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[00:00:05] Genesis, 45. Open up your Bibles, if you would, with me today. And I'm going to go ahead and read. Beginning in verse one, the Bible says then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, make everyone go out from me, so no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. You guys remember where we're at? And he wept aloud and the Egyptians in the house. The Pharaoh heard it. Then Joseph said to his brothers, because they didn't know they did not recognize them. I'm Joseph. Does my father still live? But his brothers could not answer for they were dismayed in his presence. You can imagine. And Joseph said to his brothers, Please come near me. Super important phrase. We'll get back to that in a little bit. So they came near. Then he said, I'm Joseph, your brother, whom you sold him to Egypt. Remember? Remember now, but now do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here for God, sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years, the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither flowering nor nor harvesting. And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the Earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God. And he has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all of his house and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him. Thus, says, your son, Joseph God has made me Lord of all Egypt.

[00:01:40] Come down to me. Do not carry you shall dwell in the land of Goshen and you shall be near to me, you and your children and your children's children, your flocks and your herds and all that you have there. I will provide for you last you and your household and all that you have come to poverty for. There are still five years of famine. And behold your eyes in the eyes of my brother Benjamin. See that it is my mouth that speaks to you. So you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt and of all that you have seen, and you shall hurry and bring my father down here. Then he fell on his brother, Benjamin's neck and wept. And Benjamin wept on his neck. Moreover, he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that, his brothers talked with him and father we're thankful. Just so grateful God to be able to just to see how this story of conflict and dysfunction and and anger and confusion all of it. Ultimately, God reconciled. God reconciled because you never stopped working, reconciled because you never stopped caring and loving, reconciled because God, you got hold of hearts. And today we do ask that God for those relationships that are represented by those who are here today in this room are listening online. Those broken relationships that need the reconciling power of the cross. Father, show us the way, show us the way, cause our hearts to be unsettled until we at least have done all that is within our ability to do. In Jesus name, amen, you can have a seat. Well, not that you need to know any more information about me today, but, you know, I have been kind of overwhelmed, a little bit overwhelmed is the wrong word surprises the wrong word, but I'm going to stick with surprise.

[00:03:36] I'm a little surprised. I've been a little surprised this week at the amount of news bandwidth that has been dedicated to the drama that's happening with Johnny Depp and Amber Heard. All right. And in case you don't know who I'm talking about, I'm talking about Captain Jack Sparrow and Aqua Woman. All right, maybe that. Maybe that helps you put it in the framework. But but honestly, for me, it's like now you turn the news on and it's just like this relentless flow of relentless flow. And it makes me think, Man, I have we really become this addicted to celebrity drama? Is there really just because, you know, it's not just the machine of the news, like it's feeding something that exists within society? And what is it? Why is it that there is just this insatiable appetite for drama, for knowing drama in the lives of celebrities? And and you know, I think the easy answer for us is to say, well, gossip. I mean, gossip. We love gossip. People love gossip. You know you're interested. People are interested in what's happening, happening in the lives of others. But you know, I think I have I have an idea on this, I think is deeper than that. I think that sometimes there's this cathartic experience that we have as we watch television and we see drama in the lives of people. In some ways, I think that, you know, we put ourselves in their place as if it's our own drama that's being played out because the reality is there's drama in all of our lives. There's relationship drama. Anybody got a little drama today going on, you know, maybe let's do this OK drama in the past. Raise your hand. All right. Drama in the present.

[00:05:18] Raise your hand. Okay. A little drama coming in the future. Probably raise your hand. That's everybody hands up. And this is not a stickup, but hands up. So look, I think that I think we identify, you know, I think that we identify. And so we're drawn to it because it's like, man, we got some of that in our own life. Maybe not to the same extent and certainly not the same circumstances. And the fact is this this is one reason why you love the authenticity of scripture. This is one reason you're drawn to the Bible, and you're grateful that the Bible doesn't conceal the unlovely parts of humanity. You know, we read the story about Joseph in Man. The way it rolls out for sure is intriguing, but there's also part of us that that is like, God, that's me. That conflict, that drama. Thank you for being so willing to present it in the lives of the Patriarchs, because now I do see that everybody, everybody has these issues on their hands happening in their lives. And that is why this story feels so good. What it ends the right way. Like, I just read these verses today and there's something within all of us that's like, Oh man, there's a relief, right? There is a relief because I think that I think inside deep inside, we're all we're all acknowledging that it can work out like no matter how bad it might be, it can work out. And let me just make sure we all understand what I say. It can work out. I mean, God can work it out. I mean, God can work it out because there is no it just working itself out. God has got to be the one who is at work.

