

The Life Of Joseph Part 3

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Preacher: Pastor Andrew

[0:00] Okay, I'm on? Good. And you may not, we may not amplify the volume, but it's here for recording! Just in case someone misses out. We come to Genesis chapter 44 this morning, and many have wondered! Why in the world is Genesis 44 in the Bible? And I think there's a really important reason for it that we'll get to. But before we dig into the study, let's just go ahead and open up our time in prayer, right? Father, we're here this morning not just to fill up our heads with more information. We're here this morning not just to do our religious duty for the week. We're here this morning not just to fulfill some sense of obligation in our spiritual journey. We're here this morning not even to just express our hearts in worship, as important as that is. But really, we're here this morning so that we can be more tuned to your attention. So that we can set our affections more on our Savior so we can connect with one another, the body of Christ, and just learn how to be more like you in this world, better representatives of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

So Lord, as we come to your word today, as we look in the Old Testament, we see evidence of the fact that you are the same yesterday, today, and forever. We see that the spotlight is always shining on our God, regardless of where we are in the journey. Whether we're in Genesis or Revelation, the focus of attention is exclusively on our God, his goodness, his grace, his sovereignty, his power, and his ability to use even difficult things for our purposes, for your purposes, and for our good. So we praise you, Lord, for that. And we ask this morning that as we look into your word, Lord, you would be the focus of our attention. And that we would begin to see, or maybe reminded to see, that all that happens in this life happens for a purpose. And we praise you for that in Jesus' name. Amen. So how many of you, and this is a rhetorical question, maybe some of you actually fit the category. But the question is, how many of you enjoy tests? Some people are really good at tests. Now, for me, I was never really very skilled in tests, or never really appreciated tests. And when they came, I always kind of got this, there was this physical reaction to tests. The anxiety, the pressure that I felt with tests. And this morning, we come to a test. So Joseph's brothers, we've kind of been following his story and the story of his brothers from chapter 29, and we've been following them through all the way to chapter 44 this morning, and following the story of this family. And we see that this family is a family that isn't one necessarily that you would push to the forefront as being ideal, as really setting the example for us in terms of what it means to live a godly life. And yet, emerging from this family is this man named Joseph, this young boy named Joseph, who, through the course and through the series of several tests in his life, we see the emergence of character, the refinement of faith, a person of integrity.

And we see a person who really stands out as being exemplary, a real model for us. Some have asked, why was Joseph considered great? And even some commentators have wondered, why did the Holy Spirit see fit to give us chapter 44 of Genesis? I mean, you look at the details and they seem quite mundane. You look at the narrative and the pieces of this test that Joseph puts his brothers through, and you begin to wonder, what really is the purpose of, what, 34 verses?

[4:56] 34 verses? Why is it here? What is the point? What is God trying to convey through the details of these verses in Genesis chapter 44? Interestingly, Martin Luther had trouble with this chapter.

The great reformer struggled with this chapter because of that reason. Wondered why the Spirit of God took so much time in preserving such a trivial 34 verses.

But I think here we see, again, another glimmer, another spotlight, not just shining on Joseph, but primarily shining on the person of Christ. Helping us to understand a little bit why God allows testing and trouble to come to our life. It's interesting that chapter 44, centers on this theme of testing. Do we see that testing in God's will tend to converge quite often?

Can you think of some examples where testing of God's people, the sovereignty of God, converge for individuals to help them grow in spiritual maturity? Can you think of some examples?

Where did some testing take place in the Old Testament? I mean, really tough testing. Job. And what kind of testing did he experience? It was, it ran the gamut, didn't it?

[6:46] From losing his children, and losing his livestock, and losing his crops, and losing his own health. And it's interesting that the tests that God put Job through, it says, it says the fire came from heaven.

It says that the Lord, it looked as if even God was against Job. So it was like Job lost it all. That was a hard test.

And through the process, God refined Job, didn't he? Some other testing in the Old Testament that you can remember. Abraham. That's an excellent example.

How did testing come into play with Abraham? Abraham. It's good.

So God shows up and says, Abraham, I'm going to make you a great nation. Just come to Canaan. Move out from Haran, across the desert. Come to this whole new place. Away from your family.

[7:54] Away from your roots. And I'm going to make you a great nation. Abraham shows up. He leaves everything behind. Shows up. And year after year after year after year.

For 25 of those. After after afters. Abraham's like, okay, did I hear this right? Did I miss the message somehow? The promise finally comes through Isaac.

And then God says, okay, how important is that promise to you? Are you now going to make that promise your idol? Or are you going to set your affection on me?

I want you to sacrifice your son, Isaac. I want you to be willing to lay down that promise. I want you to give it up. I want you to demonstrate what's truly important.

