

A Changed Heart

Genesis 44

Go ahead and turn to Genesis 44 in your Bibles. Last week we ended with a grand reunion, a party even! After more than two decades, Joseph got to see Benjamin! Remarkably, the brothers who initially sought to kill him hadn't killed his brother. Simeon gets released, and all the sons of Jacob enjoy a meal together, though only one of them know it. Genesis 43 ends saying that "they drank and were merry with him." It means they got drunk together, but the point I believe we're to take away is that they were CELEBRATING! They weren't spies after all! The inquisition was OVER! They could freely buy and sell in Egypt, which meant that their families wouldn't starve. Their Egyptian troubles were FINALLY over...or were they? That same night, we're told...

Genesis 44:1-2

1 Then 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 his sack, 2 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.

Do you reckon this steward was wondering, "*Master, what have you got up your sleeve?*" Perhaps he was a trusted friend as Joseph had been to those he served. Think about it. This guy essentially WAS Joseph. Joseph had been the steward of the house for Potiphar. After his wrongful imprisonment, Joseph was basically the household steward for the warden who had put everything into his hands just as Potiphar had. We see Joseph now as ELEVATED, that he's somehow arrived. Don't forget that this isn't a rags to riches story for Joseph. This is a FORFEIT-YOUR-LIFE-for-God's-will STORY, God's will being the salvation of Joseph's family. The BLESSING was still to come. For now, Joseph was still a steward, this time for the entire nation of Egypt.

How do you think Joseph treated his household steward? Because of his godly character, I'm sure he treated him well, but because of his personal journey, living the life of a steward himself, I'm sure he treated him VERY well. He obviously had quite a close relationship with him because HE HAD BROUGHT HIM IN ON THE SCHEME. We saw this last time. The brothers had been brought to Joseph's house when they came with Benjamin. They were nervous because of how they never really paid for the grain from their first trip...

Genesis 43:19-23

19 So they went up to the steward of Joseph's house and spoke with him at the door of the house, 20 and said, "Oh, my Lord, we came down the first time to buy food. 21 And when we came to the lodging place we opened our sacks, and there was each man's money in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight. So we have brought it again with us, 22 and we have brought other money down with us to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks." 23 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.” Then he brought Simeon out to them.

You see how INVOLVED he was? What I love is how WARM he is toward the brothers. Did he feel a little sorry for them? It was a hard ordeal that they were going through, and the steward, seemingly privy to the plan, knew they still had an ordeal to go through. Perhaps his kind manner was due to the love he knew Joseph had for them, in spite of their past treatment of him, and that affection had been infused into him by association with Joseph. Who knows? The steward is unmistakably REASSURING, though that was probably lost on the brothers given the stress they were under.

It was Joseph’s TRUSTED HOUSEHOLD STEWARD who had put the brothers’ money in their sacks with the grain they had “purchased.” Now he was replacing their money again, but he’s also been commanded to PLANT EVIDENCE on the youngest brother. Who’s that? Yep, BENJAMIN. Joseph is going to put Benjamin in jeopardy. Later, we’ll see that the brothers had told this Egyptian lord of how their father’s favor now rested upon Benjamin, though Joseph probably expected this behavior after his disappearance. Out of this knowledge, Joseph has his household steward plant damning evidence on Benjamin in order to put him at the mercy of Joseph. It’s getting juicy, and the steward’s role in this “DISCOVERY DRAMA,” if you will, isn’t over. He’s about to play the role of INTERROGATOR! We read...

Genesis 44:3-5

3 As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away with their donkeys. 4 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? 5 Is it not from this that my lord drinks, and by this that he practices divination? You have done evil in doing this.



Now this is not the cup that Joseph had placed in Benjamin's sack; it's old, but not old enough. However, it is Egyptian, and it dates back to around 945-712BC, roughly a thousand years after this scene in Joseph's life. That said, who knows? This could be a fair representation of THE cup. Joseph ordered his steward to plant the cup on Benjamin and then overtake the brothers and accuse them of theft. The steward scolded the brothers for taking the cup, asking, "**Why have you repaid evil for good?**" Now, try to see this from the alarmed perspective of the brothers. This Egyptian lord had invited them into his home and shared a meal with them. He had supplied them with provisions for their journey home, and for the second time, he had given them the grain they had come to buy FREE of charge. Now, after all of his benevolence, they decide to STEAL from him?! Thus, the steward accuses them of repaying evil for good.

