

Genesis 43:1-44:34

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[0 : 0 0] it's uh wonderful to see the lehman family up here and to see them testify to god's grace in their lives um we're going to talk a lot about families today uh i don't know about you but uh i grew up uh in a family that didn't really have family reunions closest thing was my grandfather's 90th birthday uh but um so we didn't have that sort of culture and i don't know if you've had that culture or not but i want you to imagine with me for a minute the worst family reunion ever imagine a gathering of a family where two brothers won't speak to each other because one slept with the other's wife imagine a bitter grandma masking the sadness of the loss of relationship with her daughters in bitterness endlessly attacking with criticism and out being outspoken about their failures as daughters imagine uncle joe nursing his second six-pack in the corner wondering why his family has never engaged him about his depression attempted suicide let alone his drinking habits and to top it off at the end of the time a father and son have a fist fight in the front yard about who's going to pay for the damage for the car that got wrecked last weekend that would be a pretty unpleasant family reunion wouldn't it it would speak to a fractured and broken family wouldn't it walking on eggshells hiding dark secrets full of grief and regret but you know this may be not far off for some of you from what your family may actually be like and we wouldn't be surprised would we by that for as we look at the bible and as we look at the first family as we look at adam and eve and their sin their rebellion against god as that rippled out into their family what do we see strife envy murder bloodshed brokenness fragmentation over and over again there's a concept in the bible in the old testament it's a word you've heard a lot of shalom shalom means peace and flourishing and well-being and togetherness in the garden of eden shalom was shattered and today we're going to start to look at god's work of shalom in genesis chapter 43 you can turn there in your bible and uh page 36 as we go ahead and the reason why we're looking at this is because jacob's family if you remember your history of the old testament uh the promise to abraham abraham and his son isaac the son of the promise was jacob and we're looking at jacob's family and jacob's family is as bad if not worse than that worst family reunion that i told you about before he rose he he uh was raised in a family full of jealousy deception and favoritism he managed to repeat that quite effectively uh he had two wives he loved one and hated the other uh he had 12 sons he loved two and hated the others uh his marriages were full of strife and sadness uh his children kept coming from the wrong women that he was sleeping with and he was increasingly frustrated by that and by the end you see that not

only that but his three oldest sons have gone off and create committed egregious sins against him and against the family to such an extent that they have lost their place as a firstborn reuben simeon levi have all been dispossessed from their favored role as firstborn and as we started this series if you've been here for a while you remember in chapter 37 greg described it one big hot mess of a family a family torn apart by envy by lies by cruelty as joseph's brothers joseph the favored one was sold into slavery and sent away by his brothers because of their envy and jealousy because of their father's favoritism for this beloved son and they go back and they lie to their brother to their father and say jacob is dead here's his bloody robe and jacob is filled with grief and we think what can god do what can god do in this mess what is god going to do in the face of such fragmentation where shalom is completely gone from this family maybe you feel like that in your life too maybe it is your family relationships that make you think what can god do to repair what is so shattered maybe you feel like it in your life what can god do to fix the brokenness the brokenness in my heart and in my life we ask god what are you up to where are you what are you doing god is at work and that's what we're going to look at this morning god is at work restoring shalom restoring broken shattered lives in his people forever how does god do this we're going to look at genesis 43 and 44 this morning let me pray and then we're going to dive in and we'll look at it together god we ask for your help this

