



SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

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BOTH+AND — SOVEREIGNTY + RESPONSIBILITY

Warm-Up Question:

What things in life most challenge your belief that God is in control of all things?

READ: Genesis 50:15-26

I. TAKING GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

- Recall the difficult life circumstances that Joseph encountered, (including all his brothers did to him and while at Potiphar's house).
- Why were the brothers afraid of Joseph after their father died? Why did Joseph then weep in vs. 17 (note he's been in Egypt for 17 years)?
- Discuss Joseph's response to them in v. 19-20. How do you see Joseph acknowledge both the responsibility of his brothers for their sin and the sovereignty of God over their wrong and his whole life?
- How did the root of Joseph's perspective on God's sovereignty bear fruit in his reaction? How would he have reacted if he didn't have that perspective?
- Think about & share what tends to be your reaction to difficult life situations or when you are sinned against. How might your fruit in these times reveal a root desire to take God's place (v. 19) instead of taking God's perspective?

II. TRUSTING GOD'S PLAN

- Think of some of your difficulties in life. How is it hard to believe that "God meant it for good (v. 20)" or Rom. 8:28 ("God will work all things for good")?
- Read Rom. 8:31-32. What does "did not spare" and "gave him up" mean? Then discuss some ways Jesus suffered and say after each way, "God meant that for good." What was that "good" that he meant?
- How do these truths give you confidence to trust God's plan to work for your good today, this week, etc, even when you can't see the why, what and how?
- How does this motivate you to all the more love and serve God, to live on mission and lay your life down to love others around you?

What is one main take-away you want to apply in your life this week?

"If there is one maverick molecule in all the universe, then God is not sovereign."

"Most Christians salute the sovereignty of God but believe in the sovereignty of man." — R. C. Sproul

"The sovereignty of God is the pillow upon which the child of God rests his head at night, giving perfect peace

"Salvation is the work of God. It is He alone who quickens the soul 'dead in trespasses and sins,' and it is He also who maintains the soul in its spiritual life." — Charles Spurgeon

People treat God's sovereignty as a matter of controversy, but in Scripture it is a matter of worship. — J.I. Packer

For Prayer:

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SEVEN RIVERS
CHURCH

BOTH + AND — SOVEREIGNTY & RESPONSIBILITY

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Scriptures Used

Gen. 50:15 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him." **16** So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this command before he died: **17** 'Say to Joseph, "Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.'" And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. **18** His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." **19** But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? **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. **21** So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Gen. 50:22 So Joseph remained in Egypt, he and his father's house. Joseph lived 110 years. **23** And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation. The children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were counted as Joseph's own. **24** And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." **25** Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here." **26** So Joseph died, being 110 years old. They embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

Rom. 8:28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Rom. 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? **32** He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

SOME THOUGHTS

I. TAKING GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

- ▶ **Recall the difficult life circumstances that Joseph encountered, (including all his brothers did to him and while at Potiphar's house).**
 - His brothers response to his dreams and how they probably treated him most of his life
 - The threat to kill him, the pit and then being sold by his own family
 - Being treated as a slave
 - Being blessed but then falsely accused by Potiphar's wife and thrown in jail, all when he acted with integrity
 - Being forgotten when the other guy got out of jail
- ▶ **Why were the brothers afraid of Joseph after their father died? Why did Joseph then weep in vs. 17 (note he's been in Egypt for 17 years)?**
 - They surely thought he would pay them back for all they did. He may have wept because they had no idea how much he really had already forgiven them and felt love for them.
 - Might be a good discussion how we do the same for God... think he's going to get back at us for something when all he thinks is how much we are already forgiven and loved.
- ▶ **Think about & share what tends to be your reaction to difficult life situations or when you are sinned against. How might your fruit in these times reveal a root desire to take God's place (v. 19) instead of taking God's perspective?**
 - Think about how often we bear the fruit of anxiety and fear when life is out of our control. We know about God's sovereignty, but that doesn't mean it's easy to trust it.
 - You could discuss how Joseph's root of faith grew through life as he saw God be faithful and work things for good. You could discuss how you've seen God's past faithfulness in a way that strengthened your faith in his future faithfulness.

II. TRUSTING GOD'S PLAN

- ▶ **Read Rom. 8:31-32. What does "did not spare" and "gave him up" mean? Then discuss some ways Jesus suffered and say after each way, "God meant that for good." What was that "good" that he meant?**
 - He did not withhold him from coming. He did not protect. He did not save from the humiliation, the ridicule, the pain and suffering. He willingly gave him up to all that and more, such as death and the bearing of his wrath for our sin.
- ▶ **How does this motivate you to all the more love and serve God, to live on mission and lay your life down to love others around you?**
 - True belief in God's sovereignty should free us from fear in order to live more by faith. To take more risks. To give more away, trusting he will provide and protect. To endure difficulties with more joy and thanksgiving (in the midst of our grief and lament).