



*The Big Reveal ~ Forgiveness*

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First Federated Church, Peoria, Illinois

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For the last few weeks you have studied the book of Genesis. You have gone through different chapters and today we get to the big reveal—we get to the moment that everything has been leading too. It is the big reveal. If you remember back in chapter 37 –Pharaoh had a dream and he called in all kind of people to interpret his dream, having no one else to interpret it he calls for Joseph. It was this moment that everything has lead up to and from that moment everything will come from that moment. It was this moment that God uses to reveal his power. God is going to use this event to show the importance of forgiveness. It is the power of this dream that would change the way that they looked at forgiveness. Today's story is all about forgiveness and living that forgiveness in our lives. I remember a story when I was younger. I grew up in a family of eleven and there was six boys and we would get in trouble or arguments with each other quit often. Dad in his wisdom would sit down the guilty parties and say that we were to sit on the couch until we forgave each other. I don't care if that takes all day, all week, or all month—you are not getting up until you forgive one another. You are family and you are going to live like family. It never seem to take past dinner time. We liked to eat a lot so we would forgive each other and make it to the dinner table. For some reason our stomachs were more important than the argument we were having.

Lets look at today's Scripture reading for a moment— It is the big reveal that is the point of the periscope—Whenever God gets involved in a story it is never what it seems to be on the surface. There is always a deeper story underneath. You see in today's Joseph was called in to interpret pharaoh's dream and let him know what was going on in that dream. But instead the story had to do with Joseph and his family. This is where we pick up the scene. God was using pharaoh to teach Joseph and his

family a much deeper lesson. The power of true forgiveness. Joseph was sitting as a ruling elder and his brothers come in before him and they are scared. Joseph says it is I –It is Joseph the brother that you tried to sell off in Egypt. I don't know about you but if I had sold my brother and tried to get rid of him and now he was second in command over a kingdom and I am here to ask his help, I would be a little afraid of what he was going to do. That is exactly what they did. They were so afraid that they could not speak to their brother. They were afraid that he would get even. That the plan that they had so long ago –to get rid of him really didn't happen. That now they are going to have to pay for what they had done. They knew that on the human level vengeance was his. That he had every right to do something and something big in retaliation to their un-accomplished plan. That something had to be done in retaliation. They were stuck at looking at the scene from the human standpoint. They could not see God in the event. They were too upset to look for God's presence. But here is where we see the power of God's forgiveness, we see how God is going to take the event of the brothers doing a negative or bad action and he was going to work good out of it. God in his infinite wisdom was going to show them that forgiveness and love is more important than anything they could have done. So we have Joseph say It is I . It is Joseph the one that you sold in Egypt I just want to make things whole again. It is not about what you have done. The evil you had planned , it is not about getting even for what I think was done out of hatred. It is about God's forgiveness. It is all about God's ability to forgive us for all the wrong that we have done in our lives. It is about the power of being whole again. It is about bringing this family back into a whole unit. Joseph was able to look beyond the natural order and see the power of God and his love at work. So he asks the question—Is my father still alive. Do we have the chance at righting the wrong that has been done. Can we be a family unit again. Is everyone still present. The brothers are still caught up in the fact that they are still waiting for the other shoe to drop. This sounds good but when is the negative part coming. When is he going to throw in the other part. Like we do in life too often. When things look good to be true we don't thank God for our blessings we instead wait for the negative consequence to come along. What is around the corner.

Joseph never falters in his faith. He knows that he was there to bring forgiveness. He knew that he was the instrument that God was going to use to bring forgiveness to a broken family. So he reaches out and hugs his brother Benjamin and then he hugs the

other brothers. And he says don't worry yourselves. This is not about what you have done to me and it isn't about what I have the right to do to you on the human level. It is about the power of God's forgiveness for the power of God's love in our lives. He knew that he was called to be the instrument of God's love and forgiveness. He was the way in which God chose to bring this family back together again. To make them whole. He was going to reunite this family. So Joseph reaches out and hugs his brothers and tells them not to worry. God brought me here. God had sent him ahead of them to come for this very moment. To bring about his forgiveness and to make this family whole again. He reaches out and hugs each brother and then tells them to go and bring their father here. He explains to them that we are only in the second year of a seven year famine and there are five more to go. But he is going to take care of his family. So he tells them to bring their father and move to Goshen so that they can be together and he can take care of them. God's love is bigger than you can imagine and I am going to show you how blessed you can be. You see it isn't about getting even it isn't about the wrong that has been done it is about God. It is always about God and his love. It is always about showing the power of that forgiving love. For the next five years we can celebrate God's love together. We can be a whole family unit again. It is not about the wrong it is always about God. What a faith Joseph has to be able to always look for God and the power of God's love in a situation.

What an awesome story - what a wonderful thing for Joseph to forgive his brothers for the wrong that his brothers did to him. We don't know how hard it was for Joseph to forgive them. We don't know his inner struggle. We do know that it took divine intervention for him to stay focused on God and God's love and forgiveness. It was the power of forgiveness that God had put in his heart that mattered now.

Lets look at Joseph's response to his brothers. You didn't send me here. God did. You didn't hurt me. God used it to bring me here to this moment. It wasn't about what you did. It has always been about what God was doing and he sent me here ahead of you, to prepare for this moment. There will be a new order. A family made whole again through God's forgiveness and love. To be here to save people. To be his instrument of healing, forgiveness and love when it is needed most.

Well just like God has called and equipped Joseph for this moment. He calls and equips each of us through our baptism to go out and be instruments of his forgiveness and love.

It is not about getting even it is always about showing God's love and forgiveness. As a Christian we are called to be God's instruments of forgiveness and love. To go out to the world and show the power of his forgiveness. We can not truly love someone else. If we hold a grudge, if we are thinking about revenge, then we are not loving the way that God has called us to love. If there is something in the way of God's love reaching out to those around us, then we are not living out our calling. We are not showing God's love. We are called here to this place to show the power of God's love and what he is doing in the world today. We are to forgive the things that others do to us. To be able to grow in the ability to forgive others. To show them the power of God's love. A love that doesn't make sense according to the world's standards. A extravagant love that does forgive wrongs and heals broken relationships. That makes families whole units again. That can change a broken world. God has called us to be filled with his love, to take that love out into the messiness of the world around us. God has called us not to live on the natural order of things but rather to rise above it and show them the power of God's love at work behind every situation. May we not only realize the awesome privilege that has been given to us but may we grow together as a family and a loving whole unit again. May we always look for God's presence in each situation in our lives.

May we pray for a heart like Joseph's that doesn't get even but rather rises above and always looks for ways to share God's love and forgiveness. May God be blest.