



Grace for the Guilty

Community Group Study Guide: Genesis 42 – Week of June 25th, 2023

1. Your sin will find you out

Throughout scripture we see that sin cannot be hidden. We deceive ourselves if we think that God is not aware of it. The seeds of sin will ultimately sprout and bear fruit in our lives. We will have to face the consequences of our actions. 20 years after he was sold into slavery, the brothers of Joseph are forced to reunite with him. They are forced to deal with the outcomes of their sins. Jacob sends Joseph's brothers to Egypt to buy grain, as famine has taken over the land. It is in a desperate movement that the brothers are forced to turn to the Egyptians. Jacob keeps Benjamin from the adventure, fearing that harm might come to him. So, the brothers guilty of sin against Joseph are unknowingly forced to go and plead for his mercy. They fulfill the first dream that God had given to Joseph in Genesis 37, by bowing down to him.

2. The Slow Burn of a Guilty Conscience

As image bearers of God, we have been given a conscience. This law is written on our hearts, so that we might have a sense of what is right and wrong. However, our conscience is in need of consistent recalibration. We need the Word of God to correct and hone it. We as sinful humans are prone to wander, prone to drift. Furthermore, it is possible to sear the conscience and do long term damage to it. When this damage is done, we require the work of God to renew it in us again. We see that Joseph's brothers had consciences that were unmoved by the horror they inflicted upon him. Their hearts remained cold even when Joseph begged them from the pit. However, here in the story, we see the brothers are finally confessing their wrongdoing. They admit that they sinned against Joseph. It seems as though their conscience was finally awakened to their sin.

3. Now there comes a reckoning

Joseph finally relents, and offers a more acceptable

DISCUSSION GOALS

Head

God knows our sins, and for those of us in Christ, He has paid the penalty for them. Therefore, we should confess our sins, knowing that He is faithful and just, and that He provides grace for the guilty.

Heart

We must tune our hearts, our conscience, to the truth of God's word. God has given us a conscience to guide us in what is right and wrong, and that tool must be recalibrated to God's standard consistently.

Hands

Repent and confess sins, knowing God's goodness. Ask the Lord to renew our hearts and shape them to reflect His.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Parent Commissioning Class

July 16th @ 1 pm

Membership 101

July 23rd @ 1 pm

proposal to his brothers. He will let them leave, with the grain, if they leave one brother behind. The brothers are to then return to their land, collect Benjamin, and return with him. If they did this, it would be considered proof that they are not spies. Joseph seems to be constructing this scenario as a test for his brothers. Will they return for their brother? Will they risk themselves or will they simply abandon the brother left in captivity? Through the impact of this moment, where their conscience is pressing on their hearts in the midst of this arranged scenario, the guilty men finally turn and acknowledge their sin. They admit both that they sinned against Joseph, and that these events are God's work in their lives. They understand that events are unfolding because of their sin and God's response.

4. The father who won't sacrifice his beloved son

When the brothers return, they relay the events that had transpired to Jacob. They inform him that in order to save Simeon, in order to prove their innocence, they must take Benjamin to Egypt. In response to this information, Jacob refuses. He will not send his son to save Simeon, and ultimately save the whole family. In this moment, we see a stark contrast between Jacob and God. Jacob refused to send his son, refused to sacrifice him in order to procure the salvation of those he loved. But praise be to God, who when seeing us in an underserving state and desperate for salvation, sent His beloved Son. He sent His Son, so that He might take the punishment of our sin, and that we might have the blessing of His righteousness.

Read Genesis 42

1. **Read Numbers 32:23** What does this verse teach us? How do we see this principal play out in this story? What does this teach us in our own life?
2. What does it mean that the law is written on our hearts? What is the purpose of the conscience? What is required in order to have a conscience that is profitable for righteousness?
3. What is the ultimate goal of God convicting us of sin? How is grief that leads to repentance a gift of grace? How have you experience this in your own life?
4. How did Joseph speak roughly with his brothers? What was the purpose of this approach?
5. How do we sear our conscience? What does a seared conscience look like? How is it restored?
6. What is the significance of Joseph accusing the brothers of spying?
7. Once more, at a key moment in the story, Joseph points to God as his motivation and reason. What can we learn from this? How is a “God reflex” properly implemented.
8. Where in the passage do we see repentance on the part of the brothers? What indicators help solidify it as legitimate?