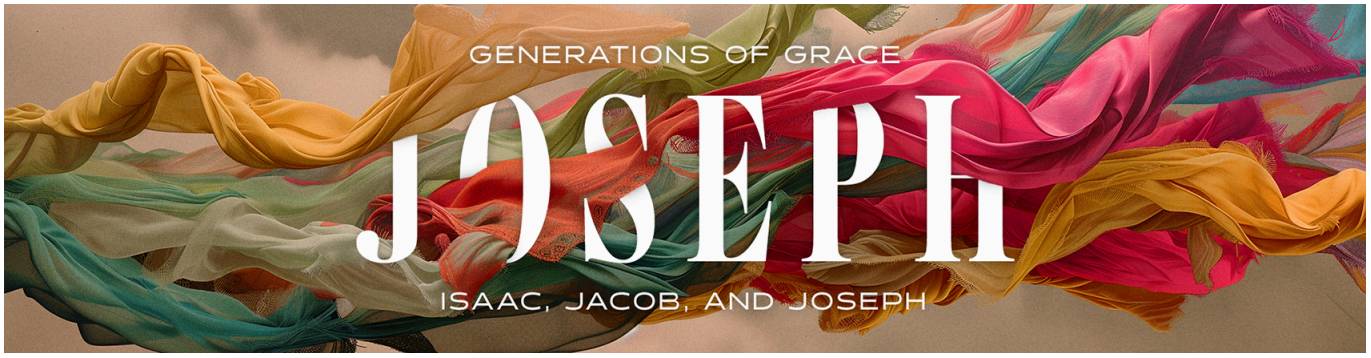


Genesis Part III
(Week 8/8) The Good God

Small Group Discussion Questions

Connect *What is a daily rhythm that reminds you of the forgiveness we can be certain of in Christ?*

Warm-Up

1. When was the last time you had a family reunion? Does getting together resolve any differences or past hurt? Why or why not?

Read Genesis 45:25-46:5

2. What was Jacob's response to the brother's news? What did he decide to do?
3. What did the Lord say to Jacob? Why would Jacob be afraid of going to Egypt?
4. What is the reason he doesn't need to be afraid?
5. Is there any aspect of your life right now that seems like an unnecessary detour? What can we rest in, when we can't see how the Lord is working?

Read Genesis 49:29-50:14

6. Where is Jacob now? Where does he want to be buried? How does this indicate Jacob's confidence that the Lord will fulfil his promises?
7. How did the Lord bring Jacob back to the land? What is surprising about this account?
8. Why is it significant that Jacob's family returns back to Egypt?
9. Read Genesis 35:11-12. How have the Lord's promises to Jacob (of land, descendants, being a nation) been partially fulfilled by the end of his life? How does Jacob respond?

Read Genesis 50:15-21

10. What do the brothers fear when Jacob dies? What do they do about it?
11. What evidence has there been that Joseph has *already* forgiven them (c.f. Gen 45:5-7)? Why do you think they still doubt the forgiveness offered, even after 17 years?
12. What can cause you to doubt the forgiveness God offers you? How would you encourage someone else who doubts God's forgiveness?
13. Would becoming slaves of Joseph make up for their sin? Why or why not? What does Joseph's forgiveness point to?
14. How would you describe "grace"? How have you seen God's grace at work through the book of Genesis?

Apply *What aspect of God and his grace at work has stood out the most throughout this series in Genesis?*

Pray *Gracious Father, thank you for how you have been at work across generations for the saving of your people. Help us respond to your offer of forgiveness and salvation. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*



Genesis Part III
(Week 8/8) The Good God

Small Group Discussion Questions

On Your Frontline this Week

What is a situation you are facing right now that needs God's wisdom?

For Families

- *Download*: some of the family resources to use at home: stbartskids.org

Listen, Watch, and Read

- *Listen (sermon):* "The Good God" by Vaughan Roberts: https://stebbes.org/sermons/the-good-god/
- *Listen (sermon):* "The End of the Beginning" by Paul Blackham: https://www.allsouls.org/Groups/139410/A062_Beginnings.aspx?show_media=145001&show_file=240017
- *Listen (sermon):* "Reconciliation" by Tim Keller: https://gospelinlife.com/sermon/reconciliation/
- *Listen (sermon):* "God Working for Good" by Philip Brentford: https://www.st-helens.org.uk/resources/talk/54963/
- *Read (devotion):* "A Journey through Genesis with N T Wright" by N T Wright: https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/29303-from-creation-to-new-creation-a-journey-through/day/6

