

Genesis 45

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[0 : 00] Then Joseph could not control himself.

Before all those who stood by him, he cried, Make everyone go out for me. So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and he wept aloud so that the Egyptians heard it and the household of Pharaoh heard it.

And Joseph 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.

So 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.

And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For 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.

[1 : 03] And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to keep alive for you many survivors. So 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.

And he said, Hurry! And go up to my father and say to him, Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord over all Egypt. Come down to me. Do not tarry. You 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 there 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.

And now your eyes see and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my mouth that speaks to you. You must tell my father of all my honor in Egypt and of all that you have seen.

Hurry and bring my father down here. Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept. And Benjamin wept upon his neck.

[2 : 08] And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them. After that, his brothers talked with him. When the report was heard in Pharaoh's house, Joseph's brothers had come. It pleased Pharaoh and his servants.

And Pharaoh said to Joseph, say to your brothers, do this. Load your beasts and go back to the land of Canaan. And take your father and your households and come to me. And I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you shall eat the fat of the land.

And you, Joseph, are commanded to say, do this. Take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives. And bring your father and come. Have no concern for your goods for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.

The sons of Israel did so. And Joseph gave them wagons according to the command of Pharaoh and gave them provisions for the journey. To each and all of them he gave a change of clothes. But to Benjamin he gave 300 shekels of silver and five changes of clothes.

To his father he sent as follows ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt. And ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and provision for his father on the journey. Then he sent his brothers away.

[3 : 11] And as they departed he said to them, don't quarrel on the way. So they went up out of Egypt and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob. And they told him, Joseph is still alive.

And he is ruler over all the land of Egypt. And his heart became numb. For he did not believe them. But when they told him all the words of Joseph which he had said to them. And when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him.

The spirit of their father revived. And Israel said, it is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.

Well this morning we come to the climax of the story of Joseph. Where the family that was once torn apart by envy, favoritism, and hatred.

Is brought back together and reconciled. It's one of the most moving chapters in the book of Genesis. Because it shows us a picture of something that as human beings we long for.

[4 : 09] We long for. Often. But experience. Rarely. According to Genesis chapter 3. At least three things happened. When Adam and Eve turned away from God.

First they tried to hide. From God and from each other. Second they became fearful. Because they knew they were guilty. And third they became hostile.

They started blaming each other. And much of human history. And much of our personal experience. Is characterized by these three dynamics. Hiding. Fear. And hostility.

Maybe you thought that you were close to a friend. But recently you've learned that. They've actually been hiding. A large chunk of their life from you. For many years. Or maybe you're. Frustrated by how superficial relationships seem to be. Among your work colleagues. Or fellow students. People may spend hours. And years together. But conversation rarely goes below the surface.

[5 : 12] Or maybe you're married. And though you may experience seasons of deep intimacy and closeness. The day-to-day reality. Involves an ongoing struggle. To know and be known.

To forgive and be forgiven. To move beyond fear and distance. To closeness and intimacy. And trust. Or maybe you're involved in seeking reconciliation.

On a broader scale. Between racial groups. Or between nations. Maybe you pray. And work for the reunification of North and South Korea.

Or for peace and justice. In Israel. And in Gaza. Or for Martin Luther King's dream. Of a beloved community. To be realized here in the U.S.

But as you seek to build bridges between people. You also see how deep the hostilities run. As Nelson Mandela said. There is no easy walk to freedom anywhere.

[6 : 10] I have discovered that after climbing a great hill. One only finds that there are many more hills to climb. The passage that we're looking at this morning. Gives us a compelling picture.

Of what reconciliation is. And how we can experience it. And extend it. We'll see three aspects of reconciliation. In our passage this morning.

The first aspect. Is that hiding. Is replaced with vulnerability. This is verses 1 through 4. In other words. The masks come off.

And the truth comes out. Until this moment in the story. Joseph deliberately hid. His identity from his brothers. The minute they showed up. At the beginning of chapter 42.

He knew exactly who they were. But they had no idea who he was. And he was very careful to keep it that way. For the last three chapters. He hid behind the mask.

