

Aug 20, 2016

Genesis 42:1-46:30

*The Genesis of God's People:
How To Fix A Broken Relationship*
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Genesis 42:1-46:30 gives us hope that any broken relationship, no matter how bad, can be made new. Joseph forgave his brothers who sold him into slavery, but he had to give them a chance to repent. Judah's true repentance leads to deeply satisfying healing between Joseph and his family. Even the one who didn't think any good could come out of his own hurt, Joseph's father Jacob, experiences new life. This is a picture of the gospel and what it does for us. The gospel brings life out of death. *Broken relationships are made new through repentance, reconciliation, and restoration.*

Introduction: (Slide #1)

1. How do you fix a broken relationship?
2. Maybe you don't have a good relationship with your dad, mom, sister, brother, spouse, GF/BF, coworker.
3. When I think of broken relationships I've experienced, I think of my friend Jose (Rachel's brother).
4. I grew up knowing his phone number by heart, we'd call and tell each other jokes.
5. He'd come to my house for our trampoline and I'd go to his to hangout at their Christian school.
6. We were both homeschooled so we took classes together, climbed rocks, built forts—together.
7. But when I was about fourteen, he stopped being my friend.
8. He ran away when I went up to hangout with him and he didn't call me back.
9. I'd just been dumped by one of my best friends... and it hurt, really, really bad.
10. I'll tell you the rest of the story later... so the big question is, how do we fix broken relationships?

(The story of Joseph in Genesis is a story about a break in relationship.)

(Broken relationships are made new through—3 key words: repentance, reconciliation, and restoration.)

- I. Mending a broken relationship begins with **repentance**. (Gen 42:1-44:34) (S2)
 - A. Joseph's brothers feel guilty, but are not repentant.
 1. They come to Egypt, Joseph sees them, and speaks harshly, like interrogation light. (42:7)
 2. He jars their hearts to reveal who they are (slam open the basement door to see rats, C.S. Lewis).
 3. His brothers bring up his death unprompted, but without claiming ownership. (42:13)
 4. They are convicted by the Holy Spirit that this is because of what they did. (42:21-22)
 5. **Repentance** is confessing "I'm wrong", asking for forgiveness, and seeking to make it right.
 - B. **Apply**. When we're the cause of a broken relationship, the fix begins with personal ownership.
 1. We need to shine the interrogation light on ourselves and see the rats in our own hearts.
 2. We can do this by asking the Holy Spirit to give us the courage to see our own faults.
 - C. By holding back, Joseph gives his brothers a chance to repent. (42:24)
 1. He displays incredible self-control even though he hasn't seen them in 22 years (42:39-17).
 2. Joseph does what's best for them at personal cost—giving them silver, but not giving in.
 - D. **Apply**. When we don't give people a chance to repent, we don't do what's best for them.

1. I prefer to sweep the dirt under the rug, but that's actually selfish—putting my happiness first.
2. The principle is giving the opportunity for repentance, which may involve confrontation.
3. When we take the easy way out, our relationships mend the wrong way and create resentment.
4. When a broken bone doesn't set right, it can lead to nerve damage and loss of feeling.

(There are **3 ways to respond** to broken relationships as seen in Reuben, Jacob, and Judah.)

E. **First Response, Reuben** covers his sin with good deeds without repenting. **(S3)**

1. At first glance, Reuben appears pretty good...
 - a) In ch37, when his brothers plan to kill Joseph, Reuben tries to rescue him. (37:21-22, 29-30)
 - b) In ch42, Reuben is the first to clearly connect their predicament to their sin. (42:22)
 - c) Joseph sends his brothers home but orders them to not come back without Benjamin.
 - d) Sending Benjamin to Egypt terrifies their father Jacob, who already lost Joseph.
 - e) Later in ch42, Reuben offers to put his sons to death if he doesn't return Benjamin. (42:37)
2. But Reuben is displaying an even deeper guilt—the guilt of doing good to cover up evil.
 - a) In ch35, after his father's wife dies, Reuben sleeps with his concubine. (43:22)
 - b) He sins sexually as he tries to overthrow his father's authority—"and Israel heard of it."
 - c) Reuben knows his sin, but instead of going to his father for forgiveness, he tries good deeds.
 - d) This is why in ch49, when Jacob is dying, he blesses his sons but curses Reuben. (49:3-4)
 - e) **Apply.** If you've hurt someone, and are being nice to them without apologizing, it's not right.

