

# The Story of Joseph: Seeing the Bigger Picture

## Week 10: The Silver Cup

### Scripture:

Genesis 44:1-17

### Motivation (Why You Need This):

#### *Where we left off last week...*

- Jacob allowed his sons to return to Egypt with Benjamin to hopefully get food
- Jacob sent them with a blessing
- Upon arrival in Egypt, Joseph's brothers were invited to a feast
- Joseph's brothers shared a meal with him, although his identity was unknown

**Genesis 43:34 (ESV)** Portions were taken to them from Joseph's table, but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. And they drank and were merry with him.

- ✓ They get fed. They get treated kindly. Grace shows up through the hands of this "Egyptian."
- ✓ *Why?* God didn't send Joseph to Egypt to get even with his brothers. He sent Joseph ahead to keep them alive. **This is the BIGGER PICTURE.**

Today, we are going to ask a deep question...

**Is it ever too late for heart change, or to right a wrong?**

We will see Joseph clearly drawing out of his brothers the true condition of their heart and whether these many years have changed them.

### Information (What You Need to Know):

- **Joseph creates a scenario where his brothers are tested**

**Genesis 44:1 (ESV)** 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.

- ✓ Joseph told his steward to fill their bags with food and money (that they had used to pay for the food)
- ✓ He also commanded that his silver cup be placed into the bag of the youngest (and most favored) brother, Benjamin

***Why would Joseph do this?*** Over 20 years earlier, they sold him into slavery because he was the favored son. Joseph wanted to see whether they would defend Benjamin (also favored). This was a *test*. *Had their hearts changed?*

■ **Joseph instructs and sends the steward after the brothers left Egypt**

- ✓ The steward was to question them regarding their supposed wrongdoing

**Genesis 44:3 (ESV)** 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.’”

- ✓ The brothers defend their innocence

**Genesis 44:6 (ESV)** 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?”

- They fiercely defended their innocence
- They pointed back to their first return when they brought back the money

- ✓ The brothers trusted each other so deeply that they were willing to reveal the contents of their bags without a second thought (they wouldn’t steal)

**Genesis 44:9 (ESV)** 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.” **11** Then each man quickly lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack.

- ✓ The silver cup was found in Benjamin’s bag and they were devastated

**Genesis 44:12 (ESV)** 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.

- The planted silver cup was found in Benjamin’s bag
- The reaction of the brothers shows that they were shaken by this finding
- They voluntarily returned to the city with the steward to face Joseph

- **Joseph's brothers beg for mercy, but recognize their long-standing guilt**
  - ✓ The brothers fall before Joseph in humility, and for mercy's sake  
**Genesis 44:14 (ESV)** When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, he was still there. They fell before him to the ground.
  - ✓ Joseph asks them how they could do this thing to him  
**Genesis 44:15 (ESV)** 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?"  
*"Joseph spoke this way [regarding divination] because it was important, for a while longer, to play the part of an Egyptian and not allow them to know he was a Hebrew who worshipped Yahweh."* – David Guzik
  - ✓ Judah alludes to their long-standing guilt and consequences following them  
**Genesis 44:16 (ESV)** 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."  
*"In all probability Judah has in mind the brothers' treatment of Joseph, for he knows that they are innocent of taking the silver cup. The brothers are convinced that God is now holding them to account for their actions against Joseph."* – ESV Study Bible
  - ✓ Joseph rejects that all of them become his servants, but only Benjamin  
**Genesis 44:17 (ESV)** 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."

### **Application (What You Need to Do):**

Genesis 44 reminds us that we can be innocent in one area and still be guilty before God in other ones.

Joseph's brothers did not steal the cup, but they were still carrying unconfessed sin.

This is a warning for all of us. We do not defend ourselves by assuming "old sin" no longer matters just because time has passed. **Time doesn't erase sin and guilt. Only Jesus does.**

**1 John 1:8 (ESV)** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.