

CAN GOD HEAL MY HURTS, GENESIS 42-45

You'll Get Through This #5

◆Intro: The following story was found in the catacombs of Rome: A rich man named Proculus had hundreds of slaves. The slave named Paulus was so trustworthy that Proculus made him the steward over his whole household. One day Proculus took Paulus with him to the slave market to buy some new workers. Before the bargaining began, they examined the men to see if they were strong and healthy.

Among the slaves stood a weak, old man. Paulus urged his owner to buy this slave. Proculus answered, "But he is good for nothing."

"Go ahead, buy him," Paulus insisted. "He is cheap. And I promise that the work in your household will get done even better than before."

So Proculus agreed and purchased the elderly slave. And Paulus made good on his word. The work went better than ever. But Proculus observed that Paulus now worked for two men. The old slave did no work at all, while Paulus tended to him, gave him the best food, and made him rest.

Proculus was curious, so he confronted Paulus, "Who is this slave? You know I value you. I don't mind your protecting this old man. But tell me who he is. Is he your father who has fallen into slavery?"

Paulus answered, "It is someone to whom I owe more than to my father."

"Your teacher, then?"

"No. Somebody to whom I owe even more."

"Who then?"

"This is my enemy."

"Your enemy!"

"Yes. He is the man who killed my father and sold us, the children, as slaves." Proculus stood speechless.

CAN GOD HEAL MY HURTS, GENESIS 42-45

You'll Get Through This #5

"As for me," said Paulus, "I am a disciple of Christ, who has taught us to love our enemies and to reward evil with good."

◆ Chances are that you don't like the sound of this story. That's because in our culture we value the very opposite, so this one has an unfamiliar ring to it. We, like many cultures before us, teach ourselves that revenge revitalizes, that payback pays off, and evening the score will even out the angry road we walk. But we are wrong. Let's take a lesson from Joseph's story.

◆ **1. God does not want me to live hurt, but healed.**

◆ A. It's pretty clear in the story of Joseph that there is a lot of pain inside. I mean, look at Joseph. Eight different times in this account we read about Joseph weeping. He was a regular water works. And it all had to do with family. He didn't cry over prison as far as we know. He didn't cry over being a slave. But over and over with family we read of him weeping. Joseph is full of pain and passion.

◆ Max Lucado points out in his book that Joseph was Egypt's ruler. He now had Card Blanc to go where he wanted. Egypt traded and even conquered at different times through and beyond the land of Canaan. So Joseph no doubt could easily have traveled home with an entourage and a guard and shown himself to his migrant shepherd family. Maybe sought renewed communication. But he didn't. For it was a pain put away, stuffed down, and molding in the dark corners of his hurt soul.

◆ B. The brothers are full of pain and passion too. When quizzed by the prince what do they say about themselves in verse 13? "We are twelve

CAN GOD HEAL MY HURTS, GENESIS 42-45

You'll Get Through This #5

brothers.” Not “we are 11 brothers.” I have a friend who lost a son earlier in life. When you ask him how many children he has his answer is “four living.” What does that tell you? His other child is still significant to him. Joseph was still a part of the brothers in spite of their attempt to get rid of him. You can read their guilt all through the story:

◆v21 *surely we are being punished because of our brother.*” Think about it. They’re in a foreign land, with strangers, shopping. The teller isn’t being cooperative and wants to do a credit check on them and they turn to each other and conclude, “this is because we sold Joseph! This is our accounting.” Clearly it didn’t go away over time.

◆Pain and sin are like that. You can stuff it down but it doesn’t go away. No pain heals that is not faced. We’ll talk more on that in a minute.

◆v28 One of them finds his money in his grain sack and they conclude? “God is doing this to us.”

◆44:16 When Joseph has planted his silver coffee mug in their belongings. Sent a posse after them to retrieve it and arrest them. Now when he accuses them face to face they tell him what? “How can we prove our innocence? God has uncovered your servants guilt.” So on the one hand they are innocent in this, but on the other, they know they are guilty men, guilty of their sin against Joseph 22 years ago!

