Judah's Sacrificial Appeal

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The Seed: Sovereignly Preserved / Redemption; Atonement / Genesis 44

Pre-Sermon Comments

Romans 8:28 LSB

[28] And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to *His* purpose.

> Some providences, like Hebrew letters, must be read backward. ~ John Flavel

Review

Genesis 43:9 LSB

[9] "I myself will be *the* guarantee for him; from my hand you may require him. If I do not bring him *back* to you and set him before you, then I shall bear the sin before you all *my* days.

Genesis 38:7 LSB

[7] But Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the sight of Yahweh, so Yahweh put him to death.

Genesis 38:10 LSB

[10] But what he did was displeasing in the sight of Yahweh; so He put him to death also.

Genesis 38:24 LSB

[24] Now it happened about three months later that it was told to Judah saying, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar has played the harlot, and behold, she is also with child by harlotry." Then Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!"

Genesis 38:25 LSB

25 It was while she was being brought out that she sent to her father-in-law,
saying, “I am with child by the man to whom these things belong.” And she said,
“Please recognize *this* and see, whose signet ring and cords and staff are these?”

Genesis 38:26 LSB

26 And Judah recognized *them* and said, “She is more righteous than I, inasmuch
as I did not give her to my son Shelah.” And he did not know her again.

Genesis 43:30–31 LSB

30 And Joseph hurried *out* for he was deeply stirred with compassion over his
brother, and he sought *a place* to weep; and he entered his chamber and wept
there. 31 Then he washed his face and came out; and he restrained himself and
said, “Set the meal.”

Outline

In Genesis 44, Joseph administers one final test to reveal whether his brothers, especially Judah, have truly been transformed. In this chapter, we see:

- Joseph's Climactic Test (Gen 44:1–17)
- Judah's Sacrificial Appeal (Gen 44:18–34)

Joseph's Climactic Test (Gen 44:1–17)

Joseph’s Trap

Genesis 44:1–2 LSB

1 Then he commanded his house steward, saying, “Fill the men’s sacks with
food, as much as they can carry, and put each man’s money in the mouth of his
sack. 2 “Now put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the
youngest, and his money for the grain.” And he did as Joseph had told *him*.

Genesis 44:3–4 LSB

3 As the morning light *broke*, the men were sent away, they with their donkeys. 4
Now they had *just* gone out of the city *and* were not far off when Joseph said to

his house steward, “Arise, pursue the men; you shall overtake them and say to them, ‘Why have you repaid evil for good?

The House Steward’s Pursuit

Genesis 44:5 LSB

5 ‘Is not this the one from which my lord drinks and which he indeed uses to interpret omens? You have done evil in doing this.’”

Genesis 42:28 LSB

28 So he said to his brothers, “My money has been returned, and behold, it is even in my sack.” And their hearts sank, and they *turned* trembling to one another, saying, “What is this that God has done to us?”

Genesis 44:6 LSB

6 So he overtook them and spoke these words to them.

The Brother’s Protest

Genesis 44:7 LSB

7 And they said to him, “Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing.

Genesis 44:8 LSB

8 “Behold, the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks we have brought back to you from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord’s house?

Genesis 44:9 LSB

9 “With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord’s slaves.”

Genesis 44:10 LSB

10 So he said, “Now let it also be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, but *the rest of* you shall be innocent.”

The Cup is Revealed

Genesis 44:11–12 LSB

11 Then they hurried, each man brought his sack down to the ground, and each man opened his sack. 12 So he searched, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest, and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

Genesis 44:13 LSB

13 Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city.

Judah's Humble Response

Genesis 44:14 LSB

14 Then Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he was still there. So they fell to the ground before him.

Genesis 3:15 LSB

15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

Genesis 44:15 LSB

15 And Joseph said to them, "What is this deed that you have done? Do you not know that such a man as I can indeed interpret omens?"

Genesis 44:16 LSB

16 So Judah said, "What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? And how can we justify ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; behold, we are my lord's slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup has been found."

> Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust Him for His grace; behind a frowning providence, He hides a smiling face. ~ William Cowper

Joseph's Trap is Sprung

Genesis 44:17 LSB

[17] But he said, “Far be it from me to do this. The man in whose possession the cup has been found, he shall be my slave; but as for you, go up in peace to your father.”

> The Christian blesses Him [the Lord] when He smites him: he believes Him to be **too wise to err and too good to be unkind; he trusts Him where he cannot trace Him**, looks up to Him in the darkest hour, and believes that all is well. ~ Charles Spurgeon

Judah's Sacrificial Appeal (Gen 44:18–34)

Judah Approaches Joseph

Genesis 44:18 LSB

[18] Then Judah came near to him and said, “O my lord, may your servant please speak a word in my lord’s ears, and do not be angry with your servant; for you are equal to Pharaoh.

Judah’s Account

Genesis 44:19–20 LSB

[19] “My lord asked his servants, saying, ‘Have you a father or a brother?’ [20] “And we said to my lord, ‘We have an old father and a little child of *his* old age. Now his brother is dead, so he alone is left of his mother, and his father loves him.’

Genesis 44:21–22 LSB

[21] “Then you said to your servants, ‘Bring him down to me that I may set my eyes on him.’ [22] “And we said to my lord, ‘The boy cannot leave his father; if he should leave his father, his father would die.’

Genesis 44:23 LSB

[23] “You said to your servants, however, ‘If your youngest brother does not come down with you, you will not see my face again.’

Genesis 44:24–25 LSB

[24] “Thus it happened that when we went up to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. [25] “And our father said, ‘Go back, buy us a little food.’

Jacob’s Turning Point

Genesis 32:24 LSB

[24] Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of dawn.

Genesis 32:28 LSB

[28] Then He said, “Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed.”