That promise or me. That was the exchange. And Abraham was willing to say, you know what? You are more important than the promise. That's good.

[8:57] Other tests. Phenomenal. Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. There they are in Babylon.

And they have this chance to be distinctive. To be distinguished. To be prominent. And they're willing to give that up. For the sake of their God.

That's great. Other tests. David. David. Give me an example of how he experienced testing. Amen. That's good. That's good. Have you ever experienced that? Where someone has made a promise to you.

And it's for your good. And then nothing is working out. Absolutely nothing is working out. Those promises that were given by your employer or by that family member.

[10:08] Whoever that might be. They're not playing out the way that you had anticipated. And yet the posture of David to continue to depend on the sovereignty of God.

In the midst of the antagonistic response of Saul. He was still willing to entrust that situation to God. Anything else? Great examples. Right? Think of. We could go to Moses. Right? We could see how he was willing to give up the prominence of Egypt.

Right? To identify and associate with the people of Israel. I think the reason.

Maybe one of the reasons. Maybe not the reason. But one of the primary reasons why God preserved this chapter for us. Is to help set a precedent.

[11:10] The precedent is. That if you want to be a person of character. If you want to be a person who is useful for God.

If you want to be a person whose testimony shines radiantly. If you want to be a person who promotes the person of God.

Then you have to be a person who's willing to go through testing. Who's willing to endure trial. Who's willing to entrust difficult situations to God.

I think. I think that's one of the reasons. Why God preserves this chapter. It seems so mundane. Seems so trivial. And yet. This is the program of God for us. This is the program of God for his people. We see it in the wilderness.

[12:09] As the children of Israel are moving through the wilderness. On the way to the promised land. God shows up through testing. The Red Sea.

The need for food and manna. The need for water. The victory over adversaries in the wilderness. Time and time again. God shows up through testing. To lay hold of the attention of the children of Israel.

To say, trust me. And so when they do show up. When they do show up in Jericho. Do you remember what Rahab says?

Remember her testimony to those 12 spies? Or excuse me, those two spies? Remember what she says? Who can echo that for me? Not necessarily the word for word.

But just kind of the idea of what she points to. Do you remember that? That's right. We have heard about your God.

[13:13] And he is awesome. And he is making us shake in our boots. Testing exposes our frailty.

And his strength. And God delights in showing up in your life. He shows up through testing. He shows up through our weakness.

So, all that to say. Kind of set the tone of this lesson. Which has so many other elements. And as I was studying through.

We could talk about forgiveness. We could talk about the healing of relationships. We could talk about the sovereignty of God. In working through hard things.

And certainly that's another significant theme here in this chapter. And in the entire story. The sovereignty of God. What you intended for evil. God meant for good.

[14:11] That's significant. But I think. What I really want to. What I really want to focus on. This morning. Is that. The sovereignty of God.

Yes. Was at work. But it was at work. Through trials. It was at work. Through testing. And that's important for us.

So, Genesis chapter 44. And if there's an extra sheet. Extra little paper. Can I have that? Just to make sure I'm tracking with you. What I want us to see first of all.

Is that testing. Reveals. The deeper things of the heart. What is really inside here? What is really going on inside?

What is your response. To hardship say. About what is. In your heart. Now. You've probably seen.

[15:17] This before. I shake this. Right. And. Splash. Why. Does water come out.

Of the thermos. Right. Why. Why does water come out. Of the thermos. Some of you are saying. Well. Because. You are shaking it. It's full.

But. Why does water come out. And not lemonade. And I know that's a. Pretty obvious test.

But let me tell you. The shaking. The shaking. That God does. In your life. Is the kind of shaking. For your good. So you can see. What is truly. In your heart. We have a tendency.

To cover up. To masquerade. What's in our heart. Things are going really well. In life. And we think. Ha ha. I'm a good person.

[16:17] Look at the good things. That are happening. But when the shaking. Takes place. And the ugliness. Kind of. Comes out. To play.

We begin to wonder. Maybe there's. Not so much goodness. In me after all. Maybe what's really inside. Is not something. I. Really want to.

To let everyone see. It's something that we. Conceal pretty well. Until the shaking comes. Comes. And then. God exposes. What's truly going on.

Inside. So let me read. For us. Just the first few verses. Of. Of Genesis 44. And. What we're going to see. First of all. If. Testing reveals.

The deep things of the heart. What are. What is this test. This specific test. That. That Joseph. Puts his brothers through. Here they are coming back. For the second time. They've had this great meal.

[17:15] Together. They've enjoyed. Merry times. Together. Together. And. Now they're on their way. Back home. And Joseph devises a test.

