



Sometimes, There Aren't Enough Rocks

Genesis 50:14-21

One of the most powerful scenes in *Forrest Gump* shows Jenny, Forrest's lifelong friend, hurling rocks at her childhood house. She is shown pelting the house over and over. Her rage is real. Jenny was terribly abused by her father, which left a profoundly negative mark on her. Seeing the house where she grew up brought back painful memories. The hurt had not gone away. The wounds had never healed.

In one of the most profound lines found in any movie, Forrest says, "Sometimes there just aren't enough rocks."

How many of us are hurting from the after-effects of toxic relationships or dysfunctional families; still recovering from betrayals; still hearing the echoes of unkind words spoken long ago; still carrying the fierce pain of being abused? The scars are deep – the pain is deeper.

Not all hurt is in the past. It is not possible to live among other people – in a workplace or family or church – and not be hurt. We wound one another. Sometimes we do it unintentionally; we may not even know we've done it. Sometimes we do it on purpose. We all cause pain; we all experience pain.

Let me ask: Have you run out of rocks?

The trouble is that the deep hurts and the deep wounds cannot be healed by throwing rocks. Sooner or later we run out of rocks and the pain remains. And sadly, while we hurl the rocks, we hurt others in the process.

Some may ask, "Why stir things up?" My answer is that our pain is not dormant. Even though we are not consciously dwelling on it, our pain produces all kinds of destructive emotions and behaviors: anger, rage, depression, emotional numbness, conflict, substance abuse.

Instead of throwing rocks, we need to be healed!

God Is Able to Heal

The good news is God is able to heal our hidden wounds. Our wounds may be deep and longstanding. They may be a fresh leaving us with confusion and pain. The hurt may have reduced us to a puddle of unmanageable emotions, wondering how we'll cope.

Regardless of how sin has scarred us, He can make us whole again. He can calm the storm raging in our hearts. He can replace despair with joy. He can repair what is broken. Our loving Father wants to comfort us. As the Psalmist assures us:

The LORD is near to the brokenhearted
and saves the crushed in spirit (Psalm 34:18 ESV).

He heals the brokenhearted
and binds up their wounds (Psalm 147:3 ESV).

And as Jesus himself promised,

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls (Matthew 11:28-29 ESV).

Our goal is not to forget a hurtful event; it is to receive healing. We can learn how from:

A Man Named Joseph

He was deeply wounded by his family. His father was married to two sisters at the same time and kept two mistresses. Joseph's only sister was raped. His brothers were guilty of murder, theft and serious immorality. Before he was 10, mother died.

Joseph was the favorite son of his father's favorite wife. His father presented him with a beautiful robe – fit for a prince (Genesis 37). His brothers hated him. They were consumed with jealousy. When he was 17, Joseph was attacked by his brothers. They would have killed him, except for his brother Reuben. They sold Joseph to slave traders who took him to Egypt.

Through an incredible series of events, Joseph went from slave to prisoner to Prime Minister. And during a seven year stretch of bumper crops followed by seven years of famine, Joseph managed grain distribution for Pharaoh.

Because of the famine, his brothers came to Egypt to buy food. After holding Simeon, Joseph sent his brothers back to Canaan, requiring them to return with Benjamin. When they returned, Genesis 45 says Joseph revealed himself. Instead of punishing them, he brought his family to Egypt. Joseph was finally reunited with his father. Seventeen years after the reunion, Joseph's father died. And that is where join the portion of *The Story* I want us to look at today.

Read – Genesis 50:14-21

Joseph made it – after all he had been through – after all the hurt, betrayal and wicked treatment. Joseph found healing. Joseph's life shows how God can heal the deep wounds of our lives.



If we want to be healed, we must...

1. Guard Against Bitterness

Now that their father is dead, what would stop Joseph from payback? Joseph's brothers just assumed he would be bitter. "It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him" (Genesis 50:15 ESV).

So they said their dad had left a message for Joseph before he died: forgive your brothers. Bitterness happens when we choose to dwell on our wounds. Bitterness can even lead to a desire for personal revenge.

But his brothers did not need to be afraid – Joseph wasn't bitter. Listen to his words: "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God" (Genesis 50:19 ESV). In other words. "God rights wrongs, so I don't have to settle the score."

Deep wounds will never be healed if we let ourselves become bitter. Bitterness spreads the hurt; but leaves our own wounds unattended. Ephesians 4:31 says, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice" (ESV).

Get rid of all bitterness. Guard against bitterness by trusting God to right the wrongs.

2. Take Steps Toward Forgiveness

When we've been hurt badly, the last thing we may want to do is forgive. But remember: deep wounds require serious treatment.

Some people think forgiving is simply forgetting. It is not. Other people think forgiveness means minimizing the hurt. It does not.

Forgiving does not mean you are saying what they did was OK. In fact, it means the opposite. It means what they did was wrong even hurtful, but that you choose not to hold it against them. You choose to forgive, just as Christ forgave your sins.

Do they deserve it? No, of course not! That is the point. It is because of the seriousness of the hurt that forgiveness needs to occur.

Do not try to cover their mistake. If they did you wrong, then there is no getting around that. Being honest about what was done to you is very important. Joseph spoke truth about his brother's actions: "you meant evil against me" (Genesis 50:21). But, he forgave. And we can too! The truth is deep wounds will always remain open if we are unable to forgive.



Forgive the people who have wounded you.

- Forgive your father for being selfish and self-absorbed.
- Forgive your mother for being hyper-critical and not giving you approval.
- Forgive your wife for criticizing you in front of your friends.
- Forgive your husband for his outbursts of anger.
- Forgive the old flame who misused you physically.
- Forgive those who ...

The key to forgiveness is to understand how much we have been forgiven by God. "... forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive" (Colossians 3:13 ESV).

3. Believe in God's Greater Purpose

One of the most profound verses in the Bible is Genesis 50:20. Joseph said:

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today (ESV).

Genesis 45:5, is equally profound:

And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life (ESV).

What Joseph's brothers did was wrong. However, as Joseph looks back on his life, he sees that it is no accident. God used all the bad for good.

We do not know what God wants to do in our lives until after the fact. If you have a deep wound, what greater purpose might God have for you? He is in the process of bringing out good through your experiences.

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28 ESV).

4. Live by Promises, Not Explanations

I am sure that while Joseph languished in the bottom of the pit or in prison, he was not aware of God's plan. But he lived by promises, not explanations. A recurring theme appears in Joseph's life is: **"The Lord was with Joseph"** (Genesis 39:2). Joseph had hope in the midst of the unknown.

If you have a deep wound, live by God's clear promises found in Romans 8:



- What we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will give us later (vs 18).
- God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God (vs 28).
- Since God is for us, nothing against us can ultimately succeed (vs 31).
- Overwhelming victory is ours through Christ (vs 37).

I don't know what deep wound you may have experienced. But I do know that God is with you in the midst of it. And his promises will bring healing.

CONCLUSION

As you consider your life, which of these 4 questions do you need to answer:

- Do you need to guard against bitterness?
- Do you need to forgive?
- Do you need to see God's greater purpose in your pain?
- Do you need to live by promises?