morning as we look at this passage we pray for your spirit to awaken our minds and stir our hearts so that we would understand your truth god we pray you would help us today to understand your word and as we understand your word will we see the greatness of your grace to us lord your power to restore and to fix to repair that which is broken for your glory and for our good we pray in jesus name amen i'm not going to read genesis 43 and 44 we'd be here till 11 30 just reading the passage so i'm going to read parts of it and we're going to summarize and i'm going to bring you along in the story um but if you remember uh uh well as we look at over these two chapters there are three movements of how god is at work doing this restoring work in his family's life three things that he does he removes idols he overcomes fear and thirdly he repudiates envy in the hearts of the family so this is what we're going to look at verses 1 through 15 he removes idols let's look at it this is actually probably worth reading so we're going to read verses 1 through 15 to set the context uh so you can look with me as we read this now the famine was severe in the land and when they had eaten the grain that they had brought from egypt the brother said to them go again buy us a little food but judah said to him the man solemnly warned us saying you shall not see my face unless your brother is with you if you send if you will send your brother with our brother with us we will go down and buy you food but if you will not send him we will not go down for the man said to us we you shall not see my face unless your brother is with you israel said why do you treat me so badly as to tell the men that you had another brother and they replied the man questioned us carefully about ourselves and our kindred saying is your father still alive do you have another brother what we told him is was an answer to those questions could we have in any way known that he would say bring your brother down and judah said to israel his father send the boy with me and we will rise and go that we may live and not die both we and you and are also our little ones i will be a pledge of his safety from my hand you shall require him if i do not bring him back to you and set him before you then let me bear the blame forever if we had not delayed we would now have returned twice then their father israel said to them if it must be so then do this take some of the choice fruits and the land in your bags and carry a present down to the man a little balm 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 to the man may god almighty grant you mercy before this man and may he send back your other brother and benjamin and as for me if i'm bereaved of my children i am bereaved so this is the opening section this is the opening moon if you remember what it is is jacob's family up in up in israel up in palestine canaan at this point are suffering a famine and the only place in the world to get grain is egypt so they've already gone down to egypt once and encountered their brother joseph but they didn't notice him joseph treated them severely initially and then mercifully blessed them not only with all the food that they could want but repaying their money back by putting it back in the sacks but he kept simeon uh one of the brothers as a uh as a down payment as a deposit as a bond so to speak and said you must come back with your brother benjamin and so uh this is where we start the famine has continued we see it in this scene that there are two pressures going on and they're in conflict because one of the pressures is the famine they're out of food they have nothing more to eat what are they going to do there's only one place to go but then there are these conditions to go back requires them to bring back benjamin and it's the very thing that jacob will not do because jacob loved rachel not leah and he had 12 sons but only two came from rachel and one was joseph and he's gone benjamin is the only one left and over and over and over again jacob's favoritism is shown in this idolatry of loving his one son of his one wife that he would probably call his true wife and everyone else is just along for the ride he has loved his one wife and therefore his two their those sons more than anything and in this scene god is prying jacob's hands off of that idol he brings along judah judah now steps into the forefront in chapter 42 he was not even mentioned but now he steps into the forefront god has moved in judah if you remember there's a whole work he did in chapter 38 god is now moving in judah to be the spokesman to lead the family of jacob in a new direction and he pleads with jacob please let him go please if you don't let him go we will die we have no food you and we and our little ones will all die but if we go if we take benjamin with us if you let go of your desperate desire to try to keep this favored son if you will release your hand from this idol then we will go and i promise you i'll bring him back i promise you that i will do it notice that even judah or notice that even as jacob agrees to this even as jacob says all right let's do it his plans change the first time when he sent them down he said go get grain this time he says okay if you're going to get grain and you're taking benjamin well here's how we're going to do it here's the strategy you got to take all this stuff to make

sure that you're going to bless them and and make sure that you have favor with this guy and and oh by the way make sure you take tons of money repay the money that that was in your bag that that joseph had put back into their sacks take that plus enough money to buy the new grain so that there's no question about your your intentions you're not wanting to steal your status do everything you can to position this so that this is going to succeed so that you may bring back your other brother whatever his name is i don't remember him and benjamin my beloved one and that's that's what god is doing here god is prying jacob's hands off of this beloved son i don't even think at the end the blessing is a faith-filled joyful one but even there you see jacob turn back to god may god almighty meaning may the god of the covenants the god who made the covenant to abraham and isaac may that god have mercy on you he is at least resigned to god's plan even though he says yeah maybe if i'm bereaved i'm bereaved you can just see him old jewish man sitting there being sad uh well but think about it by letting him go he is letting go all of his family he now has when these guys go out to egypt he has no sons he is alone in canaan and so let us not be too hard on him but let us recognize how hard it must have been for him to release all of his sons to do this not only did he have to let go of all of his sons but he had to let go of all of his control he had to let go of all of his schemes to save his family he was driven by the providence of god and by the working of joseph which is also a hand of the providence of god he's driven by these things to have to take this step of faith this step of letting go of the idols and it's essential because it's the only way that god can do the work of actually restoring the shalom of the family he needs to get god is working to get all of the family together in one place so that shalom can be restored and benjamin's favoritism and his separation from his other brothers is the barrier to god accomplishing that purpose and so he has to go friends i wonder if there are things that you cling to in your life things that like suitcases of gold that you would clutch to even as the ship is sinking around you the opinion of others the love of a particular person your comfort your plans

