

The Life Of Joseph Part 2

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[0:00] The welfare of his family. And we touched on this a little bit last week, it's really important. Because Jacob is on the verge of not seeing grace. He is right there. He's looking grace in the face. And he is virtually pushing himself back from the table and saying, I don't want to go there because it's not worth the risk.

It's not worth more fear. It's not worth more sorrow. It's not worth losing more children. And so we push back from the table of grace and we decide that it's not worth the risk for us to experience God's grace.

Jacob is in bondage to sorrow and fear and grief. But his sons, essentially Judah in particular, stands up and says, listen dad, we're going to honor your request, but let me tell you, if we don't go down, we're all going to die.

[1:33] I mean, you might lose some of your kids, but let me tell you, you're going to lose the whole family. Children, grandchildren, wives, it's on you.

Is it worth that risk? You're being a little irrational, dad. You're not thinking this through. And we find this little snippet at the end of verse 9, excuse me, in verse 10, it says, if we had not lingered, we would have returned this second time.

That's what the New King James says. It's kind of a translational issue. It's either we would have returned this second time, or as the ESV and NIV and several other translations put it, it says we would have returned twice by now.

We could have gone there and back twice at this point. Probably about a two-month trek one direction. So we're talking about four months to eight months of just hanging on by a thread, exhausting the supply.

That's how desperate things were. And that's how much Jacob was willing to push grace out to the back burner, to keep pushing it down the road. There were barriers to grace in his life.

[2:52] Now when he finally decides to go, now we find what I've titled here, circumventing grace. And what I mean by that is trying to get around grace, trying to overcome grace, and what we're going to find is actually purchasing it.

Let me read this, verses 11 to 14. It says, Then their father said, If it must be so, then do this. Take some of the choice fruits of the land in your bags and carry a present down to the man.

A little balm and a little honey, gum, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds. Take double the money with you, carry back with you the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks. Perhaps it was an oversight.

Take also your brother, and arise and go down to the man. May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man, and may he send back your brother and Benjamin.

And as for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I'm bereaved. Isn't it interesting, when God finally gets us to the point of relenting, we still have this sense of trying to take the bull by the horns, of trying to take the wheel, of trying to take control, and try to bring an outcome.

[4:09] What are some ways that Jacob, what is Jacob's strategy? What is his thought? Okay. I'll send you down, but what's he gonna do?

What's that? Okay. Right. Yes, right. That's good.

That's good. Okay. So bring some food with you, and let's see if we can buy them off. What are some things that he's gonna bring? What are some of the items of this care package he's sending down?

Okay. Honey and nuts. Balm. Mer. Okay. So that's part of the present. What else are they going? Besides the gifts, double the money, and we've talked about Benjamin already, but send Benjamin. Let's see if we can buy them off.

[5:22] Now, there are some problems with this. I mean, from an external standpoint, things are not good with Egypt.

I mean, as far as they're concerned, they're not in a favorable light with people of Egypt, and yet, they think that somehow, this little, meager gift, is going to overcome the significant issues that they have with Joseph.

almost, almost like a slap in the face, I would think. You think you can buy me out with pistachio nuts?

Are you serious? You're not thinking this through. A couple of summers ago, our family had the opportunity to go down and to stay in a home in Destin, Florida.

And this was not just like any home. It was, it was in a million dollar gated community. And the house that we were staying in was backed up to this elite golf course.

[6:29] And it had a screened in pool that went to eight feet, but started at zero. It was like one of those zero depth pools. There's no steps. It was just kind of walk right in like you're walking into the beach.

The owner, the owner does all the embroidery for Nike. So that gives you a sense of the, of the kind of place that we were staying in.

It was like walking into a museum. There were, there were trinkets and artifacts, like, everywhere. And they had the price tag still on them.

And the cheapest ones were like \$450. And I'm thinking, oh my goodness, where's Timothy? Hands off, buddy. Don't touch anything.

Oh man. And then they had these like, like TV monitors, like just kind of stacked up in, in, in rooms that they weren't using. And it was an amazing, amazing home.

