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| **Loving From a Forgiving Heart**  *Promise: God’s love and forgiveness enables us to love and forgive* Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg Gen 45:3-15; Ps 103:1-13; 1 Cor 15:21-26, 30-42; Lk 6:27-38 (7th Sunday after the Epiphany), 2/23/25)  *And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.”* – v 5  **Lead In –** G.K. Chesterton once quipped, “The Bible tells us to love our neighbors and also to love our enemies; probably because generally they are the same people.” We might add that they may be brothers in the same family. And our Lord Jesus speaks in our Gospel Reading this morning of loving our enemies and doing good to those who hate us. The example of Joseph would be hard to beat in this regard. His story begins in Genesis 37 and proceeds all the way to the end of the Book in chapter 50. We do well to consider it.   1. **If Anybody Had Reason to Exact Revenge, Joseph Did**    1. The despised favored son was left for dead then sold…    2. In all his suffering Joseph does not give up hope…    3. The surprising elevation to Pharoah’s right hand… 2. **22 Years Does Not Assuage the Guilt of the Brothers**    1. In custody the brothers are tormented with guilt…    2. You meant evil against me, but God meant it for…    3. It is the Holy Spirit working in Joseph that enables… 3. **Talk About a Man Who Had Reason to Exact Revenge**    1. Christ was betrayed, abandoned, falsely tried…    2. Upon his return in the evening of the first day…    3. Jesus’ breath enables his disciples to forgive and love…   **Final Word –** And so, where do we fit in? You perhaps may remember Jesus’ Parable of the Good Samaritan? In the parable it was a despised Samaritan, and not the Jewish Priest or Jewish Levite that rendered care to a Jewish man who had been beaten, robbed, and left half dead along the roadside. For the Samaritan the injured man was an enemy. He also was a neighbor. And so, loving his neighbor, he dressed the man’s wounds and then took him to convalesce at an Inn for which he footed the bill. Luther compares the Church to the Inn when he writes, “For the churches are nothing else than lodging places of this kind in which the people who feel sin, death, and the terrors and vexations of an afflicted and wounded conscience are healed.” There’s where we fit it. Collectively we are an expression of the Church. As we gather, we are a place where we face the trials of this life and see God working out good even from evil. This is the place where we can receive forgiveness of sins and share it with others. It is enabled from the loving and forgiving heart of our Crucified and Risen Savior.  **Ge 39:1-3** Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. The Lord was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master.  **Ge 39:21-22** But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it.  **Ge 42:21** Then they said to one another, “In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he begged us and we did not listen. That is why this distress has come upon us.” | **Genesis 45:3-15 ESV**  *Joseph Provides for His Brothers*  3Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?” But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence.  4So Joseph said to his brothers, “Come near to me, please.” And they came near. And he said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. 5And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. 6For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. 7And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. 8So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. 9Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not tarry. 10You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. 11There I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come, so that you and your household, and all that you have, do not come to poverty.’ 12And now your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you. 13You must tell my father of all my honor in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here.” 14Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. 15And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them. After that his brothers talked with him.  **Ac 7:9-10** “And the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; but God was with him and rescued him out of all his afflictions and gave him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who made him ruler over Egypt and over all his household.  **Ge 44:16** And Judah said, “What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how can we clear ourselves? God has found out the guilt of your servants.  **Ge 50:20** As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.  **Jn 20:19-20** On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.  **Jn 20:21-23** Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.” |