[7 : 07] Of a rude Egyptian government official. Speaking to them through a translator.

Interrogating them as if they were foreign spies. Keeping them all in custody for three days.

Keeping one of them in custody while he sent the others home. Planting a cup in his younger brother's backpack. Forcing them into a corner. Of course at times he relented. And showed them unexpected kindness.

He returned their money. But he did so secretly. He prepared a great feast for them in his own house. But he ate separately. Even in his kindest moments.

He maintained a professional distance. In particular he maintained an emotional distance. Twice in chapter 42 and 43. Joseph was deeply moved.

By affection for his brothers. Chapter 42. He overheard them talking about. How they regretted. And how wrong they were to sell him into slavery.

[8 : 06] And so he turned away from them. And wept. But then he came back to them. And kept talking. And chapter 43. He saw his brother Benjamin.

Who he hadn't seen in 20 years. The only one of the brothers. Who hadn't been complicit. In selling him into slavery. So he hurried out. And he went to his room.

And he wept. And then he washed his face. Composed himself. And came back out. And put on his face again. But here in chapter 45. All the masks come off.

The professional distance. The emotional distance. The pretense of a language barrier. The manipulative accusations. He spoke directly to them. In the language they had spoken in their house growing up.

I am Joseph. Is my father still alive? Previously he had asked. Is your father still alive? Now he says your father.

[9 : 03] Is my father. We are brothers. I'm your brother. Joseph. Joseph. And along with. Disclosing his true identity.

He let go. He released. The flood of emotions. That he had held back for so long. He couldn't control himself. He cried. Make everyone go out. And he wept aloud.

And all the Egyptians heard him. Now it's true. They didn't have soundproofing back then. But for Pharaoh's household. Who weren't even in the house.

To take notice. He wasn't just quietly shedding a couple of tears. For 20 seconds. And then regaining his composure. He was bawling.

He had lost it. He had let his guard down. And he didn't really care who heard. You see genuine reconciliation. Of previously broken relationships.

[10 : 00] Is rarely a neat and tidy process. Moving from hiding. Pretending. Coldness. To vulnerability. And sincerity.

And self-disclosure. Often releases a floodgate of emotions. And sometimes makes a scene. That makes other people wonder. What's going on? But you know.

If we as a church. The Apostle Paul says. We as a church. Are called to the ministry. Of reconciliation. Of proclaiming a message of reconciliation.

With God. And with one another. Through Jesus Christ. And if we're committed to that ministry. It's appropriate. For us to be deeply moved. In our affections.

To weep. As we confess our sin against God. Or our apathy. Toward one another. To lay hands on each other. And pray for each other.

[10 : 57] And stand beside each other. When we face sickness. And death. And hardship. Or to joyfully embrace. Long lost brothers and sisters. When they come home to God.

Through faith in Jesus Christ. You know. Yes. It's possible. It's possible to have a church. That's full of emotions. And empty of knowledge.

But I wonder if our temptation. Is more to be full of knowledge. And holding back. In our affections. You know. Every so often.

I'm talking with someone. And they share something. And they break down. And they start crying.

And then they immediately. Try to stop themselves. And they say. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to.

Burden you. But you know. Crying in front of. A brother or sister in Christ. Is not a sin. Maybe. You've been holding in.

[11 : 52] All your emotions. For way too long. Because of pride. Maybe you need to repent. Of your pride. Not of your tears. Now it's true.

Different people. Different cultures. Express emotion differently. But in ancient Egyptian culture. The ideal was to remain calm. Cool. And collected.

Especially among the professional classes. And especially in Pharaoh's palace. It was not normal. For a man of Joseph's rank.

In Egypt. To weep loudly. That's why everyone else noticed. But Joseph didn't care. He was reconciled with his brothers.

And so he. Let it all go. To embrace them. And weep over them. And welcome them. Now we have to ask.

[12 : 48] How did this happen? How was Joseph freed. To become vulnerable. In front of his brothers. Who had previously. Hated him. And sold him into slavery.

