-law say, "Oh my God, I praise you for the rude behavior of my mother-in-law"? Or will you say, "I praise you for my neighbors who are working so hard to cheat me"? Who likes to say things like this? It is very difficult.

I am not telling you to be happy about problems or pain. But you can pray like this: "Lord, I am in pain; I am sad. That person hurt me. He defamed me, I lost my job--I didn't get the promotion which I deserved.

My wife does not like me. My husband does not care for me. But apart from that, I know that you are working in my life, and I praise you for that. I am thankful to you from my heart. Right now I can't see it or touch it, but in the long run, I know that you will work for me."

May this be our reaction.

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