
When The Church is in crisis: *From Crisis to calling*

Mount Carmel Missionary Baptist Church

Pastor Leroy Hines Anthony. M. Div.

September Bible Study Series

9/23/2026



Lesson Text: Genesis 50:15-21

¹⁵ When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may ^[a]actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him." ¹⁶ So they sent *messengers* to Joseph, saying, "Before your father died he commanded, saying, ¹⁷ 'Thus you shall say to Joseph: "I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you." ' Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father." And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

¹⁸ Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, "Behold, we *are* your servants."

¹⁹ Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for *am* I in the place of God? ²⁰ But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive. ²¹ Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke ^[b]kindly to them.

Lesson theme:
Healing from the past without becoming
defined by it

Question:

What happens to a person or church when yesterday's crisis becomes today's identity?

- A crisis can happen to us without having to become us.
- What happened may be part of our story but it does not have to become the definition of our story.

context: Genesis 50

Genesis 50 comes at the end of long story of:

- Family Dysfunction
- Betrayal
- Separation
- Suffering, and
- Providence

Joseph's brothers had sold him into slavery because of jealousy.

- He was taken to Egypt.
- Falsely Accused
- Imprisoned
- Eventually elevated to a position of authority under Pharaoh.

Year's Later Famine brought Joseph's brothers to Egypt looking for food.

They eventually discovered that the brother they had betrayed was now the person with power to determine their future.

Genesis 50 occurs after their father Jacob dies.

- The brothers become afraid and think “*Perhaps Joseph will hate us and may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him.*”
 - Joseph now faces a choice to allow his past pain to determine his present response.

The crisis can affect us without defining us (Genesis 50:15):

Reflection 1:

“**When** Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him.”

- **Victimization begins with (uncontrolled) broken-dependency.**
 - Which often reveals Previous Unhealthy Dependency. {In the name of family, relationship}
 - Which gives way to a False Sense of Security.
 - Which leads to Distorted Perceptions.
 - Promoting Unresolved Guilt.
- **Victimization thrives on Yesterday!**
 - Notice Joseph’s brothers immediately interpret the present through the lens of the past!

Note: The emotional consequences of the crisis were still alive in their relationship with Joseph.

When you know what you did to someone, you think you know what that someone must now be thinking about you.

That’s the result of unresolved crisis!

The By product of unresolved crisis.

It can cause us to:

- interpret today's actions through yesterday's wounds;
- expect rejection because we experienced rejection;
- anticipate conflict because we've experienced conflict;
- distrust people because someone previously violated our trust.

A church can experience the same thing.

A previous conflict can become the lens through which every new conversation is interpreted.

A disagreement becomes: "Here we go again."

A question becomes: "They are challenging leadership."

A new idea becomes: "They are trying to take control."

A change becomes: "We've seen this before."

The danger is that the crisis becomes the lens through which everything is viewed.

Key Consideration:

If we are not careful, we can leave the crisis physically while continuing to carry it emotionally.

What crisis baggage do we carry as a church?

Developing Character from The Crisis(Genesis 50:16-17_{a-b})

¹⁶ So they sent *messengers* to Joseph, saying, “Before your father died he commanded, saying,

- **Crisis Intervention requires identifying a mutual place of Favor, a common ground of RESPECT!**
 - Here it is The Father, The Fathers Words, and The Fathers Wishes.
 - Character is *developed* prioritizing The Father.
 - Character is *exhibited* by self-determined pursuit of reconciliation exhibited through changed behavior.
{consider the brothers previous treatment of Joseph}

¹⁷ ‘**Thus you shall say to Joseph: “I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you.”**’ Interesting Fact: Nowhere in scripture is it recorded that their father ever spoke these words or gave this commandment.

- It is a ploy or strategy for Mercy.
- Which confirms changed disposition from their previous ploy and strategy of Mischief.
- **The appeal is strengthened through humility and reverence.**

“Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father.”