Well the answer is two things. First. His brothers finally repented. And second. Joseph was ready. To forgive. You see.

Genuine reconciliation. Between two parties. Who have offended. Or hurt one another. In the past. Requires both. Repentance. And. Willingness to forgive.

You might say. What exactly is repentance? Well repentance means. At least two things.

Acknowledging and regretting. Past. Sin. And its consequences.

And second. Turning away from sinful patterns. And taking a concrete step. To trust. And obey God. Now that's why.

[13 : 43] Joseph didn't immediately. Let his guard down. Back in chapter 42. When his brothers first arrived. On the scene. And he hadn't seen them in 20 years. He didn't just say.

Hey. Remember me? I'm your brother. You sold me into slavery. 20 years ago. But you know what? Everything's worked out. Just okay. God made it all work out.

For the best. So let's just put it behind us. And go on. That's not real reconciliation. That's just putting on a happy face. And using religious cliches.

It's sweeping all the dirt under the rug. Instead of cleaning it up. Papering over the cracks in the wall. Instead of actually repairing them.

It's flimsy. It's foolish. And it won't last into the future. Because it has never dealt with. The pain and sin of the past. You see. If someone has seriously wronged you.

[14 : 44] Lied to you. Cheated on you. Stolen from you. And you choose to simply go back to them. And make yourself vulnerable to them. And fully entrust yourself to them.

Without any expression of repentance. On their part. Sorrow for the past. And making a step toward change.

You are not promoting reconciliation. You are simply putting yourself in a position. Where you will probably be hurt all over again. And even worse. You are enabling the other person.

To continue in their destructive. And sinful ways. By your refusal to do the hard work. Of actually lovingly. Confronting them. Sometimes the first step toward reconciliation.

Is lovingly confronting someone. About what has gone wrong. And if you do that. And if they completely reject you. And don't listen.

[15 : 44] And don't acknowledge any problem in the past. And don't want to change. Then you wait patiently and pray. And pray that God would change their heart.

And until they show that some sign of change. You may need to mourn the loss of the closeness you once had. Or simply release the other person into God's hands.

And move on. Because apart from repentance. True and lasting reconciliation. Is not possible. Joseph waited.

He waited long enough. To see his brothers express sorrow over their past sin. And also. To begin to act differently.

Than they had in the past. Repentance doesn't mean becoming perfect. It doesn't mean fixing everything. But it does mean. Acknowledging the wrong.

[16 : 39] And taking a step in the other direction. And that's half the reason. Why Joseph came out of hiding. Because his brothers. Truly. Repented. But the other half of the reason.

Is that Joseph was ready and willing. To be reconciled with them. Even Joseph held. Though Joseph held himself back from his brothers. In some ways.

In these. Chapter 42. 43 and 44. He wasn't. Holding bitterness. And vindictiveness. Over their heads. And he wasn't.

Interpreting every one of their present actions. In the worst possible light. He wasn't. Sitting back. Sort of folding his arms. Sitting on the fence.

Saying. Hmm. Well. Let me see if you change. And then I'll decide. Whether. I want to forgive you. No. He longed for his brothers.

[17 : 37] His heart was moved. At every sign of repentance. That he saw. That's why. When he first overheard them. Expressing their regret. And guilt.

Over selling them into slavery. 20 years ago. He wept. And that's why. When he saw them come back with Benjamin. Rather than just.

Leaving their brother Simeon. In Egypt forever. To. Rot. In an Egyptian dungeon. He repaired. A lavish feast. To welcome them. And then finally.

As we saw at the end of. Chapter 44. He saw Judah. Judah who had previously. Run away from the family. And abandoned them. Judah stepped up.

And offered himself. And said. Take me as a slave. So that Benjamin can go free. When he saw that Judah.

[18 : 35] Was devoted to his father. And his younger brother. Joseph couldn't hold himself back. Any longer. And so. The moment that he saw. His brothers facing their sin. And turning from their selfish ways.

And showing hearts. That were being transformed. By God's grace. He opened himself up to them. And became vulnerable to them. And he didn't hold back. So that's the first.