[7:31] The, the master suite was bigger than our first home. With a bedroom and the closet and the, in the, in the bathroom.

And I was thinking to myself, okay, at the end of this week, what can we do to, to say thanks? How do you say thanks for that?

I mean, let's be honest. If I put a thousand dollars on the table, it's just going to be a slap in the face. That's kind of what we're talking about here.

We're talking about this, this, need for desperate grace. And Jacob is like, totally irrational.

How in the world are you possibly going to pay off that debt with pistachio nuts? Not going to happen. But, but Jacob finally, finally comes to a bit of his senses in verse 14.

[8:36] And this would be kind of the, the, the, the key verse in this first section. May God almighty grant you mercy before the man. There's a glimmer of light that kind of is beginning to shoot through to Jacob.

He's beginning to understand what's really at stake here. He's not going to be able to, to do nearly enough to, to get the kind of response that he needs.

He needs mercy from God. It's interesting in the Old Testament, the word mercy is used 290 times. The word grace is only used 11 times.

And most of the time that is used in the Old Testament, it's actually referring to favor and not to grace. We actually happen to see one of those instances in our, in this story that we're looking at. One of the uses of grace in this story. So, there were some barriers to grace. I wonder, what stands as obstacles to grace in our lives?

[9:47] What stands as obstacles to grace for us? Of, not only, not being able to receive grace, not being able to appreciate grace, and not being able to give grace.

What are some of those things that stand in the way? Pride stands in the way. What do you mean? I think I can do it myself. That's good.

I can do it myself. You see that in these, in these, this family? I can do what it takes to get what I want. The, the scheming and manipulation of this family.

Right? That's good. There's, there's pride. It takes place. What else? What else? Right. Right. That's good.

Did you hear that? There are people in your life where, every time you turn around, there seems to be new need for grace. I mean, or at least a new need for forgiveness, a new need for, for spending on that individual.

[11:06] And, um, that, that requires maybe a little, little help on our side, doesn't it? God help me. Help me to be a person of grace. It also requires maybe a little deeper conversation, understanding

of what grace looks like.

Because sometimes, sometimes grace is, I'm not going to enable you. I, I want you to learn what it means, to do what it takes, to trust God on your own.

I'm not just going to continue to, to, to, this trend in your life. And, and that takes wisdom, doesn't it? Takes some wisdom. I think, uh, if we were to look at Jacob's life, we would see that sorrow and fear stood in his way.

And I think there are times where, we're, we don't want to be hurt anymore. Or, we don't want to risk anymore.

So we run to comfort. We, we, we run away from those things that are going to, to, to put us out of, outside of our comfort zone.

[12:19] We resist that at all costs. And because of that, I think we miss grace. We miss God's grace for us. We miss God's grace showing up, for us.

And we miss the opportunity to convey grace to others. So, the brothers show up in Egypt. We find that in verses 15 to 23.

And we see the response of grace. This is beautiful. In verse 15 is where it begins. It says, in verse 15, so the men took the present, and they took double the money with them, and Benjamin, and they arose, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, bring the men into the house, and slaughter an animal, and make ready, for the men are to dine with me at noon. The man did as Joseph told him, and brought the men to Joseph's house.

And the men were afraid, because they were brought to Joseph's house. And they said, is it because of the money, which was replaced in our sacks the first time, that we were brought in, so that he may assault us, and fall upon us, to make us servants, and to seize our donkeys?

[13:30] So they went up to the steward of Joseph's house, and spoke with him at the door of the house, and said, oh my lord, we came down the first time, and then we find their explanation. There is a coming to grace.

There is a need for grace. They recognize that they need grace. And we don't see the pleading here. We'll see the pleading a little later.

But when the wheels of grace begin to turn, and Joseph begins to put into motion the grace that he's going to act towards his brothers, now we move to this next element, their suspicion of grace. They're a little skeptical, when grace is put into effect. And what do you see here? Describe for me what's going on in their minds.

They don't necessarily know what Joseph is doing. All they know is they're being moved into his house, and now there's some suspicions going on.