[00:06:56] Broken relationships can burden us our whole lives until reconciliation occurs. And, you know, no matter, no matter if maybe today you're like, Well, you know what? I just move on. I just move on. I just start over. I just dear friend, I just disconnect. No, you don't. You don't just do that. There is still a piece of you that's unsettled until that relationship is reconciled and settled. And I'm grateful that God provides a pathway for real reconciliation if we are willing to take it. God does provide a pathway for real reconciliation if we are willing to take it. Now, when I say reconciliation, this is this is what I mean. I'm talking about the restoration of relationships and peace where there had previously been hostility and alienation. So you're talking about two or more people who were in relationship with one another, family relationship, work, relationship, friends and something has happened. There's been an incident that's occurred and has created hostility. I don't mean hostility in a physically violent sense, although sometimes that happens. I'm talking about where there was peace now. There's war right where there was friendship and and and joy in a relationship. Now that's been divided. When I say alienation, I'm talking about separation and not just geographic separation, but I'm talking about relational. Operation and reconciliation means that that issue that caused the offense has been identified and resolved. This is the hard part of reconciliation. When true reconciliation happens, it means that those parties that have been involved have identified the offense that has occurred and they've come to some sort of agreement on it. Not just about what it was, but how it is that they're going to move forward. You know, I've said this to you maybe a hundred times.

[00:08:57] So let's just make it one hundred and one today. It takes one person to forgive. It takes two people to reconcile. It takes one person to forgive. It takes two two people to reconcile. My belief is that as a Christian, God has supplied me with everything that I need to be able to forgive those who have offended me, who have sinned against me. I don't need to wait for that person to come and to make a confession and to repent so I can see all of it lined up. You know, I can go to the cross. I can confess my hurt before the Lord. I can receive the forgiveness that he has given to me for my sins that have been committed against him. And then I can freely give that to other people who don't who don't necessarily deserve it. Because let me tell you something. The forgiveness that God gives you is not deserved. It's not deserved. And so it takes one person. And this is just so good because the good news of this is you don't have to live your life being bitter at people and keeping records of wrong and holding grudges. You know, some of us today were were grudge holders, and over the course of time, what's happened is we've just become like a polluted, well, you know, we're toxic and we have the tendency to look around us and blamed everybody else for it. But the fact is this there has been an event in our life that took root. And instead of pulling that route up out above the surface and and dealing with it, we've allowed it to get a foothold in us. And over the course of time it has produced on forgiveness it's produced bitterness.

[00:10:34] It is produced all sorts of things that bring dysfunction and toxicity into relationships. And so reconciliation, it takes two people and there aren't always two agreeing parties. But when we do reconcile, it means that two or more parties have come together and they've they've resolved the issue. You say, well, like, how is this applicable to life today? Well, the fact is, it's always applicable because there's always drama and relationships. I mean, I wish I could stand here and say to you, you know, in this life, every relationship will always be perfect and it'll be drama free. God bless you in Jesus name. Amen. And and it's just not the case. It's just not the case, and it's fatiguing. Man is fatiguing how much work relationships take. Right? I mean, just over preferences like like, how do you wind down? Well, I happen to watch. No, I'm just kidding. All right. But it it. But it is an issue because listen, we talk about how unprecedented these last two years have been with COVID 19 in the political drama and the economic fallout, not just in a localized sense, but in a global sense. And we use the word unprecedented and we tie it into all those things. But I'll tell you what's been even more unprecedented has been the division, the division, the conflict, the differences of opinion over all of these issues. COVID 19 mask mandate, vaccines. You know, the political piece, all of that stuff. There has been division in family families. There's been division among friends. You know, some of you we've sat down and we've talked about how difficult it is to find yourself in a place where it's like in you're, the nucleus of your own family. There's conflict over these issues.

[00:12:24] Conflict in the church. Churches are divided. You know, we did it on a daily devotions. We did a series called Wrestling With, and we really wanted to drill down on areas that that we, as Christians, struggle, you know, and just to be honest about it, because sometimes we're not altogether honest about those things. And so, you know, we did we did a series one of the series. One of the teachings in this series was on division in the church. And it was or at least it was at one point it was the most watched devotion of all of the devotions in that series. And why is that the case? Because listen, we feel it, we feel the conflict, and sometimes we don't know how to necessarily resolve it. So. So listeners, we're two years past the whole COVID 19 thing. And you know, we're starting to clean up society. In a sense, I would I would say there's probably relationships that we have that need to be cleaned up. As well. It is fascinating to me because I'm fascinated by stuff like this is fascinating to me that 10 percent of the Book of Genesis is dedicated to this story is dedicated to, you know, like if you were to say, if God were to say to you, Hey, listen, we've got creation, we've got the fall, we've got the promise of of Abraham. Like, where do you want me to dedicate the bulk of the of the book? You say, we'll probably do those things. What does God do? He dedicated to this conflict in this family, 10 percent of the book and it's been it's been a journey. You know, last time we were with Joseph, remember he'd gone from prison to prime minister.