He says this. Verses one to five. I think just one to three. Then he commanded. This is Joseph. He commanded the steward of his house. Fill the men's sacks with food.

As much as they can carry. And put each man's money. In the mouth of a sack. And put my cup.

The silver cup. In the mouth of the sack. Of the youngest. With his money.

For the grain. And he did. As Joseph told him. As soon as the morning was light. The men were sent away. With their donkeys. They had gone only a short distance. From the city. Now Joseph said to his steward.

Up. Follow after the men. And when you overtake them. Say to them. Why have you repaid evil for good? Is it not from. From this. That my lord drinks. And by this.

[18:10] That he practices divination. You have done evil. In doing this. Alright. So someone summarize this test for me. What's happening?

What is this test? Or at least. What are the mechanics of the test? Maybe not the full expression of the test. How does Joseph set this up? What does he do?

Okay. So. He puts money back in their sacks. Alright. Fills up their sacks with grain. What else is going on? Okay. He plants a cup in Benjamin's sack.

Why Benjamin? He is the youngest. That's right. Joseph's full brother. And why is that significant? That's exactly right.

Joseph is recreating. The event. That landed him in Egypt. Right? He's giving them an opportunity. To redeem. What had been happened.

[19:13] In the past. To say. Okay. Let's recreate the details. In some respect. Let's see. If you guys are going to throw. Benjamin under the bus. Like you threw me under the bus.

Now. The brothers. Are making their way. Out of Egypt. What is going through their mind? We survived.

Woo hoo. Right? We're bringing Benjamin back. Who else are we bringing back? We're bringing Simeon back. Mission accomplished.

Pistachios did their job. Right? That was the present that they gave. You know. The nuts. And pistachios. And almonds. And. We.

Did it. Guys. Here we go. Back to dad. Things are great. Hallelujah. Now. Isn't it.

[20:18] Isn't it interesting. How God. Takes us to the mountain. Before he's got to. Obliterate. The. The. The image of success.

Personal success. So he can expose. And. And take us to. To the place where. Where. Where he shows up in our life. Danger averted. And not only.

Did we get Benjamin. And the grain. And. And Simeon. But we actually. Have restored. This relationship. With the number two guy. Of. Of Egypt.

Talk about a successful. Successful mission. Where we accomplish more. Than we even dreamed. Was possible. And now. And now.

Joseph's steward. Comes. Does. Does anything. Strike you. As. As interesting. About this story. Like. Let me. Let me read this. And. It says.

[21:16] Fill the men's sack. With food. As much as they can carry. And put each man's money. In the mouth. Of his sacks. How. In the world. Did these guys.

Leave Egypt again. Without checking. Their sacks. Who are these guys? Well. Let me tell you. It's because.

They were so convinced. At the success. Of the mission. They were so. At ease. So. At rest. They didn't even bother. Checking. Their sacks.

Because. They knew. They knew. They had done their job. Everything was working. In their favor. And then. Tragedy strikes.

Tragedy strikes. And. Now. One by one. From oldest. To youngest. They're opening. Their sacks. What are they finding. In their sacks? They're finding.

[22:11] The money. But isn't it interesting. That it's not listed. Anywhere. In the narrative. It's because. With. What they had in mind.

Was. The cup. And I'm sure. I'm sure. That once they began to open. From oldest to youngest. They're like. Oh my goodness. The money is here again.

But at least. It's not the cup. I also think. It's interesting. That. That Joseph. Encourages. The steward. To.

To talk about. This cup. Of divination. And this cup. Of divination. Would have been used. In Egyptian practices. To do. What. You would expect.

To divine. The future. To. To reveal. The secret things. And so. Joseph. In alluding. To this. Wants his brothers. To understand. You're not going to get away. You are not.

[23:08] Going to get away. With anything. You better. Come clean. Already. He's. He is. He's helping them. To again. Think.

Think about. Their. Their. Their lives. And to think about. About why. All of this is taking place. For them. He couches this.

In terms of. Of the Egyptian. Culture. And essentially. I know the will of God. I know your heart. I know the secret things. There is no hiding. We find the discovery.

In. Verses. Six to thirteen. Oh. By the way. It's interesting. That this word. Divination. Is only used. Four times. Excuse me. Five times.

In. In. Genesis. We find. Four of them. Here. In. This. Chapter. The only other time. It's used. Is of Laban.

[24:06] Who. By divination. Finds out. That. That. That. The blessing. That he was. Experiencing. From. From. Jacob. Overseeing. His flocks. He.

Recognizes. That it was. Because of. Jacob. That God. Had blessed him. So. This family. Is very familiar. With. This concept. Okay. This is not. A foreign.