Movement. Of reconciliation. Hiding. Replaced by vulnerability. The second movement. That we see in this passage. Is guilty fear.

Replaced by God given. Reassurance. This is verse 4 through 15. When Joseph first revealed himself. To his brothers. His brothers didn't immediately respond.

With. Yay. Joy and delight. Great to see you again. They were dismayed. It's him. The one we sold into slavery.

[19 : 34] And thought we got rid of. And our lives are in his hand. They were scared. Speechless. And so Joseph had to reassure them.

Reassure them of his good will toward them. Which he did over and over. In his long speech. In verses 4 through 15. Twice in verse 4 and verse 5.

He said you sold me. But then he said three times. In verse 5, verse 7, verse 8. God sent me. You know if you've really.

Been wronged. By someone. If you've been traumatized. Like Joseph was. A 17 year old kid.

Ganged up on by his older brothers.

Beaten up. Thrown in a pit. Sold to slave traders. It can be very hard. To see beyond the wrong.

That someone did to you.

[20 : 33] The traumatic event can become all consuming. And life defining. In a way that warps your vision. And distorts your relationships. And drains the hope for the future.

Out of you. The solution. Is not to deny. Or excuse. Or dismiss. The evil that occurred. Joseph said it twice.

You sold me. Into slavery. Later on. He will say. You intended. To harm me. His brothers were motivated. By hatred and revenge.

But 20 years after the fact. Joseph was able to look back. And see that even on the worst day of his life. There was more going on.

Than just. His brothers. Evil. Intentions. He says. God. Sent me. Here. And God's purpose.

[21 : 31] In sending me here. Was in direct contrast. To your purpose. In selling me. Here. That's why he uses. Two different verbs.

To describe. The brothers action. And God's action. You sold me. God sent me. Now the brothers were acting. And God was acting.

Simultaneously. In time and space. But their ultimate purposes. Were very different. He says. You sold me. Because you wanted to get rid of me.

So that I would be as good as dead to you. You had no purpose. For me. You saw me as an obstacle. To get rid of. Or at best. A means. For financial profit.

It. But he said. God sent me. With a glorious purpose. Verse 7. He says. God sent me. Before. Verse 5. God sent me before you.

[22 : 28] To preserve life. Verse 7. God sent me before you. To preserve for you. A remnant. On earth. And to keep alive. For you. Many survivors. Verse 8.

He said. It was not you. Who sent me here. But God. In other words. God sent me. Here. Not only to suffer as a slave. But ultimately.

To rule over all of Egypt. To save the nation from a famine. And to save you. My brothers. As well. What Joseph saw. And what he confidently declared here.

Was this. God's good purpose. Had outlasted. And ultimately triumphed. Over. The sin.

And evil intent. Of his brothers. I wonder. Is there a traumatic event. In your past. Or a circumstance. In your present.

[23 : 23] That you cannot seem to see. Beyond. I don't want to comfort. I don't want to try. To comfort you. With simplistic phrases.

Like. Everything happens. For a reason. There is a reason. Why that phrase. Is not found. In the Bible. Maybe you cannot.

Identify. What God's purpose. For you. Through your trauma. And through your suffering. Is.

Joseph was able. To speak these words. Confidently.

But it was 22 years. After the fact. And God had finally. Made it clear. But it wasn't. Necessarily so clear. Every step of the way.

Maybe you can't. See. God's good. Purpose. Amidst your. Present. Circumstances. But can you believe.

[24 : 17] That one day. By God's grace. You might be able. To see. God's good. And enduring. Purpose. Even if you cannot.

See it now. What Joseph was granted. To see. And what I pray. That you would be granted. To see as well. Is that God's good purpose. Will outlast.

And ultimately. Triumph. Over every. Sinful. And evil. Design. And that's what enabled Joseph. To extend grace.

And reassurance. To his brothers. Who had wronged him in the past. Because Joseph saw. God's good purpose. He trusted God's good purpose. And he was committed to participating.

In God's good purpose. Rather than perpetuating. The cycle. By repaying evil for evil. But you know.