[00:14:01] What a difference a day can make. But remember, with Joseph, it had been the plan of God all along. It had been a long road to that point. It had been some 13 or 14 years. So what has happened is he's sitting as the prime minister. There's been seven years of plenty. Joseph, because he was a wise administrator, had been accumulating grain and other sources of food to sustain not only the nation of Egypt, but other nations as well. And now, as we pick the story up, we're a couple of years into the famine the famine had reached beyond Egypt. It had reached up into Canaan, where Jacob and his family were dwelling. It was so bad, Jacob said. Hey, listen, I've got news that there's there's a dude that's not in the original language, but you know, there's this guy that's down in Egypt. He's a very wise man. And, you know, Egypt has prepared itself in him, realize that he was he was hearing about his own son. And so he sends ten of his sons, right? He has 12 sons, one he thinks his dad, Benjamin is his youngest son, and Benjamin is a product of Jacob's marriage with Rachel. They together had two children, Joseph and Benjamin. That becomes important later on. He sends ten of his sons down. He holds on to Benjamin because he doesn't want to lose Benjamin. The boys go down and they stand before Joseph. They don't recognize him. And this was the way it worked. Joseph, if you wanted food, you had to stand before. Joseph Joseph recognizes his brothers and he is unrecognizable to them. And so what he does is, he says, Listen, you've not come for food. You guys are spies.

[00:15:42] You're here to spy out the land and the like. Whoa, whoa. Wait a minute. We're not spies. We have a father and another brother up in the land of Canaan. There's 12 of us. One is dead. One's back at home with our father. Joseph throws his brothers into prison for three days, and then he lets them out and he says, Listen, I'm going to verify your story to see if you're really telling the truth. This is what you're going to do. Nine of you are going back to your father and we're going to keep one of you here and you go and get that other brother and you bring him back. And then I'll know that you're telling me the truth and you're not lying. And so Joseph keeps Simeon. The nine brothers go back to Jacob and they say, Hey, listen, you know, he dealt really harshly with us. He accused us of this, that and the other thing. And so what we need to do is we need to take Benjamin with us and go down. Otherwise, you're never going to see Simeon again. And Jacob's like, Man, you guys have bereaved me of one child already. I'm not losing Benjamin to Jacob says, forget it. Totally reluctant. Well, the famine gets worse, and it gets so bad that Jacob has no. He has no choice but to send Benjamin down with the other brothers, and so they all go down together. There's ten of them now with Benjamin. They get down to Egypt and Joseph greets them. He brings them into his house and he has dinner with them. He sets them around the table from the oldest to the youngest. They still don't even know that he's their brother. And they're astonished.

[00:17:14] They're like, They're like, What? What is happening here? How is it possible that this person knows the that the birth order? And so so what happens is each of them is given a bag full of provision. Joseph loads them up, says, Hey, you guys told the truth. Loads them up. Releases. Simeon sends them back, but he takes one of the precious items in his house and he plants it in Benjamin's bag. So the brothers, all 11 of them are headed back up to Jacob. Sorry, I know this is taking a long time, but you just got to catch this. They're heading back up to Jacob. Joseph sends one of his guys and confronts some says, Hey, wait a minute, you guys came in and you told this story and you got provision, but you stole something from the house and the guys are like, We stole nothing. We didn't steal anything at all. If you find that stolen item in one of our bags, that person's going to be your slave Joseph slave for the rest of their life. And so they go bag by bag by bag. They get to Benjamin. They open his bag and there it is in his bag and the Bible says they tore their clothes, right? They tore their clothes. They go back. Back to Joseph, they're standing before Joseph and Judah steps up, and he says, listen, this is this is our father's youngest son. He's lost one son already. If he loses another, it'll be the death of our father. Therefore, please take my life, take my life instead of my brother's life. And you say, Why is this a big deal? Because it was Judah who who was responsible for leading the brothers into selling Joseph in the first place.

