



EPIC
“Joseph”
Jeremiah Ramer//August 19-20, 2017

INTRODUCTION

The story of Joseph in Genesis 37-50 is an epic roller coaster ride! In this story we are confronted with unhealthy family dynamics, betrayal, and survival—all eventually used by God for His purposes and plans. Through Joseph’s story we learn a valuable life lesson: **oftentimes the only way through the pain of your past is forgiveness.**

WARMING UP

1. If you could have one, which would you choose: A glimpse into the future or a journey into the past? Why?
2. What is the longest period of time you have been separated from your family? What was memorable about your reunion?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Before we see God’s hand at work in Joseph’s story, we see lots of messed up family dynamics and human drama. Divide up the 36 verses of **Genesis 37** among your group and have everyone look for the ways Jacob, Joseph, and the brothers created drama. Share.
2. It was over a two-week trek from the cistern in Shechem to Egypt. What might have been going through Joseph’s mind during that time? Regret? Rage? Hopelessness?
 - a. Look at both **Psalms 69:1-5** and **Psalms 35:1-8**. Which of these laments of David best describes how you would have reacted if you were Joseph?
 - b. Now look at **Psalms 69:13-18** and **Psalms 35:22-28**. What mindset change do you see here?
3. Read **Genesis 39:2-5 & 20-23** and **Genesis 41:37-43**. What stands out to you in these verses? Think back to what you read about Joseph’s earlier life in Genesis 37. What seems to be missing? Why do you think that is? How might the intervening 13 years have shaped Joseph to become such a man of God?
 - a. Read aloud **Romans 8:28**. This is clearly seen in the story of Joseph. In looking back over the hard things of your own life, are you able to see that God was with you in your suffering? Share if you are comfortable doing so.
4. Read **Genesis 41:50-52**. What is significant about his first son’s name? Do you think it possible he “forgot”? What does his reaction in **Genesis 45:1-2** tell you about this?
 - a. Read **Genesis 45:4-8**. Has Joseph moved through the pain of his past and truly forgiven his brothers? Why do you think so? (Note: think back to his son’s names. Do they reveal pain or peace?)

- b. Read aloud **Genesis 45:5-11** and **50:19-21**. As Joseph reveals himself to his brothers, how does he also make God known for who He is, has been and will be? How would you explain Romans 8:28 using Joseph's life as an example?
- 5. In reviewing Joseph's story, what elements points us to Jesus? (see John 1:11, Matthew 13:55-57, 26:14-16, etc)
 - a. Re-read **Genesis 50:19-20** and consider Jesus saying this to you personally. What was the "good" that came from His suffering and dying for our sin?
 - b. Read **Luke 23:34**. Who is Jesus really speaking to?
 - c. Read **Ephesians 4:31-32**. Have you accepted the forgiveness of your sins? Has this helped you be more kind and compassionate to others? To forgive others? Is this hard for you?

PERSONAL APPLICATION

If the story of Joseph has stirred up unhealed wounds or reminded you of any unforgiveness in your heart, the first step is to honestly admit this to yourself and talk to God about it in prayer:

- a. One of the most tender verses in the New Testament is Matthew 11:28-29. Jesus says, "Whoever has a heavy burden, come to me and I will give you rest." Are you weary? Do you have a heavy burden? Have you suffered or caused suffering? Remember only God can bring you to the point of forgiveness or healing.
- b. Consider the possibility that you are still on your journey. Do you trust God enough to wait patiently for him to bring good out of the bad situations in your past or present? That when it seems he isn't answering prayer, He might actually be working things out some other way? Pray through Romans 8:28 often.
- c. If you recognize that you have to ask for forgiveness from someone (OR have to forgive yourself), do not delay!! Ask God for the courage to make things right.

God does not intend for us to walk alone. Consider sharing your burdens with someone in your group or another close friend, or enlisting the help of a trained counselor at the CPC Counseling Center.

PRAY ABOUT IT

Share prayer requests and praises.
Close by reciting the Lord's Prayer together.