A Word about Reactions and responses to reconciliation request(Genesis 50:17c)

Simply stated: This text reflects that true reconciliation request will be heartfelt, not transactionally focused. Joseph's weeping reveals that forgiveness did not mean the pain of the past was meaningless or that Joseph was emotionally untouched by what happened. His weeping reflects: **“the tears of a wounded heart encountering the possibility of reconciliation.”**

Several things can be seen in the text:

1. **His tears reveal humanity.** Joseph is powerful and forgiving, but he is not emotionless. His history still affects him.
2. **His tears show the depth of the relationship.** These are not strangers who hurt Joseph; these are his brothers. The betrayal was personal.
3. **His tears demonstrate that forgiveness is not denial.** Joseph does not have to pretend that the betrayal never happened in order to forgive them.
4. **His tears may reflect the tragedy of unresolved guilt.** Years later, the brothers are still afraid of Joseph, suggesting that the family had not fully experienced the reconciliation Joseph was willing to extend.
5. **His tears open the way for restoration.** Immediately after weeping, Joseph speaks reassurance: “Fear not” (v.19) and promises to provide for them (v.21).

Key Consideration:

“Joseph’s tears remind us that forgiveness does not erase the wound; it releases the wound from having control over the future.”

A Word about how to broker reconciliation request(Genesis 50:18)

¹⁸ Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, “Behold, we *are* your servants.”

- They moved from fear and distance toward direct relationship with Joseph. What does it reveal about reconciliation?
- 1. Reconciliation requires re-engagement. The brothers had been living with distance and fear; now they physically approach Joseph. Reconciliation requires someone to move toward the relationship rather than continuing to avoid it.
- 2. Reconciliation requires humility. Their posture—falling before Joseph—communicates submission and recognition of the seriousness of what they had done.
- 3. Reconciliation requires vulnerability. They expose themselves to Joseph’s response. They don’t control whether he will forgive them.
- 4. Reconciliation requires a willingness to change the relationship. They move from being estranged brothers to saying, essentially, “We place ourselves in your hands.”

“Reconciliation brokering begins when people are willing to move toward one another with humility rather than remain separated by the wounds of yesterday.”

They communicate, They seek forgiveness, and They approach Joseph

Refusing to let the past become your identity (Genesis 50:19)

Joseph had every reason to remember.

What Joseph experienced was real betrayal, and real suffering, but he refused to let what happened to him determine who he would become.

Look at Joseph's response.

“Fear not: for am I in the place of God?”

- Joseph understood that he did not have to become the judge because he was once the victim.”
- He could have retaliated. He had the authority. He had the opportunity. He had the justification.

But Joseph refuses to occupy God's seat. "Am I in the place of God?"

That's a powerful question for a church in recovery.

Sometimes healing begins when we stop trying to occupy a position that belongs to God.

We don't have to: • settle every score; • expose every person; • win every argument; • punish everyone who hurt us; • make everybody admit they were wrong.

Sometimes we have to say:

“God, You are God, and I am not.”

Joseph Acknowledges the Evil Without Denying It (Genesis 50:20_a)

Joseph doesn't say: "What happened wasn't that bad."

He doesn't say: "You didn't really hurt me."

He doesn't rewrite history.

"But as for you, ye thought evil against me..."

Joseph calls it what it was.

- Evil was done.

That's important for healing. Christian forgiveness does not require us to pretend that the wound never happened.

We can acknowledge: "It happened." without saying: "It owns me."

We can say: "It hurt." without saying: "I will live hurt."

We can say: "They were wrong." without saying: "Therefore, I have permission to become wrong."

God Can Redeem What We Cannot Rewrite (Genesis 50:20_b)

Joseph makes one of the most powerful statements in Genesis:

“But God meant it unto good...”Joseph doesn't call evil good.

He says God brought good out of what was evil. That's different.

God didn't need the betrayal to be good in order to make something good from it.

That's an important distinction for a wounded church.

- We don't have to call the crisis good.

But we can believe God is still able to bring good from it.

Say it this way: **"God doesn't have to change our history to change our future."**

Joseph couldn't change the pit, the slavery, the false accusation, the prison, the years of separation.

But God changed what those experiences would ultimately mean.

Healing Requires a New Way of Seeing

Joseph's brothers saw:

“You hurt us, and now you’re going to hurt us.”

Joseph saw:

“God has brought me through what you did.”

- Same history.
- Different perspective.

The difference is not that Joseph forgot.

The difference is that Joseph interpreted his history through God’s providence rather than through his pain.

Answer this Question: **What is the difference between remembering a painful experience and allowing that experience to control our present behavior?**

What shall we become?

Will we become a church
defined by what happened, or
a church transformed by what
God is Doing?