[00:18:54] It was to idea Judas like, Hey, wait a minute, why? Why kill the kid when we can make some money off of them? And Judah was the was the one who initiated that whole process. And now what we see is there's this pretty significant change in Judas Life, where Judas says, Listen, take me, I'm going to lay my life down as a ransom. There's so much there is so much imagery of the cross here in all of this. Of course, he is the lion of the tribe of Judah. But take my life as a ransom in his place, and it's that that breaks Joseph's heart. It's in that moment. Joseph he he calls all of his servants to leave, and he weeps so loudly that Pharaoh next door hears him and he reveals himself to his brothers. This is twenty three years after he was sold into slavery. Twenty three, it took twenty three years to bring this broken family to a place of reconciliation. And today, listen, I want to. I believe like this is one of the most powerful stories in human history concerning reconciling broken relationships for sure in the Bible. But this is like this story is is so full of principles for us to be able to choose to walk a path of reconciliation and broken relationships. If you're taking notes today and if you're not taking notes, take them in your heart. Number one, is this three key principles that will lead us to a place where we're able to be reconciled in those areas where relationships are broken. Number one, this is what I see from the scriptures is reconciliation. It takes real change. Reconciliation takes real change. You know you think, man, what was the purpose of Joseph shenanigans? I mean, the guy put his brothers through it.

[00:20:45] Why did he do that? Why did he go to such great lengths to put the pressure on them? And I think that this is why he did it. He wanted to make sure there had been real change. I mean, twenty three years down the road, is this still the group of guys that just sold into slavery and were even willing to have potentially just a murder him to throw him into a pit and to leave? Or was there something that had happened over the course of time? Joseph employed these different things to make sure that there had been some sense of transformation, and in fact, there had been all of the brothers. As you read the story and you can read it later. Chapter 42 to forty five All of the brothers, including Judah Judah, was that guy. Judah was the perpetrator. You know, Judah was the one, like I said, who had initiated this whole thing. But all of the brothers over the course of time had been clearly had the minister to clearly by God. How can you know this is we're going to call this repentance today, because that's what it is. How can you know that you've really locked in sincere and genuine repentance? I'm going to give you the three C's, the three C's of repentance. OK, do you know what the three C's are? OK. They're not the three Zs. You're not falling asleep on me today. They're the three. They're the three C's. Number one is conviction. Number one is conviction. These guys were clearly convicted. If you, you don't have to. But if you want to back in Chapter 42, verse 21, the first time they're standing before Joseph, they've been thrown into prison. And this is what they say to each other.

[00:22:22] They're speaking in Hebrew, but they don't understand that Joseph can understand what they're saying. This was their conversation. We are truly guilty concerning our brother. Four. We saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear. Therefore, this distress has come upon us, so they're collectively saying, Listen, you know what? We're guilty, we're guilty. We saw how distressed Joseph was when we threw him in that pit and we didn't do anything about it. Right? Then the Bible goes on to say that Ruben spoke up and you said, Didn't I speak to you? He does. He does this whole. I told you so moment, right? Hey, don't be. I told you so, person, OK, don't be that person. That's like I told you. You know, I told you that was wrong because Ruben was just as guilty. But clearly there was there was conviction. They were sensitive to the conviction. They acknowledge we'll talk about this. In just a second, they acknowledged out loud that conviction. We call it confession. But you know, what happens sometimes is we bury conviction. We bury it. The spirit of God. He convicts us, identifies an area in our life that is wrong thinking that's been wrong, speaking that's been wrong. Maybe the way we've handled relationships, it's just simply not been right. And you know, what we do sometimes is we bury. We sweep it under the rug. We try to numb it by drugs and alcohol. We try to wish it away. Well, you know, we get new family members. We start all over again. We get new friends. We delete our friends. We live in an era where you actually can delete or you can think that you can delete your friends.

[00:24:02] And the truth is, there's none of those things. None of those things resolve the issue of guilt. They don't. When the spirit of God is convicting, we're not called to bury. We're not called to numb. We're not called to start over. We're called to receive it. We're called to walk in it 14 years, 14 years after the fact. And there was that convicting work of God in their in their hearts. Oftentimes, what we want is God to convict other people instead of God convicting us. Because when we're in broken relationships, the tendency that we have is to focus on the fault of others and instead of our own personal responsibility. Are you with me on that? The second thing is confession. The second C today is confession. And that is precisely what happens with Judah. Judah having come back and now in a situation situation with Benjamin, he says these words to Joseph in Chapter 44, verse 16. He says this to this guy who's a stranger, right? Doesn't know he's his brother. He says, What shall we say to my Lord? What shall we speak or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants. Here we are, my lord slaves. Both we and he, also with whom the couple was found. So the second thing is confession. And that's what Joseph or excuse me, that's what Judah does on behalf of his brothers. Like, he just says it straight to Joseph. God has found out the iniquity of your servants. God has has not only shown us these things, but but all of these events that have rolled out have put us in the position where we just can't ignore it anymore. And so we're speaking out what is true.