Series Resources

- *Read*: "Genesis" by Derek Kidner. 📚
- *Read*: "Genesis for Everyone: Part 2" by John Goldingay. 📚
- *Read*: "How to Read Genesis" by Tremper Longman III
- *Read*: "Genesis: Story of God Bible Commentary" by Tremper Longman III
- *Watch*: "Genesis 12-50" by the Bible Project: https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/genesis-12-50
- *Watch*: "How should we read the Old Testament?" by Dan Paterson: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJtba-JyPVg

📚 Available to borrow from the St Bart's Library (Toowoomba): stbarts.com.au/library

GENESIS III: Generations of Grace

Week 8/8 "The Good God"
by Amy Norman (22/11/2026)

선하신 하나님 | 良善的神 | நல்ல தேவன்

Bible Passage: Genesis 49:29-50:26 (cf. 46:1-5)

Gracious Father, thank you for how you have been at work
across generations for the saving of your people.
Help us respond to your offer of forgiveness and salvation.
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

- Last week, we saw the beginnings of Joseph's family reunion.
  After more than 20 years, Joseph came face to face with his brothers.
  They last saw him was being carted off to Egypt as a slave,
  but now Joseph is before them *in charge* of all of Egypt.
- Each time Joseph meets his brothers (before they even knew who he was),
  what he desperately wants to know is:
  is his father still alive?
- This family reunion is not yet complete.
  And like most families – even when they get back all together,
  there is still some unresolved tension to sort out.

- Today we come right to the end of the whole book of Genesis.
  How Jacob and Joseph come to the end of their lives gives us a clue
  to what we should keep our eyes on.
  They both point back to God and point ahead to how he is working out his plans.
- We see this in particular as
  as Jacob **prepares to leave the promised land**,
  in **Jacob's return**,
  and Joseph's perspective of **God's good plans.**

LEAVING THE PROMISED LAND | 46:1-5

약속의 땅을 떠나다 | 离开应许之地 | வாக்குப்பண்ணப்பட்ட **தேசத்தை விட்டுச் செல்லுதல்**

First, we come to Jacob **leaving the promised land.** Joseph's brothers return from Egypt with some amazing news for their father. *Let's turn back to chapter 45, verse 26 …*

They told him, "Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is ruler of all Egypt." Jacob was stunned; he did not believe them. But when they told him everything Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him back, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. And Israel said, "I'm convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

So Israel set out with all that was his, and when he reached Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said, "Jacob! Jacob!" "Here I am," he replied.

"I am God, the God of your father," he said. "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes."

Then Jacob left Beersheba, and Israel's sons took their father Jacob and their children and their wives in the carts that Pharaoh had sent to transport him. *Genesis 45:26 - 46:5*

- Jacob is stunned by the news that his favourite son – who he thought was dead – is alive!
  When he sees the carts and hears Joseph's invitation to join him,
  Jacob responds by setting out *with all that was his.*

  Jacob is not just visiting Egypt, he is relocating his whole family to Egypt.
- When Jacob gets to Beersheba, we see how he is feeling.
  We might expect Jacob to be full of excitement, like a kid before Christmas,
  but it's far more complicated than that.
- The Lord appears to him and assures him "*Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt …*"
- Why would Jacob be afraid? *Practically* there are many reasons.
  Travelling and moving a whole family is dangerous.
  He could be fearing for his family's safety,
  fearing for how they will find food,
  fearing about living in another foreign land.
- But even more than that, being reunited with Joseph means *leaving the promised land.*
  This is not just the place of his upbringing,
  where he buried his beloved wife Rachel,
  but this *specific* land has been one of the Lord's central promises to him,
  and the generations before him.
- The Lord took his grandfather Abraham from Harran to *this land.*
  The Lord told his father Isaac *not to go* to Egypt.
  The Lord had protected Jacob himself to return to this land after being married.
- What will happen if Jacob and his descendants leave the land the Lord promised?

It doesn't make sense. How can this *be their land* if they are not there?