maybe it's sin patterns that you return to for comfort over and over and over again idols that have captured our hearts such that we grasp them so tightly that only great moves of god's providence and even compulsion can pry our hands off of them friends what's the one thing that if god said i want you to let go of this would you want to run and hide instead of willingly saying lord i give to you do you see that those things that capture our hearts like that end up becoming then these magnetic centers that warp our relationships with one another because we're unable to love fully and how these things harden our hearts towards god a loving god who knows our needs before we ask them friends just like jacob god is at work in our lives he wants to pry our fingers off of those idols so that he might do restoring work in our life so that's the first movement that's what he does in chapter in verses 1 through 14 and then verse 15 is really fun it's kind of like if you've ever been to a theater show it's like when the curtain comes down and two characters walk across the stage in front there's a scene change going on behind that's what that's what verse 15 is it's just a reminder that and then they all went the men took they went all went down and suddenly at the end the curtain comes back and for the first time in five chapters all of jacob's brothers are in the same place in egypt and in the second one what you see is that god overcomes the fear that joseph's brothers have as they enter into this they come down jacob or joseph is looking from afar he sees benjamin with them he tells his servant go out welcome these men invite them to our house for dinner now remember when joseph's brothers left he put the money that they had paid for the grain back in their sacks and they got back and jacob looked at and said what you come back with all this money but not simeon did you do it again it looks shady it looks really shady and now they have to go back to the same person and ask for more grain and it looks like they've stolen the grain the first time around and so they are afraid they are sore afraid look with me verses 18 through 25 just so we can capture this story and the men were afraid because they were brought to joseph's house and they said it is because of the money which was replaced in our sacks the first time that we brought that we are brought in so that he may assault us and fall upon us make us servants and seize our donkeys you see their fear and they have every good reason to be afraid don't they they have every good reason to let go of it or to come in and think we could be done he could just kill us all he could put us all in prison what in the world is going to happen and remember they've already protested in chapter 42 we're honest men so they're trying to protest their honesty they go to the steward they know joseph man i don't know what he's going to say we're going to try to get in with the steward first so they go to the steward and they try to explain what's happened and that's what they do in verses 19 through 24 and do you see what happened they come in and say when we came in we we found our money in the sacks and we don't know where we don't know where it came from but

we didn't put it there we didn't steal it we really didn't pay for it friends look at what god does in the mouth of a pagan egyptian in the mouth

[20 : 22] of someone who didn't know god at all look what he says in verse 23 he said peace to you oh by the way that's shalom that's where it shows up the first time in the passage peace be to you do not be afraid your god and the god of your fathers has put treasure in your sacks for you i received my money he's saying there's no outstanding debt there's no bill we're not wondering where the money is that paid for your grain i got that god has provided for you god has lavished undeserved grace upon you you got all the grain you needed to live and the money to come back and do it again and all i know is that if i could read into what the servant is thinking all i know is that i've seen this dude joseph enough to know that god is up to something through him he has blessed our country he has saved our country and now he god has worked to save you god has lavished undeserved favor upon you and this is what god does and so then the servant takes them treats them like honored guests he washes their feet he washes their feet he washes their feet he washes their feet he washes their donkeys he invites them to a feast and brings them into this feast where joseph interacts with them about his family and you see the question is your father well is he in shalom is the idea and when he hears that it's all well he feasts them like honored guests he lavishes upon them he lavishes upon them riches wealth imagine they've been in a famine and suddenly they're at a feast friends this is god's restoring work and this is how he does it sometimes he pries our hands off of our idols but sometimes he just lavishes undeserved grace upon us it touches the brothers they make glad and marry and have a big party and celebrate it washes over joseph joseph joseph sees the first dream that he had back in chapter 37 fulfilled his 11 brothers are now bowing down before him simeon has been restored to the brothers he's no longer a bond and he's overcome with passion love for his brothers and he weeps he has to hide it because his long con isn't done yet friends i wonder for you how you respond when god lavishes grace upon you i wonder if your instinct to be afraid as you approach god is greater than he than his grace to you sometimes i wonder if you ever wonder whether his grace just seems too good to be true and it becomes instead for you a burden if god has been so good to me then i have to do everything i can to try to repay him for it our guilty conscience thinks i don't deserve this it can't be real our fallen hearts i think make us grace resistant and god lavishes