[14:38] It says, particularly in verse 18, what's taking place? Okay. They're afraid about slavery. What's this guy going to do?

Okay. Because of what they did to their brother. Right? We'll get to that in a second. They don't have a clear conscience. They're not a clear conscience. They don't have a clear conscience.

That's right. There's no clear conscience, and so what would they expect?

But judgment. Good point. Really good point. Appreciate that. What else? Yeah.

There's panic. There's panic going on. He's going to take our money. He's going to take our donkeys. He's going to make us slaves. And I don't know if you've had this experience, but you pull your kids aside.

You know something's gone down, and then all of a sudden, they're just kind of overflowing with the story. But you know, hidden underneath the story is something.

[15:50] There's a guilty conscience going on, kind of like what you referred to, Tom. And so they may be free in that specific situation, but when it comes to a guilty conscience and underlying layers of feeling worthy of what's taking place, it just seems to be this extra overflow of explaining the situation.

I think that's what we find with these men. They assume the worst. They expect Joseph to act just like them. I like how one commentator puts it.

They say, what you spot is what you got. You get that? What you spot is what you got, meaning the things that you notice in other people, the things that really drive you crazy, are oftentimes the things that you expect or see in your own heart.

Like, it's kind of like, you always assume the worst in people, but you're assuming the things that you know to be true about yourself. You know what I'm saying?

Like, if you're really frustrated about somebody who just keeps talking trash about you, but you kind of know that's what you're kind of programmed to do, that's what you assume, and you kind of place that on them because you assume them to act like you.

[17 : 24] Make sense? And so these men recognize that, or at least they have jumped to a conclusion about Joseph.

They're assuming that he's going to act in the way that they've always acted in their entire life. Why shouldn't he do what has been so common to them? Commentator says this, whatever you criticize most harshly in others, may it be a hallmark of your own psyche.

Everyone makes comments about other people from time to time, but those who focus on one topic continually, irrationally, and inexplicably, are often describing themselves.

When someone seems unduly preoccupied with certain flaws in others, it's time to do a once-over to see if it's taking root in Mr. or Mrs. Obsessed. Now, that should remind us of what we know in Christ's words in the New Testament, especially the Sermon on the Mount, when he's talking about the need for us, he says, why do you see the speck in your brother's eye?

And there's a big plank kind of jutting out of your own? Jesus understands this. He recognizes that oftentimes the reason why we have an inclination to suspect things of others or see things in others is because we know them to be true of ourselves.

[18 : 56] That's why Paul in Galatians says, brothers, if someone's caught in a transgression, you who are spiritual, restore him in a spirit of gentleness.

Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. That's the warning. But we see that they are recipients of grace.

From verses 19 to 23, they jump to a conclusion, they explain their story, they try to demonstrate that they're free of guilt.

And what would you expect a Gentile, how would you expect a Gentile, somebody who doesn't know God, to respond? Verses 20 and 21, it says, we came down to buy some food, we came to our lodging place, we opened our sacks, there was each man's money in the mouth of his sack, so we've brought it again, we don't know who put the money in our sacks, here it is.

What would you expect? A normal unbeliever to respond. How would they respond? Yeah, it's mine. Some bribery going on, some kickback.

[20 : 12] That's a really good thought. What else? Okay. That's right.

You are really just guilty. You're really just trying to cover up for a guilty conscience, and now you're found. That'd be one way. To respond.

Maybe, what is your problem? What is your problem? What is going on? Get out of here. You took the money, nothing for you.

Go home. It's over. But notice verse 23. This would be kind of our key verse in this second section. Verse 23 says, He replied, Peace to you.

Do not be afraid. Your God, and the God of your father, has put treasure in your sacks for you. I received your money. What stands out?

[21 : 18] What stands out about that? Isn't that interesting? This Gentile, who should be the furthest away from God, is the one calling their attention to their God.

How do you suppose that happened? There's only really one explanation, right? Joseph. What else stands out to you?

How about that opening phrase? Shalom Lekem. Peace to you.

And why is that important? Have we heard those words before? We have, haven't we? I mean, we've heard the anti-peace coming from these brothers, who says, They hated their brother and could not speak shalom to him.

