

Theme: Bitterness and forgiveness

Day 1 **Matthew 5:38-42** Reaction to unreasonable treatment (cf. 1 Peter 2:19-25)

³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ ³⁹ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. ⁴⁰ And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. ⁴¹ If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

¹⁹ For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. ²⁰ But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.

²¹ To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

²² “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.”

²³ When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.” ²⁵ For “you were like sheep going astray,” but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Day 2 ^{BS} **Matthew 18:21-35** Heartily forgive

²¹ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”

²² Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

²³ “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. ²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

²⁶ “At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ ²⁷ The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

²⁸ “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

²⁹ “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

³⁰ “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

³² “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³ Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ ³⁴ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

³⁵ “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Day 3 **Romans 12:17-21** Conquer evil by doing good

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary:

“If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.”

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Day 4 Genesis 37:1-36
Joseph suffers unreasonable treatment by his family

¹ Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan.

² This is the account of Jacob's family line.

Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.

³ Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him. ⁴ When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

⁵ Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. ⁶ He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: ⁷ We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."

⁸ His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

⁹ Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

¹⁰ When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" ¹¹ His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

¹² Now his brothers had gone to graze their father's flocks near Shechem, ¹³ and Israel said to Joseph, "As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I am going to send you to them."

"Very well," he replied.

¹⁴ So he said to him, "Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks, and bring word back to me." Then he sent him off from the Valley of Hebron.

When Joseph arrived at Shechem, ¹⁵ a man found him wandering around in the fields and asked him, "What are you looking for?"

¹⁶ He replied, "I'm looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are grazing their flocks?"

¹⁷ "They have moved on from here," the man answered. "I heard them say, 'Let's go to Dothan.'"

So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. ¹⁸ But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him.

¹⁹ "Here comes that dreamer!" they said to each other.

²⁰ "Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams."

²¹ When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. "Let's not take his life," he said. ²² "Don't shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don't lay a hand on him." Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father.

²³ So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing—²⁴ and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

²⁵ As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt.

²⁶ Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? ²⁷ Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood." His brothers agreed.

²⁸ So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

²⁹ When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes. ³⁰ He went back to his brothers and said, "The boy isn't there! Where can I turn now?"

³¹ Then they got Joseph's robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. ³² They took the ornate robe back to their father and said, "We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son's robe."

³³ He recognized it and said, "It is my son's robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces."

³⁴ Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days. ³⁵ All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. "No," he said, "I will continue to mourn until I join my son in the grave." So his father wept for him.

³⁶ Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard.

Day 5 Genesis 39:1-23
Joseph suffers unreasonable treatment by his employer

¹ Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there.

² The LORD was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. ³ When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, ⁴ Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. ⁵ From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. ⁶ So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph's care; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.

Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, ⁷ and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"

⁸ But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care.

⁹ No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" ¹⁰ And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

¹¹ One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. ¹² She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house. ¹³ When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, ¹⁴ she called her household servants. "Look," she said to them, "this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. ¹⁵ When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

¹⁶ She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home. ¹⁷ Then she told him this story: "That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. ¹⁸ But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

¹⁹ When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, "This is how your slave treated me," he burned with anger. ²⁰ Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined. But while Joseph was there in the prison, ²¹ the LORD was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. ²² So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. ²³ The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

Day 6 Genesis 40:1-23
Joseph suffers unreasonable treatment by his friends

¹ Some time later, the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their master, the king of Egypt.

² Pharaoh was angry with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, ³ and put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the same prison where Joseph was confined. ⁴ The captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph, and he attended them.

After they had been in custody for some time, ⁵ each of the two men—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were being held in prison—had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own.

⁶ When Joseph came to them the next morning, he saw that they were dejected. ⁷ So he asked Pharaoh's officials who were in custody with him in his master's house, "Why do you look so sad today?"

⁸ "We both had dreams," they answered, "but there is no one to interpret them."

Then Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams."

⁹ So the chief cupbearer told Joseph his dream. He said to him, "In my dream I saw a vine in front of me, ¹⁰ and on the vine were three branches. As soon as it budded, it blossomed, and its clusters ripened into grapes.

¹¹ Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup and put the cup in his hand."

¹² "This is what it means," Joseph said to him. "The three branches are three days. ¹³ Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your position, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand, just as you used to do when you were his cupbearer. ¹⁴ But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison. ¹⁵ I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon."