[00:25:46] You know, sometimes I think when we think of confession, you know, we're settled with just acknowledging it on the inside, acknowledging our error or our fault. And we think that as long as we've acknowledged it to ourselves, that that's sufficient. But remember that the Bible says confession first starts with God. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. So when we're in that place in the spirit of God is convicting our hearts and we own it, we take responsibility. We're not focused on what others have done. We're focused on our part, and God reveals that what we do is we bring it back to him in confession, like David did when he was convicted of his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah the Hittite, he said in Psalm, 51, against you and you alone have sinned, right? The pathway to personal healing always starts with confession to God. But then the second piece of that is for the people that we've offended. And I'm not saying today that you've got to, you know, go make a list of every person you've offended and email them, text them, you know, posted on social media. I'm not saying that. I'm saying God will guide you in that. But listen, when you're in that place where you're trying to reconcile a relationship that's been broken, taking ownership in confessing your sin to the other party opens the door for real healing to take place. And the third thing the third C today, not the third z. Stick with me is change is real change. And that's how Chapter 44 wraps up. It says the Bible does in verse 33 now. Therefore, this is Judah, of course, stepping in as a ransom.

[00:27:28] Now, therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the Lad as a slave to my Lord and let the Lad go up with his brothers. And so the third thing that we see is what we see real change, right? Because Judas gone from this guy that he like, he really could not care less about his brothers to the extent where he was willing to sell one into slavery to a place now where he's saying, I'll give my life for his life, you know, I'll give my life for his life. He owned it, and it was evident that he owned it because there was change in his life. If you and I are really going to evaluate how we walk in repentance and whether or not we really are sincerely repentant, you have to have those three things. There's conviction, there's confession, and then there's change. And by the way, this is what Paul was talking about in Second Corinthians Chapter seven, verse 10. Remember, Paul challenged this church. They were walking in sin. In a variety of different ways. And as he had corrected them, there was real change that was produced in their life, and this is this is what you said to them. He said for godly sorrow produces repentance, leading to salvation, not to be regretted, but the sorrow of the world produces death. So there are two types of sorrow, right? You can have the sorrow that you're bummed out because you got busted, you got caught, you got the ticket. Well, since we're like having a day of unveiling all of Pastor Derek's inadequacies, I got a ticket for speeding two days ago. I did. I did. I did. I did look, I was only going 90, so I mean, it wasn't wasn't too bad.

[00:29:16] I do like speed is a problem for sure, but but the real repentance in my life is going to be manifested by me going the speed limit. OK, that's that's that's the deal. So listen, just just because you get busted or just because, you know, it's become inconvenient, inconvenient to you, or maybe like there's real emotion, right? It's a difficult situation and there is some pain. And so maybe you cry, well, that doesn't necessarily mean you've repented. Godly sorrow produces repentance, and this is how Paul described it for the Corinthians for observed this very thing that you saw out in a godly manner what diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what, fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication. In all these things, you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter. So in other words, Paul says, I know, I know that there was conviction. I know that there was confession. And it's evident that there's been real change because you guys have gone the extra mile. This, in resisting personal responsibility and relationships, will bring toxicity into them. You and I need to own the part that we're responsible for and maybe for you like that just seems almost impossible. You're thinking today, Well, how do I do that? And my answer is turn to the cross, turn to the cross. It's at the Cross of Christ, where you'll find power to do what is not within yourself to do. It's at the Cross of Christ that you will find the reason, the reason to take these steps. The reason is this If he is forgiven us like this, then we should freely forgive one another. And at the cross, you'll find purpose, right? Our purpose is to bring glory and honor to God were image bearers and broken relationships do not bring glory and honor to God.

[00:31:03] Reconciliation is impossible unless there's real spiritual change and real change starts with. US, me. I'm waiting for someone to say you like pointing at me, you're like, you, pastor, you need to start real thank you. Real change, real change starts with me. I want you to say that today, real change starts with me. The second thing today is this reconciliation means understanding how much God loves everyone. And I love this. You know, you can highlight verse seven and eight. We talked about it last week. I'm not going to reread it today. And I know that you theologically inclined people, when I say it is, you're going to be thinking, well, this and you know, the real theological purpose of God preserving this family was because of the promise that he'd made to Abraham that threw him. All nations would be blessed. And so really, what God was preserving was this was this promise to bring Messiah into the world. And listen, that is absolutely true. But I want to say to you as well that God cared for this family. God cared for these people. God cared not only for Jacob and his sons, but also all of their kids. And this is exactly what Joseph says. He's like, Hey, listen, I've got a message for you guys, and my message is this God cares about you. God loves you. You didn't do this to me. God did this to me. And the purpose of God doing this was to show you how much he loves you. That twenty three years ago, when all of this happened, what God was doing because he sees the end from the beginning. He was providing a way for you to be preserved. And listen, I think about how because you know, he he could have he could have totally focused on self indication here, which is probably what I would have done.