And yet, what's coming back? Peace. No peace going out. Peace coming back. Chill out, man.

[22 : 36] Peace to you. Who do you serve after all? Who is your God? Right? Talk about a wake-up call from a Gentile. Undoubtedly.

Undoubtedly. Because were those not the first words of Joseph to Pharaoh? I can't do it. But God will give you an answer.

He will give you an answer of shalom. That's what it says. He'll give you an answer of peace. This servant was able to distribute grace and peace because he had been a recipient of peace and

grace from Joseph.

Peace had remained on Joseph's heart and peace was conveyed to everyone in Joseph's circles. They were recipients of peace and because they were kind of steeped in peace, they had the savor of peace on them and so what do you suppose they gave?

They gave peace. I love it because it sounds so familiar. The words it's not me echo back through this phrase.

[24:02] It's not me. It's God. God did this for you. When are you going to see it? When are you going to wake up? When will you finally realize that your God and the God of your father is behind all these things?

When will you get it, guys? Recount the grace Simeon is brought out. We find here in these next several verses beginning at the end of verse 23 it says, then he brought Simeon out to them and when the man had brought them into Joseph's house and had given them water and he had washed their feet and when he had given their donkeys fodder, they prepared the present for Joseph's coming at noon for they hear that Joseph should eat bread there.

Amazing grace. Words of peace Simeon is brought there's a reunion taking place there's water for their feet ministering to even the earthy things of their needs food given to their donkeys and now they're waiting for food for themselves.

This extravagant grace. So what's the results? What does grace do? How does it play out? In verses 26 to 34 kind of show us how grace plays out and we see Joseph's initial message of grace in verse 26 it says they brought excuse me when Joseph came home they brought into the house to him the present that they had with them and they bowed down to the ground and he inquired about their welfare and said is your father well and the old man of whom you spoke is he still alive?

They said your servant or father is well he is still alive and they bowed their heads and prostrated themselves and he lifted up his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin his mother's son and said is this your youngest brother of whom you spoke to me God be gracious to you my son then Joseph hurried out for his compassion grew warm for his brother and he sought a place to weep and he entered his chamber and wept there this message of grace this would be kind of the the third kind of significant verse verse 29 this is Joseph's conference of grace or or his request of grace to his brother God be gracious to you my son when grace settles on a heart when we're talking about results of grace when grace settles on a heart what does grace produce in the person who gives grace what did it produce for Joseph what did it do for him he was overwhelmed and what was he overwhelmed by okay yeah he's seeing

[27:15] God at work isn't he and just makes him overjoyed why else what else has it done for him that's great that's great seeking the best now let me tell you if any of us had been in this situation what would be our what would be our gut reaction here not to be overcome with compassion but to stick it to these guys grace had preserved Joseph's heart from being embittered his desire to be gracious and to give grace had guarded him had been an arsenal around his heart protecting him from bitterness keeping him from a wrong reaction to his brothers anything else stand out yes good that's good he was looking for

God so when grace is on a heart it actually not only desires the best but it's waiting for God to do it there's expectancy God is going to show up here somehow and I believe I believe that God will have his way is that what you mean amen there's gratitude there's gratitude in thanksgiving I don't think it's by accident the word grace and thanks come from the same root I don't think that's an accident they are mutually exclusive you cannot be a person of grace without being a person of thanksgiving so Joseph calls attention to grace okay and I I'm stepping out on a limb here so this may or may not be true but this is my interpretation of what's taking place here verse 32 says they served him by himself speaking of

Joseph and them by themselves and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves and then verse 33 says excuse me the end of verse 32 because the Egyptians could not eat with the Hebrews for that is an abomination to the Egyptians okay now help me understand some of the culture the cultural aspects that we find in this verse what's happening here okay okay good so they're sitting in the same room but there's three classes of people right primarily there's the Egyptians and the Hebrews but then even among the Egyptians there are distinctions showing up right who's sitting by himself Joseph who is off by themselves the servants and I think what

Joseph is doing is he is punctuating the need for grace here I want you to understand what you deserve and how Egyptians feel about you guys as being Hebrews and yet here you are here you

are receiving food from my table and now this experience of grace says they sit before him the firstborn is verse 33 the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth and the men looked at one another in amazement portions were taken to them from where from Joseph's table I think that's key but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of them and then this key phrase and they drank and were merry!

merry with him I wonder how long it had been since they had ever experienced any kind of merriment! How long had it been since they had enjoyed one another's company?

