

HEALING FROM LIFE'S HURTS

Part 8 of Foundations 260 - OT. Genesis 45:1-8.

Peter Foxwell. The Cornerstone Church. March 1, 2026.

Dismiss the Middle School

THIS COULD BE A GAME-CHANGER

Maybe once or twice in life, we gain an insight that changes everything. Today could be that moment for you.

We're going to read an ancient story about Joseph, a man who lived thousands of years ago, but the insights we gain from it are still fresh and relevant today.

We'll read how Joseph healed from devastating hurts. We'll see how he got unstuck after being betrayed and unjustly treated. We'll learn how he let go of desires for revenge and retaliation. Instead of getting bitter, he got better.

And doing what he did will be our pathway to healing from life's hurts. It's a game-changer

I want to help you heal from life's hurts. Maybe you were hurt or abused by a family member. Or a church. Or at work. Or maybe a marriage fell apart. And you're still wounded or feeling stuck.

All of us have the "tattoos" and scars left by shattered dreams and broken promises. Happily, one of the benefits of the Christian faith is access to emotional healing and the Great Healer, God Himself.

So, let's read Joseph's story and discover our pathway to healing.

GENESIS 45:1-8

Joseph's brothers traveled to Egypt, hoping to purchase grain during a famine in their homeland. They gained an audience with the prime minister, who was Joseph. He knows who they are, but they don't recognize him. Suddenly, he identifies himself. The situation is tense. Would Joseph kill them all?

Genesis 45:1-8 (CSB) Joseph could no longer keep his composure in front of all his attendants, so he called out, "Send everyone away from me!" No one was with him when he revealed his identity to his brothers. 2 But he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and also Pharaoh's household heard it. 3 Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But they could not answer him because they were terrified in his presence.

4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Please, come near me," and they came near. "I am Joseph, your brother," he said, "the one you sold into Egypt. 5 And now don't be grieved or angry with yourselves for selling me here, because God sent me ahead of you to preserve life. 6 For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there will be five more years without plowing or harvesting. 7 God sent me ahead of you to establish you as a remnant within the land and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. 8 Therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household, and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Joseph's story unpacks a pathway to healing from life's hurts. There are three decisions we must make. Let's learn them now.

1. THE DECISION TO REVEAL OUR HURTS.

When we hold onto emotional pain, or try to ignore it, or stuff it down deep, it doesn't go away. Instead:

- **We build a shell.** We guard ourselves from people so they can't get close enough to hurt us.
- **We blow up.** Our wounds fester and ferment deep inside until they explode in anger and depression. It may take years or decades, but the volcanic emotional eruption will surely come. It's going to be ugly.

Joseph had an emotional meltdown in front of his brothers. Years of hurt and pain, resentment, and anger boiled over. The Bible says that ... *he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and also Pharaoh's household heard it.*

Those weren't tears of joy at his family reunion. No, they were part of an emotional explosion that **revealed** how deep his wounds went.

Then, Joseph revealed to his brothers what they had done to him. He named his pain and assigned blame. It was honest and straightforward: *"I am Joseph, your brother," he said, "the one you sold into Egypt"* (verse 4).

Revealing is healing. It's better to talk about our wounds before our feelings explode. There are four helpful ways to reveal what you've been through:

1. Talk to the Lord, *"This is what happened, and this is how I feel about it."*
2. Keep a journal where you vent your feelings in writing.
3. Meet with a trusted friend or professional helper.
4. Talk to the people who hurt you - but only if it's safe and with support.

2. THE DECISION TO REFRAME OUR EXPERIENCE.

We need an accurate perspective on what happened to us. That's how Joseph dealt with his pain in verses 5-8. He put God in the frame, saying that God permitted his brothers to sell him into slavery **for a purpose**, to save his family and the world. That sounds grandiose, but it was accurate:

Genesis 50:20 (CSB) You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result — the survival of many people.

Instead of drifting into fatalism (“it doesn’t matter”), denial (“it wasn’t that bad”), or self-blame, it helps to name the bigger purpose behind our suffering.

We have to climb above the pain to see God’s purpose. For example:

- **God wants to refine our hope so that it is focused on him:**

Romans 5:3-4 (CSB) ... we know that affliction produces endurance, 4 endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope.