[25 : 13] We're not just meant to identify. With Joseph. Who had been hurt. We're also meant to identify. With his brothers. Who had sinned. Maybe there are people.

Whom you have mistreated. Gossiped about. Lied to. Ran away from. And if they were to suddenly show up.

And be sitting right next to you. In your pew. Knowing all that you had said and done. About them and to them. You would be scared and speechless.

In all of our pasts. Without any exceptions. There are sins. Dark thoughts. Selfish actions. Careless words.

Neglected opportunities. That we have forgotten. Or deliberately suppressed. Maybe like Joseph's brothers. You are periodically haunted. By the memory of past sins.

[26 : 16] Plagued by guilty fear. Look at what Joseph said. To his brothers. Verse 4. He said.

Come near. To me. He said. Don't run away. Don't hide. Don't stay stuck. In your guilty fear. You have repented. I have forgiven.

We are reconciled. We can now embrace. Verse 5. He said. Don't be distressed. Or angry with yourselves. In other words.

It doesn't do any good. To constantly beat yourself up. Over your past failures. Yes. We should mourn over our sin.

And be truly sorry for it. But godly sorrow. Paul says. Leads to repentance. To obedience.

[27 : 11] And life. And joy. So instead of beating yourself up. For no good purpose. Joseph said. Get up. Go home. And bring dad down here. So that we can actually be all together as a family.

Verse 9 and verse 13. He says. Hurry. Go to dad. Hurry. Bring him down here. Verse 24. He warned them. Don't quarrel on the way.

In other words. Don't waste your time. Wringing your hands. And wondering. What if things happen differently? Well they didn't. Don't get caught up with blaming each other.

And pointing fingers. Don't fear for the future. Because you're my brothers. My love for you won't change.

Brothers and sisters in Christ. Aren't these the same words. That the Lord Jesus Christ. Says to us. Hebrews 4.

[28 : 13] Let us draw near. With confidence. To the throne. Of grace. John 14. Don't let your hearts be troubled.

Trust in God. Trust also in me. As the Father has loved me. So have I loved you. Abide in my love. Don't cringe. And run away. In guilty fear. Be assured of God's love for you. In Jesus Christ. And draw near to him. Hiding.

Is replaced with vulnerability. Guilty fear. Is replaced with God given reassurance. And third and finally. We see hostility.

Replaced. With hospitality. This is verse 16 through 28. You see reconciliation. Is not just a one time event. It's not just a really emotional family reunion.

[29 : 19] And then you go back to your regular way of life. True reconciliation leads into ongoing fellowship. In the second half of this chapter. We see Joseph providing for his family.

He provided for them quite generously. Look at all the things he provided. Food. To sustain him during the coming years of famine. Verse 11. Housing. The best land in Egypt.

Verse 18. Transportation. Verse 21. Wagons. The ancient equivalent of a door-to-door limo service. Clothing. Verse 22. Recognizing their renewed status as brothers and sons in the same family.

Gifts. Verse 23. Ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt. But you know the main theme of this section. Is not Joseph's provision.

And his gifts to his brothers. Because if he wanted. Joseph could have arranged. For his brothers to be provided for back in Canaan. He was the governor of Egypt.

[30 : 24] Second in command to Pharaoh. He had the power to order. Regular delivery service. Amazon Prime. Monthly delivery. Of everything that they could ever want or need.

Straight from the storehouses of Egypt. But no. He called them. To himself. He said come. Dwell in the land of Goshen.

You shall be near me. See he wasn't just providing for them. From a distance. He was calling them to come and live with him.

And for once. His brothers got him. When they went home. They didn't say. Hey dad. We've got free tickets to Egypt.

We'll have plenty of food. Better land. A bigger house. New clothes. And extravagant wealth. They didn't mention any of those things. They said.

[31 : 20] Joseph is still alive. And he's ruler over all of Egypt. The provisions were only a token. A sign. Of Joseph's hospitality.

A tangible symbol. To show Jacob that Joseph really was alive. You see hospitality. Is not entertainment. Hospitality is not impressing your family or friends.