Concept. Or a foreign. Term. For them. They. Get it. It is. Deeply. Embedded. In their. In their. Family. And. They know. They've been found out.

They know. They've been caught. Says in verse 6. When he overtook them. He spoke to them. These words. And he repeats back the words of.

Of Joseph. And then Judas is the first to speak up. It's here in verse 9. It says. Whichever of your servants is found. With it. That is the silver cup.

[25:01] Shall die. And we also will be my Lord's servants. Now that's. An interesting. Prospect. And it was.

Another. Reminiscent thing. Of what happened. Previously. Can you make some connections there? What happened. With Joseph.

Essentially. They sent him off to die. Didn't they? He was the scapegoat. He was the one. Who they were. They had to get rid of. Verse 12.

And he. The servant. Searched. Beginning with the eldest. And ending with the youngest. And the cup was found. In Benjamin's sack. Verse 13.

Then they tore their clothes. And every man loaded his donkey. And they returned. To the city. So the implications. Of the discovery. The cup is found.

[25:56] And what are the implications? Maybe we should put it this way. According to Judah. What should the expectation be? Benjamin dies. And the rest of them are slaves.

That's the implications for them. What about the implications for the family back home? What does that mean for them? Starvation and death. It means that the fledgling nation of Israel is doomed. It's at an end. It means that Jacob will be bereaved of his sons. Just as he. Had anticipated might happen.

Although it's not mentioned. One by one. They're finding. This money. That's also in the mouth of the sacks. And. And I'm sure. One by one.

Their heart begins to sink. They almost can anticipate. The inevitable. I'm sure. That they can. In their mind's eye. They know it's coming.

[27:06] Things could not have been worse. Things could not have been worse. So they go from the mountaintop. To the absolute valley. The lowest. The lowest point.

Jacob had not been pessimistic enough. Their doom was sealed. With this discovery. Wives and children. And legacy in Canaan. Would be no more.

The fateful day. Must have flashed. Once again. Before their eyes. As this discovery. After discovery. After discovery. Takes place. And one by one.

They can remember. This. And tag. This. This. Assaulting. And relentless. Reminder. Of what they did. To Joseph.

Years and years before. We knew better. We're hounded by our guilt. Many times. How many times. Have we wanted to tell dad. How many times. Have we wanted to come clean.

[28:03] But because of. The significance. Of. The sin. And because of the. Years of silence. They continue to. To keep this.

Under wraps. But under. But. But. But notice this. Notice their unified response. The unified response. Of this brother. What is the unified response.

In verse 8. What do they all do together. We're beginning to see.

This fractured family. Begin to coalesce. Okay. So. What's an evidence. Of. God.

Beginning to. To unify this family. You see that. It says. We all brought our money. Back to you. You see.

[28:57] A unified. Theme there. They. They all. Wanted to do. What was right. They're all. Coming. Coming back. In a way. To. To.

To. To. Want to. Do. The right thing. How about in. Verse 9. What do you see there. That's right. We're in this together. We're not going to throw. Benjamin under the bus. We're not going to throw. Any of our brothers. Under the bus. We're all going to be slaves. We're in this together. How about

verse 13.

They all go back. They all go back. And. Something else. Happens. When the discovery. Takes place. They all do something else. They all tear their clothes.

They are all. Devastated by this news. It's not a sense of relief anymore. You get that? These are not the same men. It's not like.

[30:01] It wasn't me. Sorry Benjamin. Go enjoy life in. In Egypt. We're out of here. This unified response.

Of. Lamenting. And mourning. Over this discovery. And although Benjamin is targeted. They return together. They're all in this together. And we find in verses.

14 to 17. We. We find the. What this dismay. Of the brothers. Leads to. We see how this test. Is now. Beginning. To. To. To produce.

To produce. The right results. In them. Let me read. Verses 14 to 17. Says. When Judah. And his brothers. Came to Joseph's house. He was still there. They fell before him.

To the ground. Joseph said to them. What deed is this. That you have done. Do you not know. That a man like me. Can indeed practice divination. There it is again. And. And.

[30:56] When it uses the word divination. Actually puts it. The. The same two Hebrew words together. Only it puts it. In different. Different verb tense.

To help. Provide. Emphasis. To the word. Okay. It means. It's divination. Or to. It's a. Truth telling. Or to reveal secrets. To help identify the future. Okay. That God has exposed. Their hearts. And Judah. Responds in verse 16.

He says this. What shall we say. To my Lord. What shall we speak. Or how can we clear ourselves. God has found out. The guilt of your servants.

Behold. We are my Lord's servants. Both we. And he also. In whose hand. The cup. Has been found. What's going on. Isn't that beautiful.

[31:53] Look what testing. Has produced. In these men. Look what it's. Brought. To the surface.