[00:32:53] You know, Joseph could have made it all about himself. He could have been like, Hey, you guys are total losers. And and you know, I mean, how evil do you guys have to be? But you know what? God loves me more than you guys did. And look what God's done for me. And look how much power I have and look at the position that God's God's given to me like this, I think, is the root most of us would take. It would be a moment for self vindication, but he doesn't do that. He brings it back to them because he recognized that in all of it, God was expressing how much he loved his brothers. And so let me say to you today, don't forget that God loves your enemies. Don't forget that God loves your enemies. And I'm going like in our minds, as low as we possibly can. Because, you know, sometimes sometimes our tendency when there's people that are against us, they've kind of positioned themselves as adversaries. You know, they don't bring blessing into our life. They bring pain and sometimes they do it on purpose. Sometimes, you know, instead of like loving those people, we're asking God to. You know, I mean, you know, some of you you've memorized scriptures to justify your prayers against people like, Hey, Pastor, you know, David said, you know, God, break the teeth of my enemies. And so I'm just praying the word of God bro, you know? And you know, maybe you kind of count yourself as merciful and you're not praying that God would break all their teeth. You're like, God, just break a tooth, you know, I mean, just just one, you know, and maybe give him an implant or something like that later.

[00:34:32] But, you know, make it hurt. Just make it hurt for a while. And, you know, sometimes like before we go to sleep, by the way, this is why I watch quantum mechanics because I don't want my mind thinking that on our pillow, you know, sometimes we can create the the greatest plans of retribution. You know, like before you go to bed, you're thinking, Man, this that and that and this and and you're asking God to be on your side to join you. Right? I mean, God, help us, God. God, you're on my side, right here on my side. Like we've got we got a dividing line here and there, over there with the devil there on the double side. And God, you're on. You're on my side. You're with me. You're for me. We sing that song. And sometimes when you see no worship song, that's what you're saying and you're like, Oh God, you're on my side. But this is what he said to his disciples. He said, This Matthew five forty four, I say to you, love your enemies. Bless those who curse you too good. Did those who hate you and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, right? When was the last time you're like, Man, I'm own and that promise, I'm owning that word, you know? And listen, he had to deconstruct the current thinking of the time in a religious sense. This is his deconstruction, he said to them. You have heard that it was said to those of old, you will hate your enemies. But I say to you, like, Hey, you've been taught this in synagogue, you've been taught this on the temple. The religious leaders have reinforced to you that it's OK for you in the eyes of God to hate those who are against you.

[00:36:03] But he says, No, that's not the way it really is. You'll love your enemies. You'll bless those who curse you. You'll do good to those who hate you. You'll pray for those who spitefully use you. Just think about those four verbs right to love, to bless, to do good and to pray. And why? Why is that the case? Because we're called to love like God loves, and that's how God loves. He goes on to say, it's God who makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust like God bless is there is the general blessing of God upon his whole creation, even those who have positioned themselves against him. I know this is true for you before you are a Christian like. From this vantage point, you can look back to your B.C. Days and you can still see the mercy and grace of God operating in your life. Can you not? Can can you look back and say, man, even even then, even then, when I wanted nothing to do with God, even then, when I was giving Christians a hard time, even then God was merciful to me. You know, we are called to love like God loves. He goes on to say to his disciples, What reward do you have if you love those who love you? Don't tax collectors and sinners do the same thing? No, but you will be perfect just as your father in heaven is perfect. Some of you are like, perfect, like God. I could never be perfect, like God. But what Jesus is saying is you need to be complete in this manner, in the manner of love, in the way that you love.