his grace upon us his goodness his favor in everything from common grace of everyday blessings to miraculous healings and provisions to ultimately his son in salvation he lavishes grace on us over and over and over and over and over and over again to free our hearts from our fear he has made us to receive this gladly but we often we often struggle with it don't we sometimes we struggle with false guilt where we think there's no way god could ever love me sometimes we struggle with true guilt i've done things that are so bad is it possible that god could love me god wants to break us break us of our self-reliance and of our self-saving strategies by showing us grace upon grace upon grace and when we get to the end of chapter 43 we think maybe this is the time joseph is going to step forward and take off his egyptian clothing and say brothers now we're together isn't this great we're having this great feast but god isn't done with his brothers and the shalom is not perfect yet god has more to do and that's what chapter 44 is all about chapter 44 is the one more step that god wants to do in their hearts to restore shalom to the family and you see it set up at the very end joseph when he sets them up for the feast which is great he sets he seats them in order of birth how could he know that they must have been a little freaked out by that like how did that happen and then benjamin gets five times what the other guys get in this feast and if you're one of his brothers overwhelmed with the goodness rejoicing this and then suddenly like wait a minute again are you kidding me we've lived with this our whole lives he's the favored one we get it but here this guy doesn't even know who he is how could this be you don't see that in the story but you might have wanted they might have they must have noticed the storyteller is very clear to make it exact and then having had a long party they fall asleep for a long time probably they might have even hung up woke up with a hangover the next day and in the meantime joseph now activates his last movement the last scene in the act of the long con that god is working in these chapters to try to bring restoration to this family he tells his servant restore their money fill their sacks as full as they could be and put a cup in the sack of the youngest one so he does this the brothers wake up the next morning they load up their donkeys they ride off back to their brother back to their father they have everything they want they're thinking hey this was a success we have Simeon we have Benjamin we have food this is great and then the servant comes out after him and says how can you treat this

host with such disdain how can you be such a bad guest you stole his cup and they and they they think no no no you don't understand verse 8 this cannot be we would not do this we came back we were ready to pay back money we are not going to be we are not dishonest men don't think about as a matter of fact we are so sure

of our innocence that if you find the guy who stole the cup kill him and that begins this fascinating back and forth about the consequences of the cup being found you see it in 9 and 10 you see it again in 16 or 17 the servant says oh no no no we don't need to kill anyone we just want the one who stole it we'll take him back and make him our servant because he's broken the rule right and so this then and so then again in birth order from the oldest to the youngest they take down their sacks they open them and as they go along the brothers must be saying see we haven't done anything and then they get to the end and Benjamin and there's the cup oh no and for the first time it seems the brothers stand in solidarity they mourn they tear their clothes they pack up their stuff and with Benjamin they go back to Egypt for the first time they've acted in solidarity and then they get back to Joseph and they recount the whole thing again and again we have this back and forth

Judas says hey you know like we can all like if we are guilty they admit it in verse 16 God has found out our guilt and we have no defense and it's probably not talking about the cup because they must still be confused about how the cup got in there it's probably about their guilt going all the way back to chapter 37 God has now revealed their guilt so profoundly and to the very one whom they have hurt by their sin that they have confessed it and Joseph presses home how much have you actually repented of that sin that's what verse 17 is about just leave the youngest one with me the favored one the one who has caused you so much grief the one your father loves the one who as Judah will say later is the one who's treated like the only real son and everyone else is illegitimate just leave him the rest of you go on back you can have all the money all the grain just go just give him to me Joseph has recreated the very scene of chapter 37 to give them an opportunity to repent to repudiate their envy their jealousy their sin and rather than working to destroy and fragment their family to give them an opportunity to begin to act righteously in response to restore their family it might have been tempting for a moment for the brothers to think we could do this but Judah says no Judah rises up again as the spokesperson as the representative of all the brothers and he says no and he recounts in painstakingly Hebrew narrative detail over and over again what what the situation was and how for the love of his father who will be heartbroken if Benjamin does not return and for the love of his brother who they will not abandon like they abandoned

