

# Wounded Christians

Genesis 45:9-10, 50:19-20

## Preface

In the military they call it “Friendly Fire” when soldiers on the same side fire upon each other. Friendly fire is always a very tragic event. The hurt and pain seems to run much deeper for everyone than it would have, had the damage been inflicted by the enemy.

Friendly fire is usually the results of some type of miscalculation or misunderstanding. Whatever the reason, the results are devastating and stir enormous emotions.

Friendly fire damage often occurs among Christians as well. Christians often say things to other Christians that hurt. The comments or actions cut deep into the soul and cause tremendous pain.

Probably everyone here knows someone who has been spiritually or emotionally injured by the artillery of fellow Christians. Perhaps you have been personally attacked at some point in the past.

The groans of such injuries are often expressed with comments like, “How can I return to that church after the way I was hurt?” or “I can’t go and sit in the same church with that person after what they have done to me.”

Unfortunately, Christians are sometimes wounded by people who it seems are out to wound them. Some people seem take some odd pleasure in putting others down and seeing others suffer.

The results of such attacks can be devastating. Some people will suffer for many years and never be the same as a result of attacks from others claiming to be Christians.

However, God does not intend for us to remain devastated. God has a plan for turning the tragedy into victory. God wants to turn you from a victim to a victor.

In this day and time, it is popular to be a victim. However, being a victim is no way to live because life cannot go forward. The clock stops at the point of the last betrayal.

Illus: I think of the family of Natalee Holloway in Aruba. I am sure for that family, the world has stopped. They can’t go further into time until they have some sort of resolution to the missing young lady. My heart goes out to them and the agony they are experiencing.

Today we will learn from one such case where God performed the healing of the heart and restored a **victim to a victor**.

## Scripture – Read

*“<sup>9</sup>Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, “God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. <sup>10</sup>You shall live in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children and your flocks and your herds and all that you have.” Genesis 45:9-10 NAS*

*“<sup>19</sup>But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in God’s place? <sup>20</sup>“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.” Genesis 50:19-20 NAS*

## Introduction

---

1 Lit *dwell*

a Gen 37:26, 27; 45:5, 7

I am sure you know the story of Joseph but I would like to briefly summarize the story. Joseph is the youngest of 12 boys. Because he is the youngest, he the apple of his father's eye and the father makes no attempt to hide his fondness for Joseph.

Needless to say this does not set well with the other brothers. Joseph makes things worse by sharing his dreams with his brothers. The dreams indicate that they will one day bow down to Joseph.

The brothers first plot to kill Joseph but ultimately sell him to traders as a slave. They return his coat and convince the father that he was attacked by a wild animal.

Joseph eventually ends up as a servant in the house of Pharaoh where he gains tremendous respect and trust. He is eventually placed in a position of great leadership over all of Egypt.

When famine strikes, the only food and grain is available through Joseph. The brothers are forced to go to Pharaoh's top man to purchase provisions. When they discover that it is in fact Joseph, they fear for their lives.

With every opportunity to display revenge, Joseph displayed forgiveness instead.

With every opportunity to dispense justice, Joseph dispensed grace instead.

With every opportunity to blame God, Joseph thanked God's divine purpose instead.

This is the victory we all seek. I want to share with you today the keys to going from victim to victor just as Joseph did.

## **Content**

### **1. Take Up Your Cross**

The first step in healing is to take up your cross.

Paul says in Philippians 3:10-11, *"That I may know Him and the power of the resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead."*

These are difficult words for humans. Paul isn't proposing that he go to the cross. He is saying that every sorrow, every act of treachery and every betrayal has become, a point of identification with Christ. Through these things, he knows resurrection in his life.

How do you move from being hurt to being a victor and rejoicing? The answer is that you must take up our cross. We embrace the pain as a means for God to do something great in our life. You must deny yourself and deny your right to not be wronged.

Joseph identified his pain with God. In God, the pain is intended to bring blessings. Being hurt by his brothers made sense in light of God's plan.