[00:37:40] We are called to be complete. We are called to love thoroughly, just as God loves and listen. If you just love those who love you. I mean, what miracle does that take right? You can be totally conditional. There can be strings that are attached. It's not until God puts an otherwise impossible relationship before you, where you've got to do something that is totally outside of human nature, right? Where you're depending on God. God, I can't do this. I, in and of myself, can't love this person, but I'm going to choose to receive your love and extend it freely to this person, even though they have. And then you fill the blank in because the truth is this you are an instrument of God's love to other people. You are God's instrument, right? There is a there is a plan that God has for those people that are on the other side, right? And whatever that means for you today, whatever the other side in your mind is. Guess what? Newsflash, God loves those people and God wants you. He wants to use your life to show his love through you to them. And so let me just say shocker today. It's not all about you, right? It's not all about you. Sometimes for these situations, we boil it down to us. It's about me. It's about how I feel. It's about how I've been if. And to know there's a bigger picture and the bigger picture is this those are people that God loves and he wants to use our lives to demonstrate his love. Are you with me today on that? The third thing that, hey, don't clap if you don't want to. All right. The third thing is this real right here like.

[00:39:26] Real reconciliation is firmly planted on the providence of God. The final thing today is this and some of you have been waiting for the final thing. Here it is. Real reconciliation is firmly planted on God's providence. Real reckon. Stick with me on this, OK? Just a couple of minutes more. This is important for you. It'll impact your life. Sometimes I hear Christians say, Hey bro, you know what? You just need to let it go. You just need to let it go. Like, what does that even mean? Let let it go into what? Yeah, you're right. I'm getting there. You're right. You're right. But people are like, Hey, let it go. Like, you know, just just let it go. Where let it go to who? Almost almost as if there's this magical thing that we can do where we just we just let it go into the oblivion and in somehow because we've gone through this process that it doesn't exist anymore. You know, that's just as wrong as saying to somebody, time heals all wounds. High time doesn't heals all wounds. There is no healing capacity and time in itself. It is a function of the time space continue continuum that we're in matter gravity and space. This is what happens before I go to bed there. There you have it. Your quantum mechanics for the day, but there's no healing properties of time. Time does not heal all wounds, and you don't just let things go. What you do is you take that thing that's caused you pain that is difficult, that that may be even be agonizing, and you place it into the hands of God and trust him with it. That's what you do. Look, you're letting it go into the hands of Christ.

[00:40:58] You're taking this piece of the puzzle of your life, right, that you just wish would go away. And it's not just going to go away and you're taking it and you're placing it in God's hands. You're casting your cares onto him because he cares for you. The word in the Greek language means to roll your cares over, to hand them over to God, to place them in his hands, and in that you're acknowledging God, you've got a plan for my life. God, you have a purpose for my life, and I believe that you are even able to take this thing and use it for good. That's what we do. Nothing is greater than the sovereign love of God that rules over your life. I just really want you to think about that today. All right. Because if you don't, the risk you run is you how you have the potential of taking this one thing that has been so hurtful. And and if you're not careful that one thing will end up influencing, in a negative sense, the rest of your life? And then, you know, the worse thing is this if you've been victimized now, that person not only perpetrated that thing against you then, but he or she still is is operating in a position of authority over your life in the present because you're the one who has chosen to hold on to it. And so let me just say this again. Nothing is greater than the sovereign love of God that rules over your life. You have to be settled in that place and you have to take those difficult issues and place them in the hands of God. I read this today, and as I was preparing, I was I was just struck by those five words to me to the most significant.

[00:42:40] When Joseph says to his brothers, right, the brothers that had betrayed him, that the brothers that had abandoned him wanted him to be murdered sold him into slavery. He says, Please come near me. Please come near me. He invites these perpetrators into his life again, and he's able to do it because there was conviction, there was confession, there was change, there was God's love and there was God's providence. And because because he had walked this path, it enabled him to step towards his brothers. You know, the great thing about this story is not the way it begins, it's the way that it ends. And I wonder today if in your life there isn't one relationship, maybe just one relationship, maybe in the workplace, maybe with a friend, maybe in the family, maybe a brother or sister in the body of Christ, where there has been brokenness and alienation and hostilities have ensued. And you know, there are lines that have been drawn and they're now the enemy. And today, my encouragement to you and I believe God's encouragement to us is we got to pray. We've got to pray and ask God to search our hearts so we can own what we need to own and then ask God to really begin to develop the pathway for reconciliation. You know, the truth is this sometimes people don't want reconciliation, but the Bible says if it is possible, as much as depends on you live peaceably with all men and women, let's pray together. And father, thank you. God, thank you that you've not just left us to our own dysfunction because we get it wrong so often we just do. And. We pray you'd forgive us. God forgive us for. Casting blame and. Pointing the finger at others.