◆C. You and I have those things too, don’t we? We have the pain of sins done to us, like Joseph. And we have the pains of sins we’ve done, like his brothers. The ugly common denominator is that pains don’t go away

CAN GOD HEAL MY HURTS, GENESIS 42-45

You'll Get Through This #5

without being faced. Your dad tells you in your childhood that you'll never amount to anything and you can remember it like it was yesterday when you're 38. Your mother lectures you, and cuts your explanations short so you feel like an slave, not a person. There are worse things. A cousin molests you. A sister betrays you. It's amazing how able we are to carry these things around with us. They're in there. God doesn't want them to stay in our back packs.

◆ Why don't we face them? Because it hurts to face hurt. Look at the pain billowing from Joseph when he reveals himself to his brothers! They can hear it in the next building! If you've ever sobbed in utter anguish in your bedroom closet, you know the pain Joseph was feeling. Emotional hurt is like a boil or abscess. We don't want to touch it because it hurts, but it can't be healed without cutting it open and removing the contamination.

◆ God's desire was not to let Joseph merely live a blest life in Egypt. God clearly wanted to restore Jacob's family as well. And God wants to restore us too. To heal hurts requires dealing with them. As Max puts it, there is no healing without revealing. What he means is that an ignored, hidden struggle is a continuing struggle, but bringing it to light begins to end it.

◆ *"He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy." Proverbs 28:13, NIV.*

◆ What's true for sin is also true for the results of human sin, namely pain. So let me encourage you to face yours. Do the work of addressing the items in you backpack.

◆ The old hymn gives us this advice:

CAN GOD HEAL MY HURTS, GENESIS 42-45

You'll Get Through This #5

- ◆ I must tell Jesus all of my sorrow
- ◆ I can not bear these burdens alone
- ◆ In my distress he kindly will help me
- ◆ he ever loves and cares for his own.

◆ Tell God about you hurt as you experience them, or recall them. Say, "Lord, moving to that new school and being picked on really devastated me. It wasn't fair. Please take this burden. I chose to give it to you. God, the way my mother screamed as us kids was wrong, and frightening... My father's absence hurt me, God... I'm giving this to you to carry." Jesus said.

◆ *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28, NIV.*

◆ For the healing of your heart, you need to name these things in discussion with God and others.

◆2. God does not want me to be fair, but gracious.

◆ A. I think Joseph is vacillating back and forth between longing to be a part of his own family, and wanting to stick it to them for hurting him. You can see both sides.

◆ On the one hand he throws the brothers in jail for a few days, just like he used to be in jail. On the other hand, he secretly gives them their money back and adds "provisions" for their journey! 42:25 Now while we know the brothers interpret this as meaning trouble, Joseph never makes it an issue. He never accuses them of not paying. In fact, his steward tells them that their God must be blessing them.

CAN GOD HEAL MY HURTS, GENESIS 42-45

You'll Get Through This #5

◆““It’s all right,” he said. “Don’t be afraid. Your God, the God of your father, has given you treasure in your sacks; I received your silver.” Genesis 43:23, NIV.

◆So on the one hand, Joseph doesn’t want to take his family’s money. On the other hand, it does mess with their minds a little.

◆On the one hand, Joseph treats them like spies. On the other hand he has to keep leaving the room to keep from breaking down in tears.

◆B. We all have this innate desire for fairness and justice, but I wonder what lies behind that. Why do we want fairness? Why do we want revenge? We say that we want the other person to feel what we feel. We want them to know our pain. But why? Certainly in part so that maybe they will stop it, or not do it to anyone else. But sometimes when we really aren’t thinking of anyone else, we still want our offender to feel our offense. Possibly pride is part of it. “You can’t do that to me! I will do it back to you! Nobody gets away with...” I wonder if it isn’t deeper yet. Maybe our desire for revenge is really a distorted desire for love. We want them to feel what we feel. We want them to hurt like we hurt. We want them to suffer with us. Know what we call that? Compassion: it means “to suffer” (passion), “with” (cum). We want to be felt. We want someone to care about how we feel. But while our hearts long for compassion, our vengeance never brings it. All vengeance and most anger is misguided hurt. Hurt people just keep hurting people. God says there’s a better way.

