

# A PILE OF ROCKS

## INTRODUCTION

In the end we must realize that our God, who could have stacked rocks against us, has dropped them. He has sought us, forgiven us, and restored relationship with us...how can we do any less?

## DISCUSSION

Who is the hardest person in your life to extend forgiveness to?  
Share why, if you want to.

## EXPLANATION

What rocks have you carried around with you?  
Why is it so hard to drop our rocks?

## APPLICATION

Read Roman's 12:14-21  
Is it difficult to trust God with your hurt and anger?  
Why?  
Do you really trust God to take care of issues of betrayal in your life?  
How do you do that (or why do you not do that)?  
How do you bless someone who persecutes you?

## MISSION

In what ways have you rejoiced with those who rejoiced?  
How have you wept with those who wept?  
What does it mean (as far as it depends on you) to live peaceably with all?

## HOMEWORK FOR NEXT WEEK

Read Luke 46-47  
And get your mother something nice.

# GENESIS

THE FINAL CHAPTERS

## A PILE OF ROCKS

PART 65

GENESIS 45:1-8

John 8:7  
John 8:2-11  
Genesis 45:1-8

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## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

### GOBAGS SANTA MARIA

Stuff The Bag Event - May 11th  
ourelement.org/gobags

### ELMENT MOMS

5/7, 2pm @ Rice Ranch Park  
5/18, 10am @ Waller Park  
5/22, 2pm @ Sunrise Park  
5/30, 10am @ Rice Ranch

### TEXT-IN YOUR VOTE

For Film & Theology  
805-310-4229

### BAD MOVIE NIGHT

5/25 - 'Nine from Outerspace'



# GENESIS THE FINAL CHAPTERS: PART 65

## A PILE OF ROCKS

**John 8:7 And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.”**

Joseph reveals himself to his brothers in Genesis 45. They are shocked and dismayed about what will now happen to them, as Joseph could want revenge for their previous behavior.

In a long speech Joseph attempts to dissipate their sense of guilt by stressing God’s role in sending him to Egypt in order to preserve the lives of his family. With the famine set to continue for another five years, Joseph sends his brothers back to Canaan in order to bring the rest of his family to Egypt.

What is interesting is that Moses, as the writer, makes no comment on whether Joseph’s overall strategy with his brothers was right. It is also unclear what Moses expected his audience to think, as it seems he was more interested in the consequences: the brothers were led to acknowledge their guilt in the matter of Joseph. This is what enables the reconciliation between them and Joseph.

The very first readers of the story would recognize the value of courageous self-sacrifice and reconciliation, not simply on the family level, but on the level of the whole people of God—values that the Israelites would themselves need to practice in order to meet the claims of their calling at Sinai.

Theologians divide sin into two general categories:

- **Sins of the flesh**—appetites that are out of control: lust, greed, gluttony, drunkenness, and laziness. These idols will lead to other sins like deceit, betrayal and despair.
- **Sins of the spirit**—pride, arrogance, self-righteousness & judgmentalism.

But Jesus hated all of these.

In Joseph’s story the brothers had both types of sin.

- Sins of the flesh (how they lived much of their lives).
- Sins of the spirit (jealousy which caused them to sell him into slavery).

*C.S. Lewis, “The sins of the flesh are bad, but they are the least bad of all sins.*

*All the worst pleasures are purely spiritual: the pleasure of putting other people in the wrong, of bossing and patronizing;... the pleasures of power, of hatred. For there are two things inside me, competing with the human self which I must try to become. They are the Animal self, and the Diabolical self. The Diabolical self is the worse of the two. That is why a cold, self-righteous prig who goes regularly to church may be far nearer to hell than a prostitute.”*

Joseph has great reasons to hold grudges as he has been sinned against multiple times. In John 8:7 Jesus says, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone...” If anyone has a right to stand over a pile of rocks to throw them we think it must be Joseph, *prison, slavery, false rape charges, he is the only Christian in Egypt, works 100 hours a week for a country that doesn’t pay him*, but he knows it is only the grace of God that has brought him where he is. Joseph understands God has a purpose in all things.

Joseph doesn’t shy away from the fact that God allowed trouble for His own greater and better purposes. Joseph knows God is in charge and had a plan, “*The people who were supposed to care for me didn’t, but God did.*” It wasn’t always pleasant, but God was in the midst of it, and because he was willing to love God and people, it all starts to work out.

It isn’t that the brother’s actions were acceptable; it is that God used them. God, by loving people, does not condone our actions, instead, He redeems them.

- Dropping our rocks against people is not the same as approval of their actions.
- Dropping our rocks against people is not the same as toleration of their actions.

Dropping our rocks leaves judgment where it needs to be, in the hands of God and teaches us to live in obedient trust.

Joseph dropped the rocks and it did something that throwing rocks could never do, it restored relationship in his family. In the end we must realize that our God, who could have stacked rocks against us, has dropped them. He has sought us, forgiven us, and restored relationship with us...how can we do any less?