With by having the biggest house. Or the cleanest house. Or the best food. Or the newest toys. Or the most extravagant gifts. The material provisions are only a means.

To an end. Of welcoming people graciously. Into your home. Into your life. And into life with God. Henry Nouwen wrote this.

He said. In our world full of strangers. People estranged. From their own past. Their own culture. And country. From their neighbors. Friends. And family.

[32 : 23] From their deepest self. And from God. We witness a painful search. For a hospitable place. Where life can be lived without fear.

And where community can be found. Hospitality. Means creating a space. Where the stranger can enter. And become a friend. Instead of an enemy.

Brothers and sisters. What we. What Joseph did for his brothers. What we hear in that quote. Is what Jesus Christ. Has done for us. At the cost of his very own life.

He has opened up a way for us. To enter in. And draw near. To the presence of the living God. As our father. In heaven. Through his death and resurrection. He's brought us from death.

To life. Through his sacrifice. As a substitute. In our place. He has transformed. Sinners like us. God's enemies. Into. God's friends.

[33 : 20] And he has promised. Never. Will. I leave you. Never. Will. I. Forsake you. So the ministry. Of hospitality.

Is a profoundly. Christian. Act. It's a sign. A pointer. To. The reality. Of what Christ. Has done. In welcoming. Us.

Home. To live. With him. Forever. The ministry. Of hospitality. Might mean. Taking in a brother. Or sister.

In Christ. Who has fallen. On hard times. And has nowhere else. To stay. If you're willing. To consider that. Let me know. There will. There are opportunities.

That come along. Maybe it means. Adopting a child. Whose biological parents. Can no longer. Take care of them. Maybe it means. Extending God's mercy. By coming alongside. A foreigner.

[34 : 13] An immigrant. Or a refugee. With practical help. Maybe it starts. With something simple. Like making a regular practice. Of greeting someone. You don't know. At church.

Or helping out. With fellowship hour. Or inviting people. To join you for lunch. After the service. I pray that we would be. A church. Characterized by this. Welcoming.

Hospitality. That overcomes hostility. And bears witness. To the world. Of the reconciling power. Of Jesus Christ. Hiding. Replaced with vulnerability.

Guilty fear. Replaced with God-given reassurance. Hostility. Replaced with hospitality. Each of these three aspects. Of reconciliation. Finds its fullest expression.

In the person and work. Of Jesus Christ. Christ. In particular. After Jesus rose from the dead. He didn't stay hidden. He appeared to his disciples. And at first.

[35 : 10] Just like Joseph's brothers. They didn't recognize him. But he said. See. My hands. My feet. It is I myself.

Touch me. And see. But like Joseph's brothers. In verse 3. And Jacob in verse 26. The initial response. Of Jesus' disciples. Was shock and disbelief.

So Jesus went on. Like Joseph did. To reassure them. To reassure. The disciples. Of his good will. Toward them. Despite the fact.

That they had failed him. Quite recently. Three times. They had fallen asleep. In the garden. When he told them. To watch and pray. Three times.

Peter had publicly denied him. Most of them. Had abandoned him. And fled. Even those who stayed. And watched the crucifixion. From a distance. Were powerless. To do anything. To help. But in all the times.

[36 : 07] That Jesus appeared. To his disciples. After his resurrection. He hardly ever brought up. Those failures. The only time he did. Was when he talked to Peter.

Said. Peter do you love me? Peter do you love me? Peter do you love me? And he did it. Not to humiliate Peter. Peter. But to restore Peter.

And to commission him. For the future. You see. Jesus reassured his disciples. And he reassures us. That God's good purposes. Had triumphed.

Over humanity's evil and sin. Jesus was crucified. It was an evil thing. But it was also according to the plan of God.

In order to fulfill the scriptures. In order to bring salvation to the world. To us. So Jesus reassures us today.

[37 : 02] Just like he did back then. He speaks peace. To our troubled hearts. He lifts up his hands. As he did for his disciples. He blesses us.

