

...but God

Series with Skip Heitzig

SERIES:	...but God
MESSAGE:	Evil Happens...<i>but God</i>
SPEAKER:	Skip Heitzig
SCRIPTURE:	Genesis 50:15-21

MESSAGE SUMMARY

The story of Joseph is one of the Bible's most compelling tales. And the most gripping feature is the difference between Joseph's outlook and that of his eleven brothers. After all the intrigue, the ups and downs of Joseph's life and career, and the years of deception and selfishness by Joseph's brothers, the finale comes after their father, Jacob, dies. This is one of the Bible's best *but God* moments, as forgiveness eclipses failure. Let's consider Joseph's brothers as they approach him one last time.

DETAILED NOTES

- I. Introduction
 - A. Joseph had so many bad things happen to him
 - B. His brothers hated him, Midianites sold him, Potiphar jailed him, cellmates forgot him, *but God* promoted him
 - C. One-fourth of Genesis—thirteen chapters—is devoted to Joseph
 1. Rags to riches story: Joseph went from total obscurity to the second most powerful person in Egypt
 2. Reveals God's providence: God cooperates with natural law to affect a supernatural result; an extraordinary outcome from ordinary circumstances
 3. Joseph proved no one needs to be held down by past baggage
 - a. Dysfunctional family
 - b. Jacob had four wives at the same time
 - c. Brothers involved in rape, incest, murder, and human trafficking
 - D. Genesis 50 is the crescendo and grand finale
 1. Jacob had died and been buried
 2. Brothers were paranoid
- II. Their Baseless Fear (v. 15)
 - A. Brothers' guilt is evident
 1. Joseph's brothers got rid of him, sold him to the Midianites, taken to Egypt, etc.
 2. They thought Joseph was dead; they found out he controlled the world economy from Egypt
 3. Joseph had provided for and protected his brothers; they were completely in debt to him, fearing he could rescind his favor and protection
 - B. Their father, Jacob was dead
 1. Brothers thought Jacob was a buffer between them and Joseph
 2. They were completely vulnerable
 - C. Brothers had two fears

1. Joseph's personal emotion ("Perhaps Joseph will hate us")
 2. Joseph's possible reaction ("may actually repay us for all the evil")
 - D. A guilty conscience is a heavy load to bear
 1. Guilty conscience needs no accuser (see Psalm 38:4)
 2. They were projecting their guilt into the situation
 3. They had been carrying their unresolved guilt for forty years
 4. Guilt filters everything and distorts reality
 - a. They thought Joseph hated them—he loved them
 - b. They thought he was unforgiving—he forgave them five chapters ago
- III. Their Blatant Fabrication (vv. 16-18)
- A. Jacob's supposed words were very likely fabricated by the brothers
 1. Brothers were so paranoid, they sent messengers ahead of them
 2. No record that Jacob said these things
 3. It was too important a message to deliver via messenger
 4. Jacob would have told Joseph himself; all twelve sons were at Jacob's side when he died (see Genesis 49)
 5. Used their dead father as the fall guy, a scapegoat
 - a. Brothers' collective personality was paranoid, opportunistic, deceptive
 - b. They had been lavishly treated by Joseph and Pharaoh, protected and provided for all these years, and relocated to avoid famine
 - c. They had already confessed to lying all these years
 - d. Self-preservation (see Proverbs 29:25)
 - B. Joseph always lived from the *but God* perspective
 1. Joseph revealed himself to his brothers (see Genesis 45:1-13)
 2. "God sent me before you to preserve life.... God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you...and to save your lives" (vv. 5, 7)
 - C. Joseph's brothers lived from the *but we* perspective
 1. "Joseph told us his dreams, *but we* resent him"
 2. "Joseph brings us a message from dad, *but we* despise him"
 3. "Here comes Joseph in his coat, *but we* will show him; we will sell him"
 4. "Now dad is dead and Joseph is prime minister, *but we* will outsmart him"
 5. This is self-preservation
- IV. Their Brother's Forgiveness (vv. 19-21)
- A. Brothers expected anger and vengeance, but Joseph wept
 1. Joseph saw their torment and was sensitive
 2. He saw their fear and extended forgiveness
 3. He comforted them
 - B. How does love and forgiveness come from the heart of someone who has been so mistreated? How is that cultivated in a person who has been so hurt?
 1. This was Joseph's theology on pain and suffering:
 - a. God is in charge, not me (see v. 19)
 - i. Our problems begin when we push God off the throne
 - ii. Romans 11:34; 13:1; Daniel 4:17
 - b. God uses bad events to bring about good results (see v. 20)
 - i. Joseph had a clear understanding of God's providence, no matter people's intentions

- ii. Joseph knew that his brothers were to be the twelve tribal leaders of Israel; their lives had to be protected
- iii. Romans 8:28
- iv. Be careful what you call "bad"
- c. God uses people to help other people (see v. 21)
 - i. Joseph committed to providing for his brothers and their families
 - ii. Joseph acknowledged their evil acts, but he saw that God took all those "bad" events and worked them together
- 2. Suffering is never wasted
 - a. God can help someone else from your time of suffering
 - b. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

V. Closing

- A. How big is your God?
- B. Big enough to take the bad things of your past and weave them together to produce something of value and beauty?
- C. Can you trust Him in maybe the worst point in your life?
- D. Say *but God*, not *but me*

Figures referenced: Jonathan Haidt, William Newell, Walter Scott, Shakespeare, Charles Spurgeon, R.A. Torrey

Cross references: Genesis 45:1-13; 49; Daniel 4:17; Psalm 38:4; Proverbs 29:25; Romans 8:28; 11:34; 13:1; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Greek/Hebrew words: sunergeó

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