- But rather than try to anticipate *exactly how* the Lord is fulfilling his promises, Jacob is invited to trust the promise-keeper who goes with him. *verse 3 again:*

"Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again." *46:3*

- The Lord responds to Jacob's fear with his presence. Not only does God affirm the plan to go to Egypt, but he goes *with* Jacob.
- You might recall just how familiar this promise is. It echoes the same promise Jacob had received before at Bethel. When much earlier in his life he was leaving the promised land, the Lord assured him then: *I will be with you and I will bring you back.*
- Despite the odds of a fuming brother and conniving father-in-law, the Lord *had* brought him back.
- So right now, even as it's unclear *just how* the Lord will bring him back and how the Lord will continue to work out his promises, Jacob is to trust the Lord's presence and leading *again.*

- If I was Jacob, I think I'd really struggle with this change. It seems really unknown *just how* things will actually work out.
- But a wise friend once put it like this: would you rather a detailed map of the way, or a guide *who created* the way walking with you.
- Jacob knew first hand the Lord's presence into unknown lands.
- This detour to Egypt was not a deviation from God's plans, but an intentional part of it.
- The Lord had even warned Abraham that his descendants, would be enslaved and mistreated in a foreign country, but that God would bring them back.
- And so I wonder if there might be an aspect of your life right now *feels* like a deviation, *feels* like a totally unnecessary detour, that God may be using – in ways you can't see yet?
- We can trust the Lord who *is with us,* even when we can't see how his promises are working out. >

JACOB'S RETURN | 49:29–50:14

야곱의 귀환 | 雅各的回归 | யாக்கோபின் திரும்புதல்

Jacob didn't see how the Lord worked out all his promises, but he trusted they would.
Second, let's look at **Jacob's return**. *Looking ahead from chapter 49, verse 29 …*

Then he gave them these instructions: "I am about to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite, the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre in Canaan, which Abraham bought along with the field as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite. There Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried, there Isaac and his wife Rebekah were buried, and there I buried Leah. The field and the cave in it were bought from the Hittites." When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people. *49:29-33*

- Here we come right to the end of Jacob's life.
  He has moved to Egypt, been reunited with Joseph,
  and when later he approaches death, gives his final blessings and last instructions.
- Jacob has been living in Egypt now for seventeen years,
  but his mind and heart is set back on the land the Lord promised him.
- Just before in chapter 49,
  Jacob blesses his sons (which now includes Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh),
  and embedded is the expectation they *will* inherit land.

They might now be in Egypt, but Jacob's blessings point ahead to a time when
Zebulun will live by the seashore and Judah will rule.

- Jacob instructs his sons to bury him back in Canaan.
  In one of two pieces of land owned by his family there.
- This is not just a *preference* – but it reveals Jacob's trust,
  that the Lord *will indeed* bring back his family to the land.
  It's a sign of trust that he won't be buried forever in a distant foreign place,
  but there will be a day where his descendants will return.

- I doubt Jacob would have anticipated *just how* the Lord would bring Jacob back to the promised land.
- The whole of Egypt mourns Jacob's death,
  and with all of Pharaoh's officials, with dignitaries, chariots, and horsemen,
  he is accompanied back to the promised land.
- This is like a state funeral,
  the most elaborate funeral recorded in the Bible,
  that is fitting for a king!
- But importantly as they go to bury their father in Canaan,
  Jacob's sons don't stay there. *Verse 14:*

After burying his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, together with his brothers and all the others who had gone with him to bury his father. *50:14*

- At the end of Jacob's life,
  after three generations since the Lord made the promise to Abraham of
  descendants, a nation, land, and blessing,
  the fulfilment of these promises still is a long way off.
- The living descendants of Jacob are all in Egypt.
- Jacob's family has grown, but with just 70 people,
  it is a long way off being a nation! /
- *And yet* – in Jacob's own life and actions we see his firm confidence
  that the Lord will indeed fulfil his promises.
- We see this in some of Jacob's final words to Joseph, as he says to him:

"I am about to die, but God will be with you and take you back to the land of your fathers. *48:21*

- Jacob will not see in his lifetime *just how* the Lord will take them back.
  Jacob was accompanied by horsemen and chariots, and yet in just over 400 years time,
  the descendants of Jacob will be chased by horsemen and chariots.
- Jacob does not know the details, but he is confident the Lord will fulfil his promises.

GOD'S GOOD PLAN | 50:15-21

하나님의 선하신 계 | 神美好的计划 | **தேவனுடைய நல்ல திட்டம்**

Finally, Jacob's death exposes the brother's fear.
And yet in their fear, Joseph again points them to **God's good plan**. *Chapter 50, from verse 15 …*

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?" So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died: 'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father." When their message came to him, Joseph wept.