"Is it not from this that my lord drinks?" Anyone have a favorite coffee cup? This (yellow water bottle) is my favorite water bottle. I'll give you one guess as to why it's my favorite.... ANSWER: YES! It's my ONLY water bottle! Therefore, I use it all the time! Do you think I'd miss it if it suddenly disappeared?! Absolutely! The steward is essentially telling them, "*This is my master's FAVORITE cup!*" It's the cup he likes to drink from, likely the very cup he drank from as they supped together the previous night. This is an accusation of FOOLISHNESS. "*Did you really think my master wouldn't miss this?!*"

Finally, Joseph has the steward ratchet up the intensity of the moment by claiming that his master used the cup for DIVINATION. WHAT'S THAT? Divination is a pagan ritual of "reading omens" for telling the future. In some cases, it consisted of examining the entrails of sacrificial animals. Another type of divination that archaeology has revealed to have been used in the time of Joseph is something called Lecanomancy, which involved pouring oil into a container filled with water and observing the shapes

that it made. Diviners would then check their manuals to see what types of events were associated with certain oil configurations in the past. Have you heard of people who "read tea leaves?" They look at the tea leaves that got away in a near empty tea cup and "tell the future." It's a bunch of hooey, but people are suckers for signs.

Now, some people really struggle with the apparent contradiction of Joseph claiming to practice divination when it's condemned elsewhere in Scripture. In Deuteronomy 18, God forbids it, claiming that it's because of such abominations that the Lord was going to drive out the inhabitants of the Promised Land before the nation of Israel. In 2 Kings 17, the practice of divination is listed among the abominations for which the Lord allowed the Northern Kingdom of Israel to be carried off into exile by the Assyrians. So, if it's sin, why is Joseph a practitioner of it? Well, *IF HE PRACTICED DIVINATION*, it's possible that this was a "God-approved" use of "props," if you will, for determining His will. You'll recall that there are other instances in Scripture where God's people have used items for determining the will of God. Those include the casting of lots (Leviticus 167-10), the Urim and Thummim (Numbers 27:21), and Gideon's fleece (Judges 6:36-40). The difference between God's people and the pagans is that God's people were seeking His will, not knowledge from the forces of nature or the gods of the nations. *IF* Joseph was truly a practitioner of divination, scholars agree that it would've been in the same vein as these other seemingly approved methods. However, most believe that Joseph was simply the owner of a divination cup, like much of the Egyptian nobility of his day, and he was just upping the ante of the charges of theft. The cup wasn't merely monetarily valuable (silver), or sentimentally valuable (favorite cup), but it also had CEREMONIAL value. Later on, we'll see that Joseph's "claim" of divination is rather NUANCED. Continuing, we read...

Genesis 44:6-10

6 When he overtook them, he spoke to them these words. 7 They said to him, Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing! 8 Behold, the money that we found in the mouths of our sacks we brought back to you from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? 9 Whichever of your servants is found with it shall die, and we also will be my lord's servants. 10 He said, Let it be as you say: he who is found with it shall be my servant, and the rest of you shall be innocent.

They are shocked and insulted at the accusation. They respond, essentially saying, *"Look! We couldn't even allow ourselves to overlook what seemed to be a CLERICAL ERROR that was in our favor. We brought the money back! Why in the world would we then STEAL from your lord's house?"* Then, to make their point, they start YELLING and CUSSING. Oh, wait, no, that's what people do today. I hope that's no one here who claims to follow Christ, but we all know folks like that, right? They really mean what they're saying, but rather than just letting the consistency of their lives lend credence to their words, they spice them up with curse words or by CRANKING UP THE VOLUME! "I mean it, BLANK-ITY-BLANK-BLANK!" I don't think it's a conscious effort to come across as more believable; rather it's a loss of self-control born out of FEAR or ANGER over not being understood or believed. Jesus simply says...

Matthew 5:37

Let what you say be simply Yes or No; anything more than this comes from evil.

Here's another one for you: "I promise." You can't break a promise, right?! Whatever you say is "your word," but for whatever reason, tagging "I promise" to a statement makes it BINDING. As always, I know that many or most in this room don't struggle with keeping their word. You say something, and that's the end of it. Your life speaks to the trustworthiness of your word. However, others are FLAKES. They make a commitment, and they mean to keep it until "something comes up." We learn to take folks like that "with a grain of salt." I hope you don't embellish your statements with swearing, or yelling, or "promising," but only with a consistent life lived by either your "yes" or "no." I DEFINITELY hope you don't embellish your words with RASHNESS like Jacob's family was prone to doing. **"Whichever of your servants is found with it shall DIE!"** I wonder where these guys might've heard something like that. How about when Jacob fled Laban and when accused of theft, Jacob told him...