(Broken people do good things... 3 inmates jumped in a freezing river to save 3 drowning boys.)

(They did good but were sent back to jail—they were guilty—car thief, drugs/weapons.)

(Mending a broken relationship has to begin with repentance.)

(After the brothers go to Egypt, the return home without Simeon, to talk to their father Jacob.)

F. **Second Response: Jacob** doesn't believe anything good can come of his hurt. (42:38) **(S4)**

1. Joseph's father displays his wounded heart by threatening to die and blaming (ignores Simeon).
2. Jacob is someone whose been through so much hurt he doesn't believe it could get better.
3. His heart has been locked in a dark cell for years, and his candle light is his son Benjamin.

G. **Apply.** Maybe you're someone who has been hurt so many times you've given up... don't give up!

1. God is about to perform a miracle in Jacob's life... *he's about to raise his son from the dead.*
2. If God can heal Jacob's broken relationship with his "dead" son, he can heal yours.

(Jacob sends his sons, including Benjamin, Rachel's other son, back to Egypt to purchase grain.)

(Joseph greets them, still in disguise, releases Simeon, and serves them a feast at his home.)

(But he has one final test for his brothers... he puts his silver cup in Benjamin's sack.)

(He sends them away, but tells his steward to confront them about the theft. 44:4)

(When the steward discovers the cup in Benjamin's sack, it says "they tore their clothes". 44:13)

(When they come to Joseph, Joseph's older brother Judah begins to plead for Benjamin's life.)

(Joseph tells them he's only going to make Benjamin his slave... 44:17)

(At the darkest moment something beautiful happens... Judah repents!)

H. **Third Response: Judah** demonstrates repentance. (44:16-34) **(S5)**

1. He pleads for his brother's life by telling him about the way Jacob responded when he died.

2. If Benjamin doesn't come back, Jacob will go down to the grave/Sheol in misery. (44:29)
3. Then he says... I guaranteed "the boy's safety", now please take my life. (44:32-34)
4. See, Judah is the brother who convinced his brothers to sell Joseph for a profit (37:26).
5. He's not seeking to gain at another's expense, he's losing it all for another—**that's repentance**.
6. Judah paints us a beautiful picture of the **gospel** and the story of Jesus, our innocent substitute.
7. Jesus was the one who had it all, but gave it all away to take our place (Lk 4:18 captives free!)
8. It's no wonder Jacob curses Reuben's false repentance but blesses Judah (scepter will not depart).
9. Judah becomes the great forefather of Jesus Christ.

(Mending a broken relationship begins with repentance.)

(When Joseph hears the gospel, it says he "could no longer control himself.")

(The gospel is what bridges the gap between repentance and reconciliation.)

(If we're all sinners and yet Jesus forgives us, healing becomes possible no matter what.)

II. Relational healing occurs through **reconciliation**. (Gen 45:1-15) **(S6)**

A. There was a woman who lived during World War II named Corrie ten Boom. **(S7)**

1. Her father, older sister, and her (51) hid Jews refugees from the Nazis in their home.
2. They were arrested, her father died, and her sister and her were sent to a concentration camp.
3. They were starved, forced to do hard work, many were beaten, and many were gassed .
4. They were Christians, but Corrie was angry, yet her sister taught her to forgive till her own death.
5. Corrie was released from prison, and instead of wallowing in anger, she decided to forgive.
6. Several years later after she spoke at a church in Germany she saw one of her guards.
7. This is a man her and her sister had been forced to walk past naked.
8. He held out his hand, said he'd become a Christian, and asked if she would forgive him.
9. She couldn't do it, but she knew God forgave her, so she tried, praying, she took his hand.
10. Forgiveness flooded her heart and she cried, "I forgive you brother!"

(That guard repented before God, but knew he needed to seek reconciliation if he could.)