[32 : 00] Joseph so long ago he says no we will not do this and it comes to its climax in verse 30 through 34 let's read those together now therefore as soon as I come to your servant my father and the boy is not with me with us then his life is bound up in the boy's life that is Jacob's life is bound up in the boy's life as soon as he sees that 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 for your servant became now he's talking about himself for your servant became a pledge of safety for the boy to my father saying if I do not bring him back to you then I shall bear the blame before my father all my life now therefore please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a servant for 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 instead of abandoning the brother Judah says take me instead if justice must be done even though it doesn't feel like justice I will bear the unjust imprisonment for we didn't steal the cup but I will bear that injustice for the sake of this brother for the sake of love for my father I will give myself to restore my brother so that my family will have peace I cannot go back without Benjamin my father would die envy rivalry jealousy and hatred are replaced by self sacrificial love that which is broken is restored I wonder friends if you ever experience times when God has brought you back to the same thing again to the same trial or the same temptation and you wonder why am

I doing this is God punishing me am I a failure maybe I can't maybe maybe I'll be stuck with this forever what I want you to see is that just like here God gives us opportunities sometimes to repeat the same circumstances again so that we can show our repentance so that we can turn from the sin that captured our hearts before and see his gracious work in our lives bearing fruit by living differently in those circumstances the restoration has begun love sacrificial love has replaced envy fear has been overcome by grace idolatry of the heart has been removed by sovereign acts of God now all the brothers eleven brothers are united in love and have given themselves in love for one another Jacob's heart has been turned back towards the lord as his hands have been pruned off the

idol he's given up his own scheming and his protection self protection and his self provision and we see the arcs the story lines of this last section of Genesis beginning to come together chapter 37 we saw that Jacob or that Jacob's sons Joseph and Judah were the two key people in this and now we see Judah restored his brothers restored Jacob turning a corner and the only one left to be restored now is Joseph you have to come back next week because that's what Greg's going to preach about is the restoration of Joseph as he makes himself known to his family but in the meantime we see that the restoration of the brothers and particularly Judah Judah who for the love of his father gave himself to redeem his brother and restore shalom to his family what a powerful story that is who points us ahead points us through chapter 49 where the blessing of Jacob on Judah will be from your line will come the future king the scepter shall not depart from your mouth and further on as we get to the genealogies in the beginning of Matthew we see that through the line of Judah comes the ultimate brother who for the love of his father gave himself to bear the unjust punishment upon himself because he did no wrong in order to redeem his brothers and sisters and to restore his family forever this is what Paul points us to in Ephesians 2 that we read earlier that in Jesus Christ God has broken down the wall of hostility caused by our sin that in Jesus the forgiveness that is there because of his substitutionary death for us restores us to a relationship with God but not only that it brings us into a new family and a new household and God is building the household on the foundation of God's grace so that we might be his family forever that's a family reunion worth looking forward to God so gracious as to rescue a family as broken as Jacob's is at work to rescue us from our broken fragmented lives from our broken fragmented families to bring us to him and into his family what a love we have what a savior we have let's pray oh Lord we worship you this morning as a [38 : 33] God who has pursued us that we might know peace with you peace to those who are far off and peace to those who are near peace to us who knew nothing of your grace and yet you have revealed yourself proclaimed yourself drawn us to yourself turned our hearts to you given us faith to believe and carried us into your family God we praise you for that today in Jesus name amen as the worship team comes forward we're going to sing a great hymn a great hymn about the amazing grace and mercy that God has shown us in Christ and can it be that I should gain an interest in my savior's blood died he for me who caused his pain for me to him who him to death pursued amazing love how can it be that thou my God should die for me please stand as we sing together as we sing together all plats

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