

It's Not Fair

Genesis 50:15-21

Week of July 14, 2024

BELONG

Ask this Ice Breaker Question: Share about a time when you were pleasantly surprised by something or someone.

BELIEVE

Have someone in your group read aloud: Genesis 50:15-21

Leader Context (not to be read aloud):

In this closing chapter of Genesis, both Jacob and Joseph pass off the scene. The death that grew out of rebellion claims even the best of the people of God. The book of Genesis, which began in a paradise in Eden, ends in a coffin in Egypt. Yet all is not what it seems. Joseph, the most hopeful figure of the book, reciprocates the heart of God in his acts of mercy and grace to his brothers, as well as his eternal perspective regarding the evil actions of men vs the sovereign power of God. Finally, toward the end of the chapter he gives orders as he lies dying. Israel, grown great in numbers and redeemed by God's power, will one day depart from Egypt. When that happens, they are to take his bones with them and deposit them in the land of promise.

Ask these questions to prompt group discussion:

1. Did Joseph's brothers really know him (v 15)? How does it feel to be misrepresented?

Leader Context (Not to be read aloud):

Once back in Egypt, Joseph's brothers conclude that their lives are in danger. They have concluded that Joseph's generous disposition toward them is probably just an act carried on for the sake of their father. Now that Jacob is gone, they reason, Joseph will unveil his real attitude toward them. He will probably kill them to get back at them for their harsh treatment of him so long before. They are reluctant to face him, and send a messenger with an urgent appeal. They cite Jacob as having said before his death that Joseph should forgive his erring brothers. Joseph is crushed when he receives this communication. They know his heart so little that they think him capable of treachery against them.

2. Why do you think Joseph wept in verse 17? It is possible that God could grieve when He sees the evidence that His people know Him so little?

Leader Context (Not to be read aloud):

When the brothers appear before him, they insist that they be his slaves for life. Perhaps, they reason, Joseph will be content to enslave rather than to kill them. Joseph speaks reassuringly to



them, however, and distinguishes between their intent—purely harmful—and what God made of it. Joseph has no intention of doing them harm. Indeed, he has only their welfare in mind. This brief episode pictures a mistake that Christians often make. Though God has sworn to forgive them eternally for Christ's sake, they see the enormity of their past sins and doubt either His ability or His kind intent. Like Joseph, God must say repeatedly that He will allow no harm to come to the one whose trust is in the finished work of Christ. How the Holy Spirit must be grieved when He sees those who are Christ's doubting His word. In the words of the old hymn, "What more can He say than to you He hath said, to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?"

3. Read Gen 50:20 and Rom 8:28. Discuss these verses in light Jesus's death and resurrection.

Leader Context (Not to be read aloud):

As we reel into the pit of Joseph's life, we are wise to remember that God is still in control. And not only is He in control, He is using all this and working it together for our good and His glory.

BECOME:

Ask this question:

4. Why is it so hard to trust God? (list several reasons) Is there one step you can take this week to increase your faith?

Leader Context (Not to be read aloud):

- Ask the Lord for help to increase your faith (e.g. Luke 17:5, Mark 9:24)
- Take an action step stemming from your faith in God (e.g. Matt 14:22-33)
- Recall and/or write out the ways God has been faithful in the past (e.g. Ps 78:42, 1 Cor 11:23-25)

Close by praying together.