◆*“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but*

CAN GOD HEAL MY HURTS, GENESIS 42-45

You'll Get Through This #5

leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:17-21, NIV.

◆C. If you want to heal hurts, instead of repaying evil, absorb it and give away grace. Hard hearts ricochet bullets and they continue on to strike someone else. Soft heart absorb the bullets and nobody else has to feel them. This is the way of Christ. Now to absorb does not mean saying "Ok, I'll take your unkindness. You can be a jerk to me." That's not absorbing. It's not apologizing for something and then explaining all the reasons you did it and how bad they were to you. That's not absorbing either.

◆*"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed." Isaiah 53:5, NIV.*

◆Now I'm not saying Christians are to be door mats. And I'm not saying stuff it all down and don't address it. We talked about that first. I'm not saying you have to let people walk on you. There's a difference between sub-servitude and grace; grace seeks to give something of beauty rather than merely endure ugliness.

◆*"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift." Matthew 5:23, 24, NIV.*

CAN GOD HEAL MY HURTS, GENESIS 42-45

You'll Get Through This #5

- ◆ Do you catch the spirit of this scripture? Here is a heart not even thinking so much about who has offended *him*, but who feels offended *by him*. This is the heart of grace.
- ◆ What will this look like?
 - ◆ She disagrees and so she talks louder and louder and drowns you out. He get angry and gets in your face with words, or even physically. Be careful. Where there is loud volume and anger, the devil is in the room. Lucado puts it, “Anger gives ground to the devil. Bitterness invites him to occupy a space in your heart, to rent a room. Believe me, he will move in and stink up the place. Gossip, slander, temper—anytime you see these, Satan has a bunk.” p.116
 - ◆ “My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.” James 1:19, 20, NIV.
 - ◆ Shall we yell back? The Bible says a soft answer turns away rather. It says a “A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.” Proverbs 29:11, NIV.
- ◆ D. One form of grace is forgiveness. Unforgiveness is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die. It mostly hurts you, not them. Forgiveness is choosing to not hate someone for a real hurt. It is deciding in your heart, “I am going to let her off the hook for that...”. (butting in and correcting my story; or making brussel sprouts and liver for dinner)

CAN GOD HEAL MY HURTS, GENESIS 42-45

You'll Get Through This #5

◆ You are right. It's isn't fair that he's rude. It isn't fair that she never asks about you. God doesn't ask you to make everything right.

That's his job. He asks you to make thing righteous.

◆ A couple was celebrating 50 years of marriage. Someone asked the elderly wife how she did it, how she got along with her man all those years. Her reply? "On our wedding day, I made a list of 10 things I was going to let him off the hook for. And then whenever he did something that really incensed me, I said to myself, "It's a good thing for him that that's on the list!" The beauty of her example lies in her intentional forgiveness. She chose to name the wrong, and to put it aside.

◆ We all want fairness, but God says, "I don't want you to be merely fair people. I want you to be like me and fill the world with forgiveness & grace."

◆ **Conclusion:** Healing hurts involved forgiveness, and reconciliation. Now reconciliation is a step beyond forgiveness. Forgiveness only take you. It happens in you. Reconciliation will require more than one willing party. God doesn't tell us we have to change the other person. He does say, "as far as it depends on you, live at peace." (Rom.12:18) It helps in reconciling to remember that that is precisely what Jesus has done for us.

◆ *"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation." 2 Corinthians 5:18, 19, NIV.*

CAN GOD HEAL MY HURTS, GENESIS 42-45

You'll Get Through This #5

◆ Pause right now even as I'm speaking and ask yourself if there is someone in your life about whom Jesus might say to you, "Choose reconciliation instead of recompense." Is there a slave driver who maybe didn't sell you, but sold you out? An old man, shriveled by life that God might want you to repay with good instead of evil? Is there someone you could be Joseph to, for Joseph after all is a type of Christ. A foreshadowing of Christ. And if you belong to him, you are his reflection.