

Small Group Notes 20 August 2017. Theme: "Wrestling with God-"

Key Words: Reconciliation, Forgiveness

Welcome

- What display of forgiveness has most moved you?

Worship

Read Psalm 133

Pray John 17:20-24

Word

Retell, in brief, the story of Joseph from when his brothers sold him to their seeking aid in Egypt. The group can share together in retelling the story as best they can from memory (Gen 39-45).

Read Gen 45:1-15.

- If you were Joseph how would you feel about your brothers? How do you think Joseph was affected? Often those who have been oppressed end up oppressing others – do you think that is what happened in Gen 47:21?
- Joseph made sense of things by believing that ultimately God's hand was at work through all he'd suffered. Some wonder if God caused something bad to ultimately bring about something good. Others would say that, despite the evil in the story, God was able to bring about good. How do you see things?
- Read Gen 50:15-21. When Jacob and Esau reconciled they embraced and wept (Gen. 33:1-5). Joseph wept in Gen 45 and later, in Gen 50, all the brothers weep. Why do you think weeping, by both "forgiver" and "forgiven" characterises these scenes?
- Can true reconciliation ever take place without embrace and weeping?
- The story reminds us how difficult forgiveness is and yet also evokes within us a longing for reconciliation. As Christians we are not left on our own, Christ helps us forgive. Does this description help you? *"Christ is not just outside us, modeling forgiveness and urging us to forgive. Christ lives in us and is himself, as Luther wrote, "the basis, the cause, the source of all our own actual righteousness. Christ forgives through us, and that is why we can forgive" ¹.*

Works

- Pray for those who are suffering the pain of unreconciled relationships.
- Pray for DMC to find a "champion" for a possible centre of "healing and wholeness".
- Consider how you can serve, practically, as "minister of reconciliation" in your place of work, home or church. The group may gently check up on one another as to these acts of love and mercy.
- For the confirmation candidates: Write down the most valuable lesson or gift you received in that time. Write down what you would now tell your teenage self. Send via email (mcguigan@durbmeth.org.za), or hand written to the office. We'll make a "collage of wisdom" to offer our youngsters.

¹ Volf, Miroslav. *Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace*. Zondervan, 2009.