¹⁶When the chief baker saw that Joseph had given a favorable interpretation, he said to Joseph, “I too had a dream: On my head were three baskets of bread. ¹⁷In the top basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head.” ¹⁸“This is what it means,” Joseph said. “The three baskets are three days. ¹⁹Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head and impale your body on a pole. And the birds will eat away your flesh.” ²⁰Now the third day was Pharaoh’s birthday, and he gave a feast for all his officials. He lifted up the heads of the chief cupbearer and the chief baker in the presence of his officials: ²¹He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, so that he once again put the cup into Pharaoh’s hand— ²²but he impaled the chief baker, just as Joseph had said to them in his interpretation. ²³The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.

Day 7 Genesis 41:25-57
Joseph is appointed to a high position after 13 years of suffering

²⁵Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh are one and the same. God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁶The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads of grain are seven years; it is one and the same dream. ²⁷The seven lean, ugly cows that came up afterward are seven years, and so are the seven worthless heads of grain scorched by the east wind: They are seven years of famine. ²⁸“It is just as I said to Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁹Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the land of Egypt, ³⁰but seven years of famine will follow them. Then all the abundance in Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will ravage the land. ³¹The abundance in the land will not be remembered, because the famine that follows it will be so severe. ³²The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon. ³³“And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt. ³⁴Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. ³⁵They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept in the cities for food. ³⁶This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine.”

³⁷The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials. ³⁸So Pharaoh asked them, “Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?” ³⁹Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. ⁴⁰You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.” ⁴¹So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt.” ⁴²Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph’s finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. ⁴³He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and people shouted before him, “Make way!” Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt. ⁴⁴Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, but without your word no one will lift hand or foot in all Egypt.” ⁴⁵Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah and gave him Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, to be his wife. And Joseph went throughout the land of Egypt. ⁴⁶Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from Pharaoh’s presence and traveled throughout Egypt. ⁴⁷During the seven years of abundance the land produced plentifully. ⁴⁸Joseph collected all the food produced in those seven years of abundance in Egypt and stored it in the cities. In each city he put the food grown in the fields surrounding it. ⁴⁹Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure. ⁵⁰Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On. ⁵¹Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh and said, “It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father’s household.” ⁵²The second son he named Ephraim and said, “It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering.” ⁵³The seven years of abundance in Egypt came to an end, ⁵⁴and the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had said. There was famine in all the other lands, but in the whole land of Egypt there was food. ⁵⁵When all Egypt began to feel the famine, the people cried to Pharaoh for food. Then Pharaoh told all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph and do what he tells you.” ⁵⁶When the famine had spread over the whole country, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout Egypt. ⁵⁷And all the world came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe everywhere.

Day 8 Genesis 45:1-11
Joseph's response to his unreasonable treatment

¹ Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. ² And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it.

³ Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.

⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt!" ⁵ And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. ⁶ For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. ⁷ But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

⁸ "So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. ⁹ Now hurry back to my father and say to him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don't delay. ¹⁰ You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me—you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. ¹¹ I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.'

Day 9 Genesis 50:15-21
Joseph does not take revenge

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?" ¹⁶ So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died: ¹⁷ '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.

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

¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? ²⁰ You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. ²¹ So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

Day 10 Psalm 38:1-23
Dealing with hurt feelings

¹ LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath.

² Your arrows have pierced me, and your hand has come down on me.

³ Because of your wrath there is no health in my body; there is no soundness in my bones because of my sin.

⁴ My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear.

⁵ My wounds fester and are loathsome because of my sinful folly.

⁶ I am bowed down and brought very low; all day long I go about mourning.

⁷ My back is filled with searing pain; there is no health in my body.

⁸ I am feeble and utterly crushed; I groan in anguish of heart.

⁹ All my longings lie open before you, Lord; my sighing is not hidden from you.

¹⁰ My heart pounds, my strength fails me; even the light has gone from my eyes.

¹¹ My friends and companions avoid me because of my wounds; my neighbors stay far away.

¹² Those who want to kill me set their traps, those who would harm me talk of my ruin; all day long they scheme and lie.

¹³ I am like the deaf, who cannot hear, like the mute, who cannot speak;

¹⁴ I have become like one who does not hear, whose mouth can offer no reply.

¹⁵ LORD, I wait for you; you will answer, Lord my God.

¹⁶ For I said, "Do not let them gloat or exalt themselves over me when my feet slip."

¹⁷ For I am about to fall, and my pain is ever with me.

¹⁸ I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin.

¹⁹ Many have become my enemies without cause; those who hate me without reason are numerous.

²⁰ Those who repay my good with evil lodge accusations against me, though I seek only to do what is good.

²¹ LORD, do not forsake me; do not be far from me, my God.

²² Come quickly to help me, my Lord and my Savior.