



FOLLOW
THE DONKEY
The Continuing Journey

The Road to Forgiveness

Joseph's brothers betrayed him threw him into a pit, then sold him into slavery

His time in Egypt led him to be falsely accused and forgotten in prison wasting years of his life, but God was with him, elevating him to second-in-command in Egypt



In this reunion, God begins to reveal that forgiveness doesn't happen in a moment it unfolds through a process that moves through pain, testing, grace and finally, brokenness

Facing the Pain

“Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but they did not recognize him.”

Genesis 42:8

**Joseph’s first reaction wasn’t peace;
it was pain**

**You can’t forgive what you refuse to
face, and God can’t heal what we hide**

**Forgiveness is like cleaning a wound,
if you never uncover it, infection sets
in and spreads.**

**Healing begins when you stop hiding the hurt
and let God bring the pain to the surface**



Testing the Heart

If you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay here in prison, while the rest of you go and take grain back for your starving households. But you must bring your youngest brother to me, so that your words may be verified and that you may not die.” This they proceeded to do.

Joseph doesn't reveal himself right away is he deceptive?

Genesis 42:19–20

Joseph accuses them of being spies is he manipulating them?

He places them in custody for three days is he vindictive?



Testing the Heart

The answer is none of the above, he is setting the stage for a test, one done not out of revenge, but revelation

Joseph's next actions help us understand what testing really is because biblical testing always has two sides

And what Joseph accomplishes in testing teaches us something we often miss about forgiveness



Testing the Heart

He offers to release ten of them so they may tend to their family's needs (*Compassion*)

Compassion responds to need, not merit

Also, they must bring their youngest brother to him to prove they are honest men. (*Accountability*)

Forgiving someone doesn't mean re-entering an unsafe relationship

- Forgiveness is not reckless
- Grace is not blind
- Accountability is not unloving



Testing the Heart

Compassion without testing enables

Accountability without blessing hardens

Testing exposes what time alone cannot heal.

“The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the Lord tests the heart.”

Proverbs 17:3

Sometimes God reopens old wounds to show us what's truly healed and what is still being held



Testing the Heart

Forgiveness isn't pretending the hurt never happened, it's letting God prove the heart He's restored or the one we have failed to let Him

It's in testing that we learn whether our forgiveness is genuine or just words

And once the testing reveals our heart, God invites us to make a choice to keep holding or to start releasing



Choosing Grace

He turned away from them and began to weep, but then came back and spoke to them again. He had Simeon taken from them and bound before their eyes. Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, to put each man's silver back in his sack, and to give them provisions for their journey.

Genesis 42:24–25



**Joseph wept because
forgiveness is not cold or easy**

Choosing Grace

At the place where they stopped for the night one of them opened his sack to get feed for his donkey, and he saw his silver in the mouth of his sack.

We are reminded the brothers left Egypt on donkeys carrying grain they thought they paid for and silver they didn't know had been returned

Genesis 42:27

The donkey bore the weight of a forgiveness they hadn't yet accepted and did not even know was available

That's how grace often travels, it shows up on the journey before the heart catches up



Showing Grace

Forgiveness always gives more than it's asked to give

It doesn't calculate fairness, it extends mercy

Sometimes forgiveness begins with an act of kindness

**When you act in grace, your heart begins to follow
because grace doesn't rush. It waits to see what
God will do with a broken heart**



**Even in grace, Joseph holds Simeon
reminding us that forgiveness doesn't
erase accountability. It tests whether
repentance is real**

Receiving Forgiveness

When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?"

Genesis 50:15

Joseph's brothers have been living for years under the offer of forgiveness but never accepted forgiveness

Under their model of forgiveness, they had to earn it (v. 18)

The reality is that Joseph forgave them, but they could not forgive themselves



Receiving Forgiveness

You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives

Genesis 50:20

Joseph did not let them off the hook and say what happened was OK

He also did not say I have moved on, because he could not

Forgiveness doesn't deny the wrong; it declares that God's plan is greater than man's failure



Donkey of Forgiveness

Joseph could have been justified in accepting their offer

But it would not have undone the past

Instead of reconciliation, it would have produced resentment

**Over time, that fear would have hardened into distance,
because repayment never leads to restoration**



**All of Joseph's dreams had come true,
but only forgiveness kept them from
becoming nightmares**

Donkey of Forgiveness

Unforgiveness keeps us looking backward in regret because nothing has broken yet

We keep holding the debt

We keep guarding the wound

We keep rehearsing the past

But forgiveness only begins when something finally is allowed to break



Broken to Forgiveness

In Joseph's story, every step of forgiveness required something to break

His silence broke before his tears fell

His control broke before grace flowed

**His right to revenge broke before
reconciliation was possible**



Broken Together

For forgiveness to be needed something must be broken

For forgiveness to be offered, somebody must be broken

**For forgiveness to be received somebody else
must be broken**

That's forgiveness broken together



“So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.” And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.”

Genesis 50:21

Easter Weekend

— CELEBRATE THE HOPE OF CHRIST —

Seasons of Prayer

GOOD FRIDAY • "I AM" THEME

AN INTERACTIVE PRAYER EXPERIENCE

8:00 AM - 5:30 PM

EASTER SUNDAY

— *He is Risen!* —



EASTER
BREAKFAST

9:15 AM

CELEBRATION
SERVICE

10:30 AM

Everyone Welcome! • Invite Your Family & Friends!

**Maybe your journey feels heavy
not because the path is hard, but
because you're trying to hold
together what God is asking you
to surrender and let be broken**