Look how it's. It's brought. Right out. Into light. Their guilt. They could no longer conceal. And now we find. A.

Heart. That is ready. To finally. Come clean. And finally. Confess. Now this wouldn't necessarily be. The kind of confession. We would expect. From a New Testament saint.

Okay. But it has all the marks. Of confession. And repentance. From an Old Testament saint. There is. Within this. A sense of.

Of. Ownership. Owning. The guilt. Owning. Responsibility. For what's taking place. And owning the consequence. Whatever it might be. Whatever happens.

[32:48] We are ready. To endure. That consequence. Because we understand. We see. The guilt of our own hearts. Verse 17. But he said.

Far be it. From me. That I should do so. This is Joseph talking. Only the man. In whose hand. The cup was found. Shall be my servant. But as for you. Go up in peace.

To your father. Okay. Joseph is. Is now. Tightening the lens. Okay. So. So he's seen. He's seen.

That the vertical relationship. Is being restored. This relationship. That they have with God. Is. Is. Because of confession. And repentance. Is now. Been.

Made right. Now. Joseph is interested. In. The horizontal. Relationship. He's interested. In. How this is affecting. Their relationships. With one another. Okay.

[33:42] That was. Kind of the second part. Of this. Test. Test. But before we get there. Let me ask this question. They're confessing a sin. What sin are they confessing?

What do you suppose? Okay. I think you're right. Because they knew they weren't guilty of.

Stealing that money. They knew they weren't guilty of the cup. They knew there's something bigger in play. Didn't they? And they've already alluded to it. A couple of times. In the previous narrative.

Haven't they? I mean. When. The first time they travel there. To Egypt. And they. And they get thrown in the slammer. For three days. Joseph overhears them.

A conversation. Amongst them. Where they're saying. Remember. That day. We saw. Joseph's face. We heard his cries.

[34:38] And we did nothing. That's the reason. For this day. They're haunted. By the memory. Of that day. And then.

Later on. It says. After they find the money. In their sacks. That first time. It says. My money has been put back here. Here it is in the mouth of my sack.

This is in chapter 42. At this. Their hearts. Failed them. And they turned. Trembling to one another. Saying. What is this. That God has done to us.

They get it. And here they are again. In the same. Similar situation. God is using testing. To help. Bring.

Appropriate healing. To their lives. Because healing. Will never happen for them. Without repentance. Healing will never happen. For them. Without confession. Without coming clean. So.

[35 : 36] So. Joseph has set this test. To help them. Resolve that vertical issue. The issue with God. And here they are. Finally. Confessing sin. Finally coming clean.

First test passed. What about the second test? And now. Joseph is beginning to. Tighten the focus. Okay. Now he says. Okay. Guys. Those of you.

Who. Didn't have a cup. You're free to go. Benjamin. You're here to stay. And here we find. Their devotion.

To their family. Here we find. Where. Where God is working. To help resolve. Their horizontal. This horizontal test. This relational test.

With one another. And then. We find in verses. 18 to 23. We find this speech. Of Judah. Judah becomes the spokesman. And essentially. What happens is. Is Judah. Is helping.

[36 : 33] Joseph understand. Understand. How significant. It is. That Benjamin. Goes back. Let's read a couple. Snippets of this. Verse 18. Says. Then Judah. Went up to him.

And said. Oh my lord. Please let your servant. Speak a word. In my lord's ears. And let not your anger. Burn against your servant. For you are like Pharaoh himself. Verse 20.

We have a father. An old man. In verse 27. His wife. Bore him two sons. Verse 28. One left him. And has surely been torn to pieces.

In verse 29. If you take this one also from him. You will bring down. His gray hairs. In evil. To Sheol. Verse 30. If the boy is not with us.

He will die. And your servants. Will bring down. The gray hairs. Of your servant. Our father. With sorrow. To Sheol. Then verse 33. Now therefore. Please let your servant. Remain.

[37 : 30] Instead of the boy. As servant to my lord. And let the boy. Go back. With his brothers. For how can I go back. To my father. If the boy is not with me. I fear to see the evil.

That would find. My father. In this. Short few verses. Jacob. Or. Jacob is referred to. Fourteen times.

What do we know. To be true. About the relationship. Of these sons. To their dad. In the past. They resented.

Their dad. Why? There was favoritism. Going on. Right? Any other. Any other. Difficulties. That they had. With dad.

Things were not good. With dad. That's right. He did not love mom. Or moms. Right?

[38 : 30] There was only one special mom. There was one. Singled out. Group. Of three. Amongst the whole. How could dad be.

So partial. And even when we act out. Even when. Simeon and Levi. Go in. Essentially. Kill an entire.