[31 : 55] How long had it been before the inner conflict that had been so hot between them just now kind of settled out maybe for the first time in decades and here they are enjoying one another's company and I think that's a result of grace here they are basking in the warmth of the grace that Joseph is conveying to them and enjoying the benefits of grace with one another so we don't have enough time to really dig into this but I want to ask this question again at the end and then I have verses here for you to kind of take home and to process okay I'm kind of launching out without any what I want to say kind of launching out on my own on this one okay so take it for what it's worth what is grace and

I'm going to suggest to you based upon these verses that grace is more than just God's undeserved favor I'm going to suggest to you that it's more than the favor of God that's flowing one direction and just kind of stays with us I'm going to suggest to you that grace is the favor of God that leads to power in the Christian life through the Holy Spirit okay grace is the favor of God that leads to power in the Christian life through the Holy Spirit now I just want to pick out a couple of these key phrases Luke chapter 2 verse 40 matter of fact yeah Luke 2 40 here's what it says speaking of Jesus and maybe if you have an app and you can get there quickly do it but if not then I can read it and we can just talk about it okay you can take it home with you and just kind of process this a little bit more it says and the child grew and became strong in spirit filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon him now does Jesus need grace does he really need the undeserved favor of God or is there something more to this and I'm suggesting there's something more okay that grace serves a purpose okay it's not just something that God does for us it's something that God does for us so that it can flow from us okay John 1 14 it says that Jesus is full of grace and truth there's something more than just the favor of God in his life to be full of something means that it that it serves a purpose and so then we come to places like Acts chapter 4 32 and 33 listen to this it says speaking of this church now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own but they had everything in common and then this verse 33 and with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the

Lord Jesus and great grace was upon them all how did that grace show up it showed up in power it showed up by the disciples the apostles doing great works it showed up in the church by the church giving all their stuff okay the favor of God marked their life and it showed up in power to do what they would not be doing of themselves Acts 11 23 this is the church of Antioch Barnabas comes and this church is just beginning and he says when he came and he had seen the grace of God what he saw the grace of God is it something that you can see you better believe it if it shows up in power if it shows up in change if it marks a life as being wholly different than it was before and he was glad he says and he encouraged them all that with one purpose in heart they should continue with the

Lord speaking of the apostle Paul in Acts chapter 14 it says therefore they stayed there a long time speaking boldly in the Lord who was bearing witness to the word of his grace how was he bearing witness to the word of grace granting signs and wonders to be done by their hand and then for sake of time maybe one of the hallmarks of this is in 2nd Corinthians chapter 12 verse 9 2nd Corinthians 12 8 and 9 and this situation is when the apostle Paul he has this vision right going into the third heaven and he asks God to take away this thorn in the flesh and Jesus says no and he says what does he say my grace is sufficient for you what is that supposed to mean well it goes on for my what is made perfect in weakness grace my strength my power grace and power are together we receive the favor of God and his strength for life and that's how it shows up in the world around us when we do acts of grace when

[38 : 11] Bob when you talked about giving your grandkids ice cream that is not a human impulse that's a divine impulse it comes through divine help or through divine example one of the two God Paul received grace and strength for the work that he was about to do Ephesians 4 7 11 Jesus talks

Hebrews chapter 10 talks about the spirit of grace and then maybe one more 1 Peter 4 10 as each one has received a gift minister it to one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God okay so maybe you're asking yourself the question now time out what about Ephesians chapter 2 8 9 for by grace have you been saved through faith and I would say this will help maybe redirect or give fuller comprehension to that because it is God's power working to create and to bring and to lead to faith especially in