Genesis 31:32

Anyone with whom you find your gods shall not live. In the presence of our kinsmen point out what I have that is yours, and take it. Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

Jacob's sons were still children at the time of this dispute, oh, but they were listening. Just a couple of weeks ago, when Reuben sought to come across to his father as trustworthy, we read that...

Genesis 42:37

Then Reuben said to his father, Kill my two sons if I do not bring [Benjamin] back to you. Put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you.

Sold! I trust him! Don't you?! I can't imagine why Jacob had any misgivings about putting Benjamin in Reuben's care when they made a second journey to Egypt, can you? Perhaps it was that whole "life being inconsistent with his words" thing...

Time and again we read the rash words of Jacob's family, and here they go again. **"Whichever of your servants is found with it shall die, and we also will be my Lord's servants."** Even after all the STRANGE THINGS that already had happened to them, the thought apparently never occurred to ANY of them, *"Wait. What if they find the cup on Benjamin?"* Thankfully, neither Joseph nor his steward were given to such rashness. *"Nobody needs to die, but the servant part is a good idea. Let's do that. The one person responsible will be my servant."*

Genesis 44:11-13

11 Then each man quickly lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack. 12 And he searched, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest. And the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. 13 Then they tore their clothes, and every man loaded his donkey, and they returned to the city.

Of course, it's no surprise to us that the cup was found in Benjamin's sack; the Holy Spirit already made us privy to Joseph's scheme. The other ten brothers (who, frankly, should've seen this coming) tore their clothes in MOURNING. Their greatest fear, truly the greatest fear of their father, had come to pass. Jacob had now been bereft of Benjamin, the only remaining son of his beloved wife, Rachel; Jacob was going to die. Now, the brothers are on the hook, right where Joseph wants them, right where God has allowed Joseph to put them. However, as you may recall from the previous passage, one brother is on the hook more than the rest, and now we'll see him rise to prominence in the narrative...

Genesis 44:14-17

14 When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, he was still there. They fell before him to the ground. **15** 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? **16** And Judah said, 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. **17** But he said, Far be it from me that I should do so! 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.

Notice the man whose name suddenly becomes prominent in the narrative. JUDAH. As Joseph's plot approaches its climax, it's "**JUDAH and his brothers**" who return to this Egyptian lord's home, and it's JUDAH who leads in conversation, like PETER AT PENTECOST. We started to witness Judah's leadership back in Canaan when Jacob told the guys to go get more food from Egypt...

Genesis 43:3-5

3 But Judah said to him, The man solemnly warned us, saying, You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you. **4** If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. **5** But if you will not send him, we will not go down, for the man said to us, You shall not see my face, unless your brother is with you.

"It will be a wasted trip without Benjamin." Jacob was afraid to send him, but Judah steps up again...

Genesis 43:8-10

8 And Judah said to Israel his father, Send the boy with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones. **9** 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. **10** If we had not delayed, we would now have returned twice.

We've already talked about Reuben's rejected offer to look after Benjamin. We can't call the offers "similar" because of the GLARING difference between them. Reuben had put his two sons on the line as surety for Benjamin. That offer rang hollow, and with good reason. Given Reuben's treachery, Jacob knew better than to trust him. Judah, on the other hand arose and said, "**I will be a pledge of his safety.**" I put MYSELF on the line for Benjamin," and despite Judah's previous lifestyle, he's apparently

made enough of a return journey home and toward godly living that Jacob relents. Jacob had seen the change in Judah, and Joseph was getting ready to see it.

Judah RHETORICALLY asks, "**What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how can we clear ourselves?**" All of these questions are actually ADMISSIONS OF GUILT. "**What shall we say to my lord?**" There's nothing they can say. "**What shall we speak?**" Again, nothing. "**How can we clear ourselves?**" THEY COULDN'T, and he knew it.

Then Judah says, "**God has found out the guilt of your servants.**" It's an interesting this to say, isn't it? Benjamin is the guilty INDIVIDUAL, yet Judah describes them ALL as GUILTY. In any other situation, this is the part of the conversation when someone stops and asks, "*Are we talking about the same thing?*" The momentary situation was all about a stolen cup, but the only thought on everyone's mind was what they had done to Joseph. These trips to Egypt had become quite traumatic for the sons of Jacob. On the first trip, they were accused of being spies and imprisoned for three days, and when Joseph had them released, they concluded that their trial was due to what? We read...

Genesis 42:21

Then they said to one another, In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he begged us and we did not listen. That is why this distress has come upon us.

