

Sermon Discussion Guide




“Relational Bitterness”

Genesis 37:2-8, 18-36; 50:15-21

Rev. Brandon Laurantzon, May 10 & 11, 2014

Step 1: Reflect on the Text

Why do we do this first? We always want to start with the Bible. The goal is to meditate on the Word and read it with an ear sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s promptings. Look for words or phrases that stand out through logic, repetition, layout, etc.

-  Read Genesis 37:2-8, 18-36; 50:15-21. What stood out to you? What did you find interesting and/or important? What was challenging or caused you to have questions?

Step 2: Reflect on the Sermon

INTRODUCTION

- 1 How did you celebrate Mother’s Day? Is Mother’s Day a happy time for you or a difficult time?
- 2 Summarize the *Big Idea* of the sermon in *one phrase or sentence* (Note: this is not the same as listing the main points). In other words, if someone woke you up at 3am on Monday morning and asked, “What was the sermon about on Sunday?” what would you say in the midst of your sleepy haze?

THE REALITY OF RELATIONAL BITTERNESS

- 3 Brandon asked, “Who in your life are you bitter towards? Who have you been avoiding? In what relationship are you denying reality by saying, “Everything is ok,” when it really isn’t?”
- 4 How do we know that the point of the Bible is not to give us moral exemplars to imitate? How do you see the realities of relational brokenness in Joseph’s story?

THE ROOT OF RELATIONAL BITTERNESS

- 5 What are some common triggers of relational bitterness? Two people can experience similar hurts and yet respond in opposite ways. How do you explain the difference?
- 6 Discuss the following quotes:

“Bitterness is when you let your hurt become hate. Bitterness is when you allow what is eating you to eat you up. Bitterness is when you poke, stoke, and fan the fire, stirring the flames and reliving the pain. Bitterness is the deliberate decision to nurse the offense until it becomes a black, furry, growling grudge.” —Max Lucado

“To lick your wounds, to smack your lips over grievances long past, to roll over your tongue the prospect of bitter confrontations still to come, to savor to the last toothsome morsel both the pain you are given and the pain you are giving back – in many ways it is a feast fit for a king. The chief drawback is that what you are wolfing down is yourself. The skeleton at the feast is you.” —Frederick Buechner

- 7 In your own words, what is the ultimate root of relational bitterness?

THE REDEMPTION OF RELATIONAL BITTERNESS

- 8 *Relinquish* the seat of judgment. Read Romans 12:18-19. What stands out to you?
- 9 *Rest* in God’s sovereignty. How have you seen God work “all things” in your life for your good? How does believing in God’s sovereignty allow you to rest? How do you think God’s definition of “good” for your life might be different from your definition of “good”?
- 10 *Relish* in Christ’s forgiveness. How is Joseph an Old Testament type of Christ? What keeps God from being bitter and angry towards us? How is forgiveness the only medicine that can heal a bitter heart? How is your willingness to forgive someone else an indication of how well you grasp the gospel? Complete the following sentences: Forgiving is not _____. Forgiving is _____. What was the point of the final illustration about the traveller in the jungle and leeches?

Step 3: Final Reflections

- ✠ How has your understanding, appreciation, and love for Jesus and the gospel grown as a result of this study?
- ♥ In what areas of faith and practice are you feeling convicted by the Holy Spirit to act as a result of this study?