



Jesus, the True and Better Joseph

OPENING: Begin with a brief welcome and prayer, asking God to help the group see His faithfulness in Joseph’s story and the mercy of Jesus.

Series Overview: In the True and Better series, we are exploring how people and events in the Old Testament point beyond themselves to Jesus. Joseph’s story reminds us that the gospel is not a promise that every hardship will resolve the way we hope. Instead, it shows us the true and better Joseph—Jesus—who was rejected and suffered, yet offers mercy, forgiveness, and a forever home to those who betrayed Him.

Discussion Questions

CONNECT

- What is a movie, book, or story with a plot twist that made you want to go back and notice all the clues you missed?
- Looking back, can you identify a difficult or confusing season that God later used in a meaningful way? What can be helpful—and what can be harmful—about trying to interpret painful circumstances in hindsight?

DISCOVER

Read Together: Genesis 45:4-8 and Genesis 50:18-21

Initial observations + Interpreting Scripture:

- Initial Thoughts: What stood out to you from this passage or from the sermon?

God’s Presence in the Pit

- Genesis repeatedly says that “the Lord was with Joseph” while Joseph was enslaved and imprisoned (Genesis 39:2-3, 21). Why is that detail significant? How does it challenge the assumption that God’s presence is proven by comfortable circumstances?
- The sermon described the gospel not as “I followed Jesus and everything became perfect,” but as the good news that God is with us and remains on His throne in the good, the bad, and the ugly. How does that understanding differ from the way people sometimes present Christianity?

God's Sovereignty and Human Evil

- Joseph tells his brothers, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good" (Genesis 50:20). What does this verse affirm about the brothers' responsibility? What does it reveal about God's ability to redeem what others intend for harm?
- How can we affirm God's sovereignty without minimizing trauma, excusing evil, or promising that every painful situation will have a visible resolution in this life

Jesus – The True and Better Joseph

Joseph's story is not primarily a formula for becoming successful after suffering. It points us to Jesus.

- "We are not the innocent ones who need vindication. We are the guilty ones who need restoration, mercy, and salvation." Why is it easier to see ourselves as Joseph than as Joseph's brothers? What changes when we recognize ourselves in the brothers?
- Joseph's brothers feared that he would finally treat them as they deserved. Where are you tempted to believe Jesus is reluctant to forgive you or is waiting to punish you? How does Joseph's response give us a glimpse of Christ's heart?

APPLY – Trust the Author

- How can the promise of God's presence sustain someone whose situation has not improved? What does faithful trust look like when there is no clear "palace" moment?
- Where in your life are you currently struggling to trust the Author of the story? What would it look like to bring that fear, grief, disappointment, or uncertainty honestly to God this week?
- Joseph offered practical care to the very people who wronged him. Is there a relationship where God may be inviting you toward mercy, wise forgiveness, or a step of reconciliation?

GROUP PRAYER

Pray Together as a Group:

- Pray together, thanking Jesus for suffering in our place and offering mercy instead of the judgment we deserve. Invite the group to share current hardships or unanswered prayers, and pray for God's presence, comfort, wisdom, and sustaining grace.
- Pray especially for anyone walking through grief, illness, miscarriage, addiction, relational loss, injustice, or prolonged uncertainty. Avoid promising a specific outcome; ask God to make His nearness known and anchor each person in the hope of Christ.
- Close by praying that the group would trust the Author of the story and live as people who have received—and now extend—the mercy of Jesus.

CLOSING

- Encourage the group to read Genesis 37-50 during the week and note every place God is present or working, especially in moments when Joseph's circumstances appear hopeless.