Illus: The late playwright Tennessee Williams wrote, "We have to distrust each other. It is our only defense against betrayal."

God does not call us to live in distrust, but to live in Christ. Our trust must be in God in all situations. God will work things to the good if we will just trust him.

Like Christ, we must take up our cross of hurt feelings and physical pains and trust God for a positive gain. We must accept them and see them as ultimately taking us to a resurrection of new life.

The first step is to accept our circumstances. To many people want to fight and be angry over their pains but we must begin to look to God to turn the pain into a blessing.

### **2. Take Off Your Crown**

The second step in healing is to take off our crown. Stop pretending that you are sovereign and confess that God is sovereign.

Illus: J.C. Ryle wrote, "Of all the doctrines of the Bible, none is so offensive to human nature as the doctrine of God's sovereignty."

It is the critical act of submission, to say that I am not in control, but God is. This is how you will find healing.

If you are in control, then your cross that you bear has no meaning. If you are in control then the betrayals or physical pains have no meaning.

But, if God is in control, then everything has meaning and purpose. Like Joseph, like Paul and like Jesus, you can see God's sovereignty ruling in you life to take you through the crucifixion and to the resurrection.

I want to remind you of something very important. Jesus was not crucified by the Jews. Jesus was crucified by His own father. You need to understand that God has destruction on His mind in your life as well.

God want to purge and refine you and I to make us pure and useful to Him. The Puritan Thomas Watson put it this way, "to put the gold into the fire until the last dross has drained from the metal.

Illus: In his commentary, Matthew Henry summed up the sovereignty of God this way. "God often brings good out of evil, and promotes the designs of His providence even by the sins of men; not that He is the author of sin, far be it from us to think so; but His infinite wisdom so overrules events that ... the issue, that ends in His praise was at first to His dishonor; as in the putting of Christ to death."

Illus: I read a story about a pastor who was having a hard time with the matter of God's sovereignty. His wife put a sticky note on the bathroom mirror that said, "When will you stop trying to be the general manager of the world?"

A crucial step in beginning the healing and discovering God's purpose is to recognize His sovereignty. Grasping God's sovereignty is not a theological step but a step of submission.

Do you want to see your hurt and pain have meaning and purpose? You must take off your crown and say, "God you are in control."

### **3. Experience Your Resurrection**

The third step in is where it all comes together. We must take up (accept) our cross and we must take off our crown. But we must also experience the resurrection.

In Philippians 3:11 Paul says, "that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead." Paul decided that his imprisonment and the betrayal of others would cause him to experience the resurrection of Christ.

Joseph did the same. Joseph understood that the betrayal of his own brothers had brought him to the glorious point of experiencing what God had in store for him.

The resurrection is the place where we come face to face with our cross and the fact that God is really in control.

The resurrection is where new life begins. The resurrection is where the old is put to death and the newness of life begins to bloom.

The resurrection is where we say even with our pain and wounds, "Thank you God for bringing me to this point." It is where we fully realize that God was in control all along and we are glad He was.

The resurrection is where the tomb opens and the healing begins. I spoke earlier of the fact that Jesus was crucified by His own father. But, Jesus was also resurrected by His father. Jesus was resurrected to a glorious position and for a glorious purpose. The resurrection is where God transforms your cross into glory.

God transformed the tragedy of the cross to the glory of salvation. Paul says in Hebrews 12:2, "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Notice that Jesus saw the joy before Him in spite of the cross and shame He endured. God wants to do exactly this in our lives.

One writer put it this way:

God's love ordains every struggle to strengthen us.

God's love lights every furnace to purify us.

God's love mingles every bitter cup to heal us.

God's love will turn turn your cross into resurrection.

➤ **Conclusion**

Perhaps you have been nursing your wounds for many years.

You have let the actions of someone else hinder you long enough.

Isn't it time you start experiencing God's divine purpose behind your circumstances and quite dwelling on the past?

**Will you be the disciple of the one who betrayed you or the Christ who want to work through you?**

**God wants you to be able to say just as Joseph did, "you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good."**