(By the healing power of the gospel and God's presence Corrie was able to forgive him.) **(S8)**

B. Reconciliation is made possible only through the gospel.

1. Reconciliation is the restoration of a broken relationship.
2. The word "reconciliation" is not used in our text, but the word "blood" is. (4x in Joseph's story)
3. They tried to shed his blood; Reuben, "Now we must give an accounting for his blood." (42:22)
4. Joseph's brothers took his life and so the only fair payment would be to take theirs.
5. But if what Joseph says is true, that this is God's plan (45:8), God will take care of the payment.
6. He does this by shedding his own son's blood on the cross, making full payment possible.
7. We believe in a God who reconciled himself to us through the shedding of blood.
8. This doesn't mean forgiveness doesn't hurt (Joseph wept x8), but God makes it right.
9. **Apply.** If you've been wounded too deeply to forgive, remember Jesus bleeds with us.
10. If you've wounded others, remember Jesus' blood makes healing possible for them.

(Relational healing occurs through reconciliation.)

(What's the purpose of reconciliation?)

III. Broken relationships are made new at the point of **restoration**. (Gen 45:16-28, 46:1-4, 28-30) **(S9)**

A. Restoration does not mean things will be the same.

1. Joseph never goes home and his father Jacob is forced to leave his homeland.
2. The consequences of a broken relationship are real, but even then God uses those things.
3. He appears to Jacob to tell him to go to Egypt and one day God will bring his descendants home.
4. **Apply**. If we repent and seek reconciliation, our relationship shouldn't go back to how it was.
5. If repentance (heart change) has taken place, to go back would be to undo the progress made.
6. The change is not for the worse, but for the better, b/c we're becoming more like Jesus.

(If you've hurt a friend, and are truly reconciled through Jesus, your friendship is deeper, truer.)
(Reconciliation gives the opportunity to re-start the relationship the right way.)

B. Gospel restoration is better than before.

1. When Jacob hears Joseph is alive, it says, "the spirit of their father Jacob revived." (45:27)
2. Jacob comes back to life... Gospel restoration is resurrection (rising from the dead).
3. Joseph has come back from the grave! Jacob has risen from his deathbed!
4. That's what Jesus does for us... he brings new life to dead relationships.

(Broken relationships are made new through repentance, reconciliation, and restoration.) **(S10)**

C. **Apply**. Dead relationships can be made new through the gospel.

1. We believe any broken relationship can be restored because we believe the gospel.
2. If you haven't seen your father, mother, sibling, ex, or friend in years, God can bring life.
3. The gospel can give you a better relationship than you ever had before.
4. Without the gospel, we can't do this, we don't have the power to forgive.
5. That's why Jesus does it for us... Jesus is our Joseph.
6. He has been hurt the worst but he forgives the most.
7. You can only do this if you have a right relationship with God.
8. All of us begin with a broken relationship with God but we can all be healed through Jesus.

(Broken relationships are made new through repentance, reconciliation, and restoration.)

Conclusion:

1. I want to tell you the rest of the story about Jose and me... His full name is Joseph.
2. When I was about 17, I told my youth pastor that I didn't know why we weren't friends anymore.
3. Like a good youth pastor, he approached Joseph and told him that this is how I felt.
4. And to his credit, one Sunday morning, Joseph approached me to explain why.
5. One of the last times we hung out, I showed him an bad magazine, and he didn't want to be tempted.
6. All this time I'd been blaming him, accusing him, and yet, I was the one who sinned first.
7. I **repented**, asked for forgiveness, and said I would have liked it if he had called me out on my sin.
8. He apologized and said he was wrong for leaving me like he did and we were **reconciled**.
9. We became friends once more and the relationship was **restored**, but it wasn't the same. **(S11)**
10. A couple years later, when I went home from seminary for an internship, he co-led my worship service.
11. We went on a hike and re-connected in a deeper way than before, as brothers in Christ.
12. Through Jesus, it doesn't matter how broken your relationship is, there's hope for you too.

Big Idea: Broken relationships are made new through repentance, reconciliation, and restoration.

2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. (NIV®)