With his favor. And he fills us with his spirit. And sends us out to go. And bear witness. About him. To the ends of the earth. And to welcome others.

Into the home that he is providing. He reassures us. Of his ongoing goodwill toward us. Finally like Joseph. Jesus extends hospitality. He welcomes us into his presence.

He sent his very own spirit. To dwell in us. And he's preparing a place for us. To dwell with him. Forever. You know. When Joseph sent his brothers. To bring his father back to Egypt.

He sent them not only. With a royal invitation. To join him. But also with wagons. And gifts. Now he didn't really need to. Send all the gifts down there.

[37 : 58] Ten donkeys. Loaded with good things of Egypt. And then they're just going to turn around. And go right back to Egypt. With all those good things on them. You don't even have enough time. To eat all those good things. That are on ten donkeys. Why did he send them?

He sent them so Jacob could be absolutely sure. That the invitation was for real. And it says in verse 27. When Jacob heard Joseph's words.

And saw the wagons. That Joseph had sent. The limo service. His spirit was revived. And he said. Joseph is alive.

I'll go and see him. Well this morning we come to the Lord's Supper. The table where we share the bread and the cup. The tokens. The pledges.

The signs. Of Jesus' promise. That his invitation is for real. That he hasn't left us alone. That he'll bring us home to himself. And he'll carry us all the way there.

[38 : 57] And he'll hold us fast. And that he's preparing a glorious place. Where we'll feast at his table in the true promised land. The Lord's Supper is a meal about reconciliation with God.

And reconciliation with one another. It represents reconciliation with God. Because the bread and the cup represent the body and blood of Jesus Christ. That the only way for us to be reconciled with God.

Is through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. That he made on the cross. To pay for our sins. If you haven't yet accepted Jesus Christ.

We ask that you don't take the bread and the cup. If you haven't yet embraced what this meal represents. But as the bread and the cup come along. It's a sign of an invitation.

An open invitation. To anyone who will receive it. That Jesus says come to me. And I will forgive your sins. And reassure you of my love. And I welcome you home forever.

[40 : 00] If you've repented. If you've acknowledged your sinfulness. And turned to Jesus as Savior and Lord. Take the bread and the cup as tokens of his grace. As pledges of his promise.

That as surely as you eat this bread and drink this cup. Even more surely. Christ has washed you clean. From all your sins. Through his death on the cross. But the Lord's Supper also expresses our

reconciliation.

With one another. Through Christ. We share the bread and the cup together. As a body of believers. Just like we celebrate baptism together. So as we prepare to take the Lord's Supper. Let me urge you to consider. Is there someone who has wronged you? That you need to forgive. And be willing to reconcile with them. If they repent.

If so as you take the bread and the cup. Pray for that person. And entrust them into God's good hands. Or is there someone that you have wronged.

[41 : 00] And need to make amends with. Confess your sin to God. Be assured of Christ's forgiveness. And don't let this day pass by. Without doing your part to make things right.

With those who are going to serve communion. Come to the front. We're going to pass out the bread. And then the cup.

Share and eat them together. As we remember what Christ has done for us. And celebrate. How he has reconciled us to himself.

And how he promises. To one day make all things new. And bring us into. His kingdom. Forever. Forever. As we prepare to take the Lord's Supper.

Let me read from Matthew. Jesus' words. At the Passover. Now as they were eating. Jesus took bread. And after blessing it.

[42 : 00] He broke it and gave it to the disciples. And he said. Take and eat. This is my body. John would you give thanks. Thanks. Thanks. Thanks. Thanks.

But you made yourself vulnerable, and you came to us, and you took further wounds than the ones we had already given, the cost of reconciliation and bringing us back, throwing open the doors that we might be welcomed in, having paid the price of our sin.

And what extravagance there is, the ten donkeys full of riches, what all it means to be drawn into the hospitality of God, that new and wonderful life with you.

Lord, may we greatly rejoice, stunned and full of wonder at your munificence, at your magnificence. We thank you, Lord, for this token that sets it forth, your gift for us, life indeed.

[43 : 51] We thank you. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Yea, yea. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.