His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said. *50:15-18*

- Joseph's brothers have been living in Egypt now for over 17 years.
  They have been fed and provided for,
  but when Jacob dies their fear is exposed:
  will their brother – the one in charge of all of Egypt – pay them back for the wrong they did to him?
- Even when they first came to Egypt,
  their guilt around what they did to Joseph was right at the surface.
  And over all this time – it hasn't gone away!
- And so they claim that Jacob left instructions for Joseph to forgive them.

- Even though Joseph has already welcomed them with kindness,
  they still fear his retribution and revenge.
  They still doubt where they stand with Joseph.
- We can kind of get why!
  What they did to Joseph was no temporary sibling offence.
  Their actions were calculated, self-serving, cruel, and intended to be permanent.
  They traded Joseph for silver, and as far as we know,
  never changed their mind to try to get him back.
- And now they live *dependent* on the generosity and mercy,
  of the same one they betrayed.
- Of course it seems too good to be true that they have been truly forgiven.
  How could they be forgiven for what they've done?
- The same dysfunctional family patterns seem to be repeating.
  Esau held grudge against Jacob,
  and the brothers *suspect* Joseph might be doing the same towards them,
  cherishing animosity towards them until he gets the opportunity to strike.
- Forgiveness seems too foreign in this family that has operated on deception.

- When the brothers make the case for forgiveness, **Joseph weeps**.

- Their scheming to secure Joseph's mercy breaks his heart.
  Even after all these years can't they see that *forgiveness* is not something they still need to bargain for, *but has already been given!*
- The brothers offer themselves as slaves, but Joseph rejects this. *Verse 19 …*

But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. *50:19-20*

- The brothers appeal to their father's wishes,
  but Joseph wants their confidence to be in how God has been at work.
- They did evil. He is not sugarcoating it. They intended to harm him.
  But God's plans for saving his people *is greater* than human evil.
- And by now they *have* seen it,
  how Joseph's promotion in Egypt has saved many from starvation,
  and that their family, foreigners in the sight of Egyptians,
  have *through Joseph* be welcomed and provided for.
- They have *witnessed* how God has been at work bringing them to Egypt,
  they have *experienced* Joseph's welcome despite their treatment of him,
  but still they need to grasp for themselves God's *forgiveness* of them.
- Maybe you're in the same boat.

You've heard of God's grace, of his mercy. Maybe again and again and again.

- But you're still not sure.
  Will God revoke it? Will he change his mind?
  Or maybe your sins and wrongs you've committed feel too big,
  that there is no possible way you can ever atone for what has been done.

- Joseph wasn't just sent ahead of his family *simply* to rescue them from one famine.
  The pattern of his life points to *how God saves.*
  That God can use evil for good.
  That God can use the suffering of one man, for the saving of many.
- The brothers have not atoned for selling their brother into slavery.
  Maybe just now they are realising they never will.
  They can't pay back Joseph, even if they make themselves his slaves!
- If we are being honest, we are the same in the situation.
  Nothing we can ever do will reverse what we've done and atone for our sin.
- How can we take hold of God's forgiveness?
  Not by what we've done,
  but by what Jesus has done for us.
- How can a band of murderous brothers be forgiven?

How can you be forgiven?
Because Christ died – he laid down his life for them, and Christ laid down his life for you.

- As the Lord tells us through Isaiah:

But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed. *Isaiah 53:5*

- Jesus' death on the cross is why we can be confident of God's forgiveness.
  Of why we don't need to ever doubt if God's grace is enough to overcome our sin.
- In Joseph, the brothers had been offered forgiveness.
  But they had to accept it and let it *truly* transform their lives.
- In Christ, we have been offered forgiveness.
  It is yours to take. So accept God's undeserved grace,
  and let it transform your life. // >

CONCLUSION

- As we've traced through the generations in Genesis,
  hopefully what stands out is *how the Lord* has been at work.
- In many ways, Genesis is a book of beginnings.
  This is just the beginning of God's salvation plan,
  a beginning of how God is drawing together a people, for a place,
  through whom all peoples on earth will be blessed.
- Maybe it's been surprising *just how* imperfect God's people are,
  and yet despite this *God* has been faithful.
- And he has continued to be faithful not just to them,
  but to every generation up to Jesus,
  and continuing onto us!
- We continue to live out of God's grace,
  from one generation to the next until the Lord Jesus returns.

Gracious Father, we thank you that your grace – your undeserved kindness to us – continues today.
Help us to take hold of the forgiveness you offer us,
and continue on waiting expectantly for
the coming together of all your promises when Christ returns.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.