

"The one thing I ask of the Lord - the thing I seek most - is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, delighting in the Lord's perfections and meditating in his temple." Psalm 27:4



WEEK 5

TRIUMPH IN GRACE

Genesis 43 - 44:17

It was the early morning hours. The sun was just coming up over Jerusalem as Jesus stood on the Mount of Olives taking in the scene around Him. The city was awakening and many Jews were making their way toward the Temple as the Feast of Tabernacles had concluded the day before. Jerusalem was bursting with people who had traveled there to celebrate. Jesus walked purposely toward the Temple as another day of teaching unfolded before Him. Just like the days before, people quickly gathered around Him, anxious to hear what He had to say. His words were always heart piercing, yet bathed in a love that was foreign to them. The crowd abruptly began separating as some of the scribes and Pharisees pushed their way through to Jesus with a woman being pulled closely behind. They placed her before Jesus declaring that she had been caught in the very act of adultery and, according to the Law of Moses, her punishment should be death. Anxious to trap Jesus and hear His judgment, they ask Him what He thought should be done with this woman. Would He excuse the sin or condemn her to death?

Jesus knew their tricks and traps. Even more, He knew their wicked hearts as well as the sin of this adulteress woman. Jesus couldn't be trapped. He reached down to write something in the dust. Angered that their question was ignored, the Jewish leaders asked again. Jesus raised his head asking for the person who is without sin to cast the first stone against this woman. He reached down again writing something in the dusty ground. Each person's heart was pricked as conviction flooded in and sin's guilt rose up. One by one their stones fell to the ground with a thud as old and young alike pulled away from the scene. The once large crowd was now an audience of one. Jesus, raising Himself from the ground and looking into the eyes of the adulteress woman standing before Him, asked her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" She responded, "No one, Lord." Tenderly looking at her, Jesus says, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more" (John 8:10-11).

Overcome with the love and grace bestowed on her by Jesus, the woman turned to leave. Her guilt vanished, her life saved, and freedom given. She didn't deserve any of it, but that's what Jesus does; He gives the undeserving, repentant sinner forgiveness and eternal life.



Today we will see Joseph's brothers realize the only way to free their brother Simeon from the Egyptian jail is to return to Egypt, and bring their youngest brother, Benjamin, to Joseph. Knowing their father would be greatly troubled by this, they head back to Egypt regardless. Years of sin, guilt, and fear must have weighed down their hearts. Just like Jesus didn't punish the woman caught in sin, Joseph didn't execute punishment against his brothers. Instead, Joseph reached out with love, mercy, and grace toward his brothers. Many commentators will say that great heart change and transformation took place in the lives of Jacob, Judah and his nine brothers in these chapters. We'll let you examine the text for yourself and draw your own conclusions. What we will see are eleven men absolved of sin's penalty and given what they don't deserve as grace triumphs.



R RECEIVING God's Word

Open in Prayer

Read Genesis 43 and 44:1-17



E EXPERIENCING God's Word

Experience 1: Genesis 43:1-34

1. Read Genesis 43:1-5. What dilemma is before Jacob and his sons, and how is this a motivation for action?

2. Jacob (Israel) gets into a conversation with his sons regarding their current situation. Read Genesis 43:6-14 and answer the following questions:



When Abram's name was changed to Abraham, the old name was never used again; the new name represented a profound and permanent growth in his character. It has been otherwise with Jacob. His name was changed to Israel at Jabbok, but it is not often after this that his new or covenant name is used. Usually, he was thinking and operating much as the old Jacob had done. He was self-centered, self-serving, complaining. However, at this point of the story we see Jacob emerging as Israel, as a 'prince with [or 'one who has been conquered by'] God.' In this character he rightly appeals to the sovereign God (God Almighty) for the issues outcome." (James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis Volume 3 – Living by Faith*, p. 1025)

3. Read verses 15-17. The traveling distance between Canaan and Egypt is about 250 miles which would have been a three-week trip. In verse 15 the brothers arrive in Egypt and go before Joseph. In verses 16-17, when Joseph sees his brothers returning, what does he tell the steward to do in order to receive them?

4. Read verses 18-22. We are told "the men were afraid" upon entering Joseph's house. Why are they afraid and how do they defend themselves?

5. Read verses 23-25. The steward responds with Godly character. How does his response demonstrate the following attributes?
 - a. Peace
 - b. Mercy
 - c. Grace

6. When Joseph first encountered his brothers back in Genesis 42:7, we were told he spoke roughly to them. Read Genesis 43:26-34. Describe the many ways Joseph behaves very differently in this encounter.

7. This is an opinion question and there is no correct answer. Why do you think Joseph has not revealed his identity to his brothers by now?

Experience 2: Genesis 44:1-17

1. Read Genesis 44:1-3. What things did Joseph tell his steward to put in the brothers' sacks?

2. In verses 4-13 it seems that Joseph has set a trap for his brothers. Describe his actions and what he may have been trying to accomplish.
 - a. Compare the brothers' responses in Genesis 42:21-22 with Genesis 44:10-13.



3. Read Genesis 44:14-17. In these verses there are parallels between Joseph's actions toward his brothers and the way Christ extends grace to us. Read the quotes on the left. Then look up the verses on the right and describe the connection you see.

GENESIS 44:14-17	VERSES
"his brothers came to Joseph's house" (v.14)	Matthew 11:28-30
"and they fell before him" (v.14)	James 4:10
"what deed is this you have done?" (v.15)	Romans 3:23
"Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord?" (v.16)	Romans 10:9
"Or how shall we clear ourselves?" (v. 16)	John 3:16-17
"God has found out the iniquity of your servants;" (v. 16)	1 John 1:9
"here we are, my lord's slaves, both we and he also with whom the cup was found." (v. 16)	Romans 6:6-7
"And as for you, go up in peace to your father." (v. 17)	John 14:27



TIME STAMP

Before the digital age, when important paper documents were received, a clerk would use an ink stamp to mark the time and date on them to stand as an official record of an event. It has been said that life events can also be like “time stamps” upon our hearts. Incidents that happen in life, both good and bad, leave an indelible stamp upon us and are not easily forgotten.

Joseph has many “time stamp” moments in his life. As you look back on this week’s lesson, what events would you say are “time stamp” moments for Joseph?



A ACTING on God’s Word

The word grace is used in the Bible to express the unmerited favor of God extended toward us. In Genesis 44 we see Joseph extend grace to his brothers many times. Whether it was when Joseph was welcoming the brothers into his home, releasing Simeon from prison, or providing them with a meal, Joseph repeatedly demonstrates unmerited kindness toward his brothers. Joseph knew that his brothers did not deserve his lavish grace, yet he chose to extend it.

1. Does extending grace mean we should ignore a sin done against us? Why or why not?



DELIGHTING in God's Word

From today's verses, how has the Lord prompted you to pray?

Write a verse from the chapter that God has spoken to your heart.

Close in Prayer