City of Shechem. Dad's response. Seems to be so passive. So. Lackadaisical. So. Hands off. So even.

Their attempts. At getting a rise. Out of dad. Of getting attention. From dad. Seems to be. Kind of pushed. To the background. We can't do anything. To get dad's.

Watchful eye. The only person. That seems to matter. In this family. Is Joseph. Joseph. And for the last. 20 years. We get. We get. Kind of a glimpse.

[39 : 24] Of what's taking place. Back in Canaan. With dad. What is dad doing. In Canaan. He's grieving. He's bawling. His eyes out. Every night. And let me tell you.

Things don't. Aren't. Concealed. Sound wise. When you're sleeping. In a tent. Any of you. Who have done tenting. Understand. That noise. There's. There's really. No noise barrier.

And so. When dad is. Is crying. His eyes out. Night. After night. After night. After night. After night. For 20 years. You continue to wonder.

Does. Does this. Does our dad. Even care. About us. So.

We find. Here. There is. This. Devotion. To family. It's beginning. To emerge. In new ways. To dad.

[40 : 21] But also. To Benjamin. How does that show up. In this. In this. Short narrative here. Up to verse 34. How do we see. Judah's.

Devotion. To Benjamin. That's right. I'll take his place. I'll be the one. It's going to be my responsibility.

Let's let him go. And I'll stick around. I'll be the one. To take. This punishment. And here we see. This loyalty.

This loyalty. To. His brother. And loyalty. To his father. And loyalty. To his brothers. His other brothers too. Send them out.

I'll be willing. To stick around. I wonder. Why Judah? Why? Why Judah? And maybe that's kind of like a. A rabbit trail.

[41 : 18] We don't need to take. Take ourselves down. But I think it's interesting. That Judah is the one who ends up being the spokesman. Given the fact that Judah was the one.

Who suggested. That they sell Joseph into slavery. He was the guy. Who turned the wheels. The crank was turning.

Because of Judah. But. Reuben was the one who wanted to save. Save. His life. Judah says. Hey. Why kill the guy? Let's at least profit out of it. Let's get something out of this deal. Just killing him isn't going to do us any good. Let's get some money in our pockets. Yes. Yes he has.

And so. Leading up to this point. Judah has had to. Had to bury two of his own boys. Judah is beginning to understand. A little bit of what it means. To.

[42 : 17] To. To. To say goodbye. To people that he loves. The legacy. And so. God is already going before Judah. Preparing his heart. Isn't he? For this.

Important moment. And that happened in. Chapter 38. We kind of skipped over that. Reuben. Has already been turned down by dad.

Simeon. Was in prison. Levi. Was. A scoundrel. Who. With his brother. Simeon. Took out Shechem. Judah was next in line. Really. He was the number four.

And. Judah is the one who stands at the forefront. And speaks. For his brothers. And speaks for. His. Youngest brother. Benjamin. So why the test?

Why the test? Can I suggest that. That this was not a test for Joseph. I think Joseph benefited from the test.

[43 : 19] But I think the real purpose of this test. I think Joseph designed this test. For his brothers. He wanted his brothers. To see. To see. Well.

How do I say this? He wanted his brothers. To experience. The full measure of healing. Kind of like what Christ did for Peter. After the resurrection.

The denial. Peter. Do you love me? Feed my lambs. Peter. Do you love me? And three times. He. He. He. He. Drills. Peter.

Peter. Peter. What's really in your heart? I. I know it's there. But I want you to see it. I want it to come out. So that you can. Can experience the full benefits.

Of having seen. The. The healing. That's begun to take place. In your life. And so. For the. The 20 years. Of conflict.

[44 : 17] That this family experienced. In the. And the 20 years. Before that. In this moment. There begins to be. For the first time. A glimmer. Of true healing.

And I think that's why. Joseph designs this test. Does it for them. In. Just. This. Little. Moment. Now finally. This family is beginning. To. To chart a new journey. And what was in their heart.

Joseph. Through this test. Pushes to the surface. And helps them to see it. And God is. Is. Is. Is. Working. Of course. Underneath.

To. To help them. Experience the full benefit. Of. Of. Reconciliation. And confession. And. Loyalty. And healing. Within their family. God is using.

[45 : 15] This test. To. To. To cement. A new trajectory. For them. To mark. In time. As a milestone. This is the day.

Where things began to change. For the. For the people. Of Jacob. This really. Is the turning point. For them. So.

Verses. Let's. Let's move to chapter. Forty five. So that's the. Purpose of testing. And revealing the deep things of the heart. Heart. And then we come to.

Testing that reveals the hidden purposes of God. In 45 verses one to eight. Let me read just the first three verses here. And we'll see. That God reveals.