Now on their second journey to Egypt, with their youngest brother in tow, they once again find themselves in dire straits. Benjamin has apparently done something insanely foolish, but this has befallen ALL OF THEM, not just Benjamin, because they sold Joseph into slavery. Judah says, "We are my lord's servants, both we and he also in whose hand the cup has been found," but this Egyptian lord tells them, "*I have the culprit. You guys are free to go. 'Go up in peace to your father.'*" Well, every one of them knew that was IMPOSSIBLE. Can you imagine the scene? I wonder if any of the brothers thought, "*Is this really happening? Are we doing this again? This can't be happening, not again.*"

Joseph had orchestrated a NEARLY IDENTICAL SCENARIO to when he had been given over and sold into slavery to the Ishmaelites. What's more, Joseph made it somewhat reasonable for his brothers to abandon Benjamin. Benjamin apparently broke the law! He stole, he got caught, and now he's going to face the consequences for his wicked, foolish deed. Who could blame them for abiding by the Egyptian lord's judgement and leaving their brother to his sentence, but would they? Judah essentially says, "I've done that before! I watched my father BREAK. I'M NOT DOING IT AGAIN!"

Once again, Judah steps to lead his family as he makes his impassioned plea to the Egyptian lord. As we read it, notice what is said and what is not said...

Genesis 44:18-29

18 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. 19 My lord

asked his servants, saying, Have you a father, or a brother? 20 And we said to my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a young brother, the child of his old age. His brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him. 21 Then you said to your servants, Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him. 22 We said to my lord, The boy cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die. 23 Then you said to your servants, Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall not see my face again.

24 When we went back to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. 25 And when our father said, Go again, buy us a little food, 26 we said, We cannot go down. If our youngest brother goes with us, then we will go down. For we cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us. 27 Then your servant my father said to us, You know that my wife bore me two sons. 28 One left me, and I said, Surely he has been torn to pieces, and I have never seen him since. 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.

If you were to sum up this portion of Judah's plea with a word, that word would be PITY. He establishes that Benjamin was only in Egypt because of this Egyptian lord's command. I don't think Judah flung this at the man we now to be Joseph; it's just a pertinent point. Judah also establishes the dire stakes surrounding Benjamin making this journey and the dreadful end that will befall their father should Benjamin not return home to him. If Benjamin remains in Egypt, it will kill his father. Also note the pitiable circumstances of this aged father and his youngest son. Though he's grown, Benjamin is the youngest, the son of Jacob's old age. He's the BABY of the family. Add to that the detail that Benjamin is one of two sons that Jacob's beloved wife bore him, and his brother is DEAD. The sons of Rachel will be no more. Now, why does Judah continue to speak of Joseph's loss as a "death" that was out of their control? Who knows? Perhaps it was for Benjamin. Perhaps they had told the lie so long that they had begun to believe it themselves. Perhaps they just couldn't bring themselves to fully admit the truth, or they believed that their act of selling him probably did result in his demise.

Joseph, of course, knows this isn't the case, but still, he's listening to all of this. Judah's desperation is real! Benjamin was the beloved baby of his father, who was already bereft of his other son. Benjamin neither chose to go to Egypt nor was he willingly sent by his father, and should his father not receive him back safe and sound, he'll die. Again, PITY is the theme of Judah's plea. Matthew Henry said...

Now, had Joseph been, as Judah supposed him, an utter stranger to the family, yet even common humanity could not but be wrought upon by such powerful reasonings as these; for nothing could be said more moving, more tender; it was enough to melt a heart of stone.

What's omitted from Judah's plea? Benjamin almost certainly denied having stolen the cup, but Judah doesn't even mention the cup or Benjamin's claim of innocence. To have mentioned it would've been to impugn the Egyptian lord's justice and judgment. The cup was found in Benjamin's possession! The evidence was too damning, and this lord's authority was too great. He was like Pharaoh. Like Judah said when he was on his face, **"What shall we say to my lord?"** Nothing.

Such is the claim of those who have come to REPENTANCE. **"What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how can we clear ourselves?"** We can't. It's impossible. Therefore, when a lost person repents, he cries out to the Lord in FAITH, that is, in TOTAL DEPENDENCE upon Him, knowing that he brings nothing to the table. Repentance means "a change of mind or attitude." It's the CHANGE from believing that you have no sin to knowing that you have sinned. It's thinking that you can "make up" for past sins with good works and then REALIZING that your "righteous deeds" are filthy rags. That's where FAITH come in.

Ephesians 2:8-9

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

The word "repentance" doesn't appear in that passage, but that's the whole message. We cannot save ourselves, so we put our faith in the Son of God who can. There's no work we have to do or can do to be forgiven our sins and saved. In faith we ASK Jesus for it. There are folks sitting in this room and listening online tonight who have yet to make the ASK. You've heard the truth of God's Word, and you even believe it, but you haven't placed your faith in it. You haven't come to God fully dependent upon Him to the point that you ASK Him to forgive your sin, take it away, and save you, but you could tonight.