Genesis 32:29 LSB

[29] Then Jacob asked him and said, “Please tell me your name.” But he said, “Why is it that you ask my name?” And he blessed him there.

Jacob’s Misery

Genesis 44:26–29 LSB

[26] “But we said, ‘We cannot go down. If our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we cannot see the man’s face if our youngest brother is not with us.’ [27] “And your servant my father said to us, ‘You know that my wife bore me two sons; [28] and the one went out from me, and I said, “Surely he is torn to pieces,” and I have not seen him since. [29] ‘If you take this one also from me and harm befalls him, you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in evil.’

Genesis 44:29 ESV

[29] If you take this one also from me, and harm happens to him, you will bring down my gray hairs in evil to Sheol.’

Genesis 44:29 NASB95

[29] ‘If you take this one also from me, and harm befalls him, you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow.’

Genesis 44:29 NIV

[29] If you take this one from me too and harm comes to him, you will bring my gray head down to the grave in misery.'

Genesis 50:20 LSB

[20] "As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to do *what has happened on* this day, to keep many people alive.

Genesis 44:30–31 LSB

[30] "So now, when I come to your servant my father, and the boy is not with us—and his life is bound up in the *boy's* life— [31] so it will be that when he sees that the boy is not *with us*, he will die. Thus your servants will bring the gray hair of your servant our father down to Sheol in sorrow.

> Repentance works a change in the whole man. ~ Thomas Watson, *The Ten Commandments*, "Repentance"

Judah's Guarantee

Genesis 44:32–33 LSB

[32] "For your servant became a guarantee for the boy to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him *back* to you, then I shall bear the sin before my father all *my* days.' [33] "So now, please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a slave to my lord, and let the boy go up with his brothers.

> The change that is wrought in conversion, is a universal change. ~ Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*

Hebrews 9:27 LSB

[27] And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment,

Genesis 44:34 LSB

[34] "For how shall I go up to my father if the boy is not with me, lest I see the evil that would overtake my father?"

Genesis 45:1 LSB

[1] Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he called out, “Have everyone go out from me.” So there was no man with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers.

Hebrews 4:15–16 LSB

[15] For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things like *we are, yet* without sin. [16] Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Small Group Discussion Questions

What part of the sermon or passage stood out to you most, and why?

The sermon emphasized that God sometimes uses difficult circumstances not merely to reveal our hearts but to transform them. How have you seen God use a trial to expose or change something in you?

Why did Joseph arrange for the silver cup to be placed in Benjamin’s sack? What was he seeking to discover about his brothers?

Joseph recreated a situation remarkably similar to the brothers’ earlier betrayal of him: one favored son faced slavery while the others were free to return home. How did this test reveal whether they had changed?

When the cup was discovered, all the brothers tore their clothes and returned to face Joseph rather than abandoning Benjamin. What does this response reveal about them?

Judah said, “God has found out the iniquity of your servants” even though they were innocent of stealing the cup. What past iniquity was troubling their consciences?

Why do guilty consciences sometimes interpret present difficulties through the lens of past sins? What is the difference between healthy conviction and destructive condemnation?

Joseph offered the brothers freedom while retaining Benjamin as a slave. Why was this the decisive moment in the test?

The sermon stated that God often removes every human solution before displaying His divine provision. Where do we see this pattern elsewhere in Scripture? How should Christians respond when they see no apparent way forward?

Compare Judah in Genesis 37 with Judah in Genesis 44. What specific evidence shows that God had transformed him?

Why does Judah repeatedly emphasize the suffering that Benjamin's loss would cause Jacob? What does this reveal about Judah's new affections?

Earlier, Judah had participated in causing his father profound grief. Now he is willing to sacrifice himself to prevent further grief. What does this teach us about the fruit of genuine repentance?

What is the difference between merely admitting wrongdoing and demonstrating a genuinely changed life?

Judah had promised Jacob that he would become Benjamin's guarantee. How did his willingness to remain as a slave prove that his promise was sincere?

Judah could not undo what he had done to Joseph years earlier. How can a repentant person respond faithfully when the consequences of past sin cannot be completely reversed?

The sermon described true repentance as producing "transformed affections." What desires, attitudes, or relationships might change when God brings someone to genuine repentance?

In what ways does Judah's offer to take Benjamin's place anticipate the substitutionary work of Christ?

What are the important differences between Judah and Christ? Why must we avoid treating Judah as though he were the Savior rather than a limited foreshadowing of Him?

The sermon described Christ as our true “guarantee.” What does that mean for our guilt, righteousness, judgment, and acceptance before God?

How does Christ’s willingness to bear the punishment of guilty sinners far surpass Judah’s willingness to suffer for Benjamin?

Jacob, Joseph, and the brothers could not see the whole plan while they were enduring it. How does knowing the outcome of their story help us trust God in our own unresolved circumstances?

Romans 8:28 does not promise that every circumstance will feel good. What does it promise, and how should that shape our interpretation of suffering?

How can we affirm God’s sovereign control without minimizing the reality of grief, fear, injustice, and human responsibility?

The sermon said, “Sometimes God brings us to the end of ourselves before He reveals the work He has been doing in us all along.” Why might reaching the end of ourselves be spiritually beneficial?

Is there an area of your life in which you have confessed sin but have not yet demonstrated meaningful change?

Is there someone whose suffering you have previously ignored but whom God may be calling you to love sacrificially?

Are you presently facing a situation in which you cannot understand what God is doing? What truths from Genesis 44 can help you trust Him?

What would sacrificial love look like in one of your present relationships—with your spouse, family, church, friend, or coworker?

Where might God be calling you to accept responsibility rather than defend yourself, shift blame, or protect your own interests?

What specific evidence of God’s transforming grace would you like to see increasingly displayed in your life?