His work in specific people. So Joseph. It says. Could not control himself. Before all those who stood by him. He cried. Make everyone go out from me.

[46:15] So no one stayed with him. When Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud. So that the Egyptians heard it. And the household. Of Pharaoh heard it.

And Joseph said to his brothers. I am Joseph. Is my father alive? But his brothers could not answer him. For they were dismayed at his presence.

Now they thought things were bad. Before. They thought things couldn't get any worse. Before. And now.

Things are. As bad as they could ever be. And yet. They couldn't be any better. Than they've ever been. In this.

Gush. Of emotion. That just. Flows out. Of Joseph. Towards his brothers. This is. This is one of the most. Touching.

[47:16] And remarkable. Moments. In the Old Testament. This is one of my favorite. Points. Of the entire Old Testament. Right here. And if this is one of the.

One of my favorite stories. This is my favorite chapter. And probably my favorite couple of verses. In all the Old Testament. The culmination.

Of really difficult things. And the sweet. Celebration. Of what God accomplished. Through those difficulties. And here Joseph is.

Someone summarize for me. What's going on. In Joseph's heart. At this point. What's he thinking. And feeling. And saying. Undoubtedly.

Undoubtedly. There is this. Yes. He passed the test. Hallelujah. Thank you God. Yes.

[48:30] Isn't it neat. In the moment. Of greatest. Family. Union. That now. Joseph. Seals the deal. I mean.

Their hearts. Had been. Had been knit together. Through hardship. And now. Joseph says. Hey. Can I be part. Of this as well. I want to. Group hug. I want to be part of the group hug.

That's cool. What else? What's that? Concern for his father. And now.

He's already heard several times. That his dad's alive. Why would he. Why would he ask the question again? What do you think? Does he really.

Not know. How dad's doing. What do you think Tom? Yeah.

[49:32] Yeah. He's. He's seeing it for himself too. And I think. In the question. He's just saying. Hey. Listen guys. He's my dad too. I am part of the family.

There is no longer. This demarcation. You and me. Is my father. Our father. Well. I'm part of the family too. You don't have to worry.

About. About me. Bringing the hammer down. I care. About. Our dad. And I understand. That his welfare. Is bound up. In the unified.

Wellness. Of you and me. And. And I'm interested. In his good. So Joseph.

He. His brothers. Are. Confess. And I think. There's this spirit of. Just delight. And celebration. And oh. How he must have longed. For that day. Looking forward.

[50:31] To what God might do. To be reunited. With his brothers. But. But these are not. The same brothers. Of that day. These are a whole new.

Group of men. Not because they're. Different. In that they're different people. They're different. In that they. Have been shaped. In new ways.

They're not the same people. They. They once were. They've been changed. Through. The adversity. And through the testing. God has. Worked in their lives.

To. To bring. A new sense of confession. And. God has worked in their lives. To. To bring new family relationships. And he repeats for them.

He says. Here in verse. Four. Joseph says to his brothers. Come near. And they come near. And he says. I am your brother. Joseph.

[51:26] Whom you sold. Into Egypt. Take a close look. Come. Look at my face. See me with new eyes. Come as close as you like.

And he gives him an embrace. Especially his. His youngest brother. And he. He is willing to vent. His. Just his. His emotions. At this moment. They've been refined.

By character. And Joseph. Joseph has. Has demonstrated. Just this. This. Refining of character. In his own life. God has given him. Opportunities.

To delight in God. In new ways. God has used. Testing. For Joseph. But God has also used. Testing. For his brothers. There's a lot more.

I like to. Say. But. But. But. But. But. But. If we don't get to this. Last little part. Then we're going to. Really be missing. The real thrust. Of. Of our lesson. Okay. So.

[52 : 31] So. Working off. Of the premise. Of the. Significance. Of testing. Peter. The apostle. Talks. An awful lot. About. Suffering. And trials. James.

Does as well. But. But. Just turn with me. If you would. To 1st Peter. As we try to. Try to bring this. To a close. I want you to understand. As I'm sure you already do.

That. That testing. Is for. Our good. Testing. Is part. Of the Christian life. Testing. Testing. Accomplishes.

In us. What only God. Can do. In only that way. So. 1st Peter. Chapter 1.

Let me just read. Verses 6 and 7. See if you can help me. Fill in this blank. It says. In this. Speaking of. This group of pilgrims. Who. Have clearly shown.

[53 : 26] Faith in God. It says. In this. You greatly rejoice. Though now. For a little while. If necessary. You have been grieved. By various trials.

So that the testing. Of the genuineness. Of your faith. Being more precious. Than gold. That perishes. Though it is tested. By fire. May be found. To result.