All that's missing from Judah's poignant plea is the ASK, but what will he ask for? Will Judah ask this Egyptian lord to consider Benjamin's upright character, his claim of innocence, and change his verdict? Will he ask for a lesser sentence for Benjamin, claiming that the punishment is too harsh for the crime? What will he ask? After Judah's plea on behalf of Benjamin and his father, he says...

Genesis 44:30-34

30 Now therefore, as soon as I come to your servant my father, and the boy is not with us, then, as his life is bound up in the boy's life, 31 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. 32 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. 33 Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a servant to my lord, and let the boy go back with his brothers. 34 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.

If the theme of Judah's plea is one of PITY, his request was for MERCY. *"Have mercy. Please. If you take Benjamin away from our father, it'll kill him,"* but so as not to come across as one who was insincere and merely pleading for leniency, Judah added, *"Take me instead."* Is it any wonder that the very next words in your Bibles depict Joseph as an emotional wreck?!

This is the same guy who had *"sold his brother into slavery, made his father think he was dead, immersed himself in Canaanite culture, married a Canaanite woman, raised three sons as wicked or more so than himself, condemned his daughter-in-law to childless widowhood for the rest of her life,*

trapping her in a betrothal that would never be fulfilled, and after his wife died, he indulged in sex with a woman he thought was a conduit to being blessed by the pagan gods of the Canaanites" (Genesis 38 message, "A Series of Bad Decisions"). Are you tracking?

Joseph doesn't even know all of these details, and in this moment, he doesn't even need to. What he knows is that this is the man who hated him because he was his father's favorite, so much that he sold him. Now he's surrendering his life, his freedom, any hope of ever seeing his own family again (you know, everything that was taken from Joseph by force) in order to INDULGE his father's favoritism. This was Judah's LOVE for both Benjamin AND his father. **"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).**

He's BEEN CHANGED. The God who had been with Joseph and had done a work in his life had done a work in Judah's. God's Word tells the story of a brother who hated and sold his brother into slavery, who continued spiraling downward until he hit rock bottom, and who, by God's grace, had REPENTED and whose life was clearly BEARING FRUIT of repentance. This is why we have Genesis 38. In fact, when I look at Judah's act of selling his brother, his downward spiral to rock bottom in Canaan, his apparent repentance and complete transformation evidenced in Egypt, and even his continued leadership of the family to the end of Genesis where his father declares him to be a "lion's cub," when I consider it all, I can't help but wonder if this story about Joseph isn't actually a story about Judah as the Spirit of God continues to trace the line of Christ down through the ages. However, the Spirit doesn't merely trace Christ's line through history, but in this instance, even reveals glimpses of Him. Hear the echoes of Christ through the words of His earthly forebearer. Judah said...

Genesis 44:32-34

32 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. 33 Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a servant to my lord, and let the boy go back with his brothers. 34 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 Hebrews 7, we see Jesus, the offspring of Judah, and **"the GUARANTOR of a better covenant,"** one He made with the Father and the Father made with us, for Him to **"bear the blame"** for our sins **"before [His] father all [His] life."** Jesus did this on the cross FOR YOU. Peter said, **"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree,"** and as He now sits by the Father's right hand in Heaven, He always lives to make intercession for us as, just like Judah did on behalf of Benjamin. Christ was the SERVANT who remained on the cross, under the full outpouring of the Father's wrath INSTEAD OF YOU AND ME. For, like Judah, He too asked, **"For how can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me?"** How can I return to my Father without accomplishing His will and delivering to Him those He sent me to save? Judah was intent upon fulfilling his father's will, and this week leading up to Sunday and EVERY DAY THEREAFTER, we celebrate the Son's fulfillment of the Father's plan of salvation. Judah had pledged to look after Benjamin WITH HIS LIFE, and like his Greater Son to come, he would make good on that pledge.

Can you find yourself in Judah's story? In what part do you find yourself? Is it possibly the bitter, spiteful scene with a Joseph in your life thrown into a pit, your anger directed toward someone who isn't the enemy? Do you find yourself wandering like Judah in Canaan, growing more and more distant from the Lord and His will for your life? Perhaps you've hit rock bottom, and the Lord is showing you His goodness as He brings you to repentance. Or like we've seen tonight, are you surrendered like Judah, recognizing your ever-present need for God's mercy and grace? *"Lord, take my life, and do with it what You will. I'm Your servant."* Think about it, and as always, our team is here to talk to you along with a room full of other brothers and sisters who love you.