[00:44:48] And not spending time at your feet with the Bible opened and. Just asking you to search our hearts. We pray today that you'd be merciful, just be merciful, God, where there's brokenness, we pray that you'd bring healing God when where there's been hostilities. We pray that you would supply your strength and help. Father, we prayed today that as steps are taken towards you, that that there would be amending God. In families and in marriages, parents with their children. Father in the church. Today, as our eyes are closed and as our heads are bowed, maybe today the relationship that needs to be mended in your life is your relationship with God. You know, the Bible says that all of us have sinned against God. There's a brokenness. And it's not that our relationship with God is broken because of him. That is not the case. God is not sinned against us. We've sinned against Him in our sins, have created a chasm between ourselves and God, or are they built a wall between ourselves and God? We've set ourselves on a side that can be construed as being at war with God. Today, you don't have to live your life any longer like that. Today you can. Come to God and be forgiven of your sins, and that wall can be torn down, the chasm can be bridged. What's been broken can be healed and the truth is this this is this is what you've needed all along. All of the other issues in your life have been a function. All of the dysfunction that you've had, all of the toxicity has been a function of your broken relationship with God. Would you take a step towards God today and would you put your trust and faith in Jesus Christ? The message of the gospel is simple.

[00:47:01] When you put your faith in Jesus, it's not you fixing your life or you becoming more religious as you trusting in the sun. And when you take that step of faith and trust in the one who died on the cross for you and rose again from the dead? This is what God does. He brings spiritual healing into your life today. Do you need to take that step of faith this morning? If this is you, you say, Pastor, that's me. I have a broken relationship with God and I want it to be healed. I want it to be mended. I want forgiveness. I want to leave this place in right standing with him today. If this is you, I want you to raise your hand this morning. I want to pray for you. Just stretch your hand up. You need to put your trust and faith in Jesus Christ. Raise your hand today. God bless you over here on my left. It's awesome. Anybody else? I see your hand in the back, thank you for raising your hand. Over here on my right. Thank you for raising your hand. And over here on my left, thank you so much for raising your hand. God bless you. Anybody else? Don't be afraid today to take a step of faith and trust in Christ, you're going to find you're going to discover a God that is always loved you. Today, maybe as a Christian, you need you need spiritual renewal, maybe today there have been events in your life that have embittered you and. And and, you know, in that place of becoming bitter, there's been distance that's been created between yourself and God. Maybe today you're the one who's created the conflict in the lives of others.

[00:48:44] And the truth is this God speaking to you today and and you just need to own it in relationship with him. And you need a fresh start in your walk with God today. If this is you, would you raise your hand? I'm going to pray for you as well. God bless you here in the center and over here on my right. I see your hand over here on my right as well. God bless you. Thank you. Here in the center, yes, sir. I see your hand and I see your hand over here. Thank you. I see your hand in the back. Thank you so much. See your hand to. He loves you so much. Over here on my right. A final thing today is this, you know, maybe there's a relationship that is broken that you just you need you need God to help you walk the path to reconciliation. And like I said, you know, my maybe a family member, maybe a friend today, you just need a work of God, a miracle. And today I want to pray for you too and to stretch your hand up high. God bless you. God bless all of you. Thank you so much. Thank you. I see your hands. Father, we're thankful this morning, God, that you are the one who who can do it. God, you can do it. You're the one who's able. And father, for each of these lives, as they step towards you with their need, we pray that you, the living God, the one who is present in this moment, would just supernaturally supply in undeniable ways the miracles today that are needed in Jesus name. Amen. Let's all stand together here today for those of you who raise your hand for whatever the case may be.

[00:50:30] Maybe you're giving your life to Christ. Or maybe there's a relationship issue that needs healing. Maybe today you know you're a Christian, but you need renewal in your relationship with the Lord. I want to lead you in prayer today. You need to take a step towards God today. It's good to be prayed for. It's better for you to step towards God and to ask him in prayer to supply exactly what it is that you need. And so Miriam and the team are going to lead us in a song of worship. I want to invite you if you raise your hand for whatever it might be. Make your way forward. You can just make your way down the aisles through the Rose Stand next to one of our follow up leaders. And then I'm going to lead you in a prayer this morning as our heads together, and today we're praying to the almighty God. Maybe this is the first time in your life you've prayed. And as you turn your heart to Jesus, the Bible teaches us that God is not only going to hear your prayers, but he is going to answer. God is always loved you. And today he's going to demonstrate that in undeniable ways. Want to encourage you to simply pray this prayer out loud after me and God today, I want to thank you for loving me. You've always been faithful and you've always been good. Today, I trust in Jesus. I receive your forgiveness. I receive your healing. And I pray today that you would work miracles in my life and you would heal what's been broken in Jesus name. I pray. All God's people said, Amen. That's awesome. So good.