In praise. In glory. In honor. At the revelation. Of Jesus Christ. So what does testing. Do for us there. Testing.

Makes us. What? What? Faithful. Okay. Faithful. Would be a. Good word to put there.

And by the way. I don't think there's any right answer. Okay. Faithful. What else? Could you might put there? Refined. It's good. I thought of the word holy.

[54 : 22] God is working. Towards our holiness. It only happens. Through testing. It only happens. As God is pressing in.

Pressing. The image of Christ. Into our lives. And that is painful. Because we tend to resist. So when God is pressing in. And making us more like Christ.

And helping us to be holy. He does it through hardship. He wants us to be more like him. Verses 8 and 9. It says.

Though you have not seen him. You love him. Though you do not now see him. You believe in him. And rejoice with joy. That is inexpressible. And filled with glory. Obtaining the outcome of your faith. The salvation of your souls. So what does. What does it do for us there? Is that? Makes us joyful. Why does joy come?

[55 : 20] Okay. We fall in love with the Lord more. That's right.

God is here. And this isn't it for me. Right? It creates a measure of hope for us. This life. And these trials. This hardship. I'm experiencing.

Is not all there is. I can look forward. To glory. I can look forward. To that culmination. Of salvation. When Christ comes. This is not the end for me. That gives us hope.

We have time for one more. About chapter 2. 18 to 25. Says.

Servants. Be subject to your masters. With all respect. Not only. To the good and gentle. But also. To the unjust. For this is a gracious thing. When. When the merciful.

[56 : 18] Excuse me. Mindful of God. One endures sorrow. While. While suffering unjustly. For what credit is it. If. When you sin. You are beaten for it. And you endure. But if when you do good. And suffer for it. What you endure. This is a gracious thing. In the sight of God. For to this. You have been called. Because Christ. Also suffered for you. Leaving you an example.

So that you might follow. In his steps. So what is. Suffering do for you there. And again. There's no. There's no right answer.

How would you summarize that. Okay. It binds you together with him. Certainly. It helps you to. To. To. To really appreciate. In new ways. His example. Doesn't it. In all that entailed. We get a new appreciation. For God. When we go through.

[57 : 14] Hard things. And when we see. Our response to it. And compare it to his response. But how about. Just in like the work. Context. In particular. This is the context.

He kind of uses. How does. How does suffering. Help us there. That's exactly right. Amen.

You find out. Who your real master is. And where your real hope is. Is it in. That promotion. Is it in. That paycheck. Or is it in. Something bigger. Is it an understanding.

And appreciating. And anticipating. The future reward. That. Your real employer. Will give to you. On that day. It's not. It's not. The employer. That you. Look at. In the face. Every day. It's. The employer. Of God. Who is. Who is overseeing. He's the real master. Who are you serving. Which. Which right. Okay.

[58:09] Who's your master. And. Let's. Let's. Let's jump to. Just the next one. Real quick. Okay. Chapter 4.

Chapter 4. 12 to 14. Says. And by the way. I skipped one. I meant to put. Chapter 3. Verses. 13. To 17. And. And that's an evidence. Of. You want to have. A profound witness. You want to be able. To let God show up.

In your life. And you can make a difference. In the world. Be willing. To endure hardship. How about this one though. 12 to 15. We'll close with this one. It says. Beloved. Do not be surprised. At the fiery trial.

When it comes upon you. To test you. As though something strange. Were happening to you. But rejoice. Insofar. As you share in Christ's sufferings. That you may also rejoice. And be glad.

[59:07] When his glory is revealed. If you are insulted. For the name of Christ. You are. What? Blessed. Because the spirit.

Of glory. And of God. Rests on you. So what does. Suffering do for us there? What does struggle. Accomplish for us?

Is that? Brings blessing. That's right. But it brings something else. Two. God's power.

And I would say. More importantly. It brings God's presence. His presence. Shows up. Like never before. The spirit of glory.

And God. Rests on you. And you can appreciate it. And know it. And experience it. Like never before. You want to experience. The presence of God in your life.

[60:06] And not that you run to trouble. But that you're willing to embrace it when it comes. Because that's when God will show up. Like never before.

And that's a good thing. Thanks for listening. Thanks for your interaction this morning. And let's pray. Before we go to our.

Pick up our kids. And listen to the message here. God thank you. That you are. Willing to. Lead us through the test.

And that's not something that we always. Look forward to. But we know that good things happen. In testing. Just like it happened here. For this family.

That we studied this morning. Help us not to run. From trouble. But help us to embrace it. And to learn from it. And to grow from it. And to see you in it. You're using it.

[61:01] For our good. You're using it for your glory. And we praise you. In Jesus name. Amen.