- **God wants to increase our empathy for hurting people:**

2 Corinthians 1:4 (CSB) He comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

- **God wants to advance his salvation plan:**

Acts 2:23 (CSB) Though he (Jesus) was delivered up according to God’s determined plan and foreknowledge, you used lawless people to nail him to a cross and kill him.

Whenever you experience hurt, reframe it. Tell yourself, “*I don’t love what I’m going through, but God has a good purpose for this. He never wastes a hurt.*”

When we shake off self-pity, we empower ourselves to heal, move on, and grow.

3. THE DECISION TO RELEASE OUR ENEMIES.

The most significant decision on the path to emotional healing is to release those who hurt us, to forgive them. In doing that, we also release ourselves.

Joseph showed that he had forgiven his brothers by his actions. He didn't hurt them; he did not kill them; instead, he helped them.

Genesis 50:19-21 (CSB) Joseph said to them (his brothers), "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? 20 You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result — the survival of many people. 21 Therefore, don't be afraid. I will take care of you and your children." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

When we're hurt by someone, it doesn't feel good to forgive them. But when we refuse to forgive, we put ourselves in a prison of bitterness and anger.

Holding a grudge is like drinking poison and hoping the other person dies. We want to hurt them, but we end up hurting ourselves.

The best reason to forgive is that we're forgiven.:

Ephesians 4:32 (CSB) And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.

God sent his Son to die for his enemies - people like us (Romans 5:10). Whatever someone did to you was already judged and paid for on the Cross.

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1. **We release the one who hurt us from revenge or punishment.** We choose not to hurt them or use what they did against them. There's an important caveat: There are situations in which it is right to report a person to the authorities. That's not revenge, it's necessary.
2. **Forgiveness is not the same as trust.** Forgiveness is instant, but trust is earned over time. We should keep our distance from dangerous people.
3. When it's wise to do so, **we do good to them.** We bless our enemy. Again, there are times when we should keep our distance.
4. It's best that we forgive **immediately.** We don't wait for them to repent or apologize because they may never do that.
5. **We forgive because it sets us free** from the root of bitterness that will eventually choke and kill our faith. We forgive so that God's healing work can continue in our lives.

YOUR HEALING PATH

There is a moment during the crucifixion of Christ that feels confusing to me. Heartless soldiers stripped Jesus naked and nailed him to the cross, but Jesus prayed out loud:

Luke 23:34 (CSB) Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing."

The soldiers didn't ask for forgiveness, and I don't imagine they cared what Jesus said. They were cruel, and their actions were unjust and evil. But Jesus prayed it anyway.

He released them. And that's confusing to me. He should have called down the wrath of God. Why didn't he? Three reasons:

- To reveal and offer **God's mercy** and forgiveness to sinners like us.
- To **reframe the situation** with God at the center, He knew his death would open the floodgates of salvation to the world, that 50 days later, thousands of people in Jerusalem would repent and turn to him in faith, and 2000 years later, we would gather here, forgiven and free, to worship our Savior.
- So that he would go to his grave **free from bondage to bitterness.** He is the pure, holy, loving, and gracious Savior.

Our experience of forgiveness in Christ is the catalyst for our healing journey. We can **reveal** our hurts in healthy ways, **reframe** our experience with God's purpose in mind, and **release** those who hurt us.

It gets us unstuck from the past. We will live and love again. We will heal from life's hurts.

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Review

- Review Peter's March 1st teaching and study guide.
- What were the main insights of Peter's teaching?
- What questions do you have about the passage or Peter's teaching?
- What were the main applications or takeaways for your life?

Discuss

1. Joseph both confronts the sin ("you sold") and comforts his brothers ("don't be grieved...or angry with yourselves"); what's hard about holding truth and tenderness together when you've been hurt by someone?
2. What's the difference in real life between revealing feelings in a healthy way that facilitates emotional healing and rehashing hurts to stay stuck (self-pity, wallowing)? Try talking about a concrete situation.
3. Describe a time when it helped you to name God's bigger purpose for a painful experience, such as growing your character, empathy, ministry, wisdom, or dependence on God. How did it help?
4. Ephesians 4:32 ties forgiving others to being forgiven in Christ; how does remembering God's mercy change what feels "impossible" to release?

Prayer Focus

- 247: "Lord, please add daily to the Cornerstone those who are being saved."
- Pray for each other to experience God's healing power for life's hurts.