

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

08.11.2024 | The Blessing of Wisdom | Genesis 42-45 | Dr. Ben Day, Senior Pastor

If you have a Bible this morning I want to invite you to turn with me to Genesis chapter 42. Today we are continuing our study of Joseph's story and we come really to the, really the climax of the story. Really all that's been building up so far in the narrative has kind of led to this. Part of the challenge as we come to today is that this climactic part of the story is stretched out over four chapters in this book because of all that kind of interaction that takes place especially between Joseph and his brothers. What's really the crucial part of coming together of the story is a long section. And so I decided that as we were studying Joseph's story instead of breaking this portion up into multiple studies and sermons to try to consider it all together in one sermon. Now as you just look at the outline for the sermon don't be daunted in thinking that we're going to read all four chapters. I'm going to try to read some of the beginning and towards the end of our portion of Scripture this morning and try to do some summarizing for the rest as we follow along in Joseph's story. But I hope that we will see this unique position that Joseph now finds himself in. It's really a change from what we've seen. We left off last week with Joseph coming into the palace of Pharaoh. Joseph had been in prison for a number of years but now he was in Pharaoh's palace. He interpreted Pharaoh's dreams by the power of God and then he was placed in the second highest position in all of Egypt. He was placed there at the right hand of Pharaoh specifically to oversee this time of famine. Well first plenty and then famine. His plan was to store up during the time of plenty when God was blessing the land and then to be able to use all that they stored up during the time of famine. And that's actually where we pick up today is how Joseph was used by God during this time of famine and actually want us to read the last two verses of chapter 41 and then move into 42 and we'll read some verses from 42 and then we'll jump over to chapter 45.

So Genesis 41 verses 56 and 57 tell us that when the famine had spread over all the land, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. Moreover, all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain because the famine was severe over all the earth. Moving into Genesis 42. When Jacob learned that there was grain for sale in Egypt, he said to his sons, why do you look at one another? And he said, behold, I have heard that there is grain for sale in Egypt, go down and buy grain for us there that we may live and not die. So 10 of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with his brothers for he feared that harm might happen to him. Thus the sons of Israel came to buy among the others who came because the famine was in the land of Canaan. Now Joseph was governor over the land. He was the one who sold to all the people of the land and Joseph's brothers came and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground. Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke roughly to them. Where do you come from? He said. They said from the land of Canaan to buy food. Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. Joseph remembered the dreams that he had dreamed of them. And he said to them, you are spies. You have come to see the nakedness of the land. They said to him, no, my Lord, your servants have come to buy food. We are all sons of one man. We are honest men. Your servants have never been spies. So Joseph has his brothers thrown into prison. We'll jump down to verse 18 just for the sake of time. It says on the third day, Joseph said to them, do this and you will live. For I fear God. If you are honest men, let one of your brothers remain confined where you are in custody and let the rest go and carry grain for the famine to your households and bring your youngest brother to me. So your words will be verified and you shall not die. And they did so. Then they said to one another, in truth we are guilty concerning our brother and 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. And Reuben answered them, did I not tell you to not sin against the boy, but you did not listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood. They did not know that Joseph understood them, for there was an interpreter between them. Then he turned away from them and wept. And he returned to them and spoke to them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes. And Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain and to replace every man's money in his sack to give them provisions for the journey. This was done for them. So Joseph's brothers returned home. They, after some conversation, bring Benjamin back with them to Egypt. Now they are back in Egypt and there is this meal and this interaction that we'll talk about later. But we go to Genesis 45, which is kind of the beginning of the end of this portion of the story. And it says that Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him. So he cried, "Make everyone go out for me." So no one stayed with Joseph when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud so that the Egyptians heard it and the household of Pharaoh heard it. And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence. So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, please." And they came near and he said, "I

am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. Now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land two years and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to keep alive for you many survivors." So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh and Lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go to my father and say to him, "Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me Lord of all Egypt. Come down to me. Do not fear you. You shall dwell in the land of Goshen. You shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children and your flocks, your herds and all that you have. There I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come, so that you and your household and all that you have do not come to poverty. Now your eyes see, the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you. You must tell my father of all my honor in Egypt and of all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here." Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept. And Benjamin wept upon his neck and he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them. After that, his brothers talked with him.

So I mentioned that in this portion of the story we see Joseph really in a new position. I mean up until this portion of the story Joseph had been, though he was a favored son and foretold that he was going to be lifted up, all we'd really seen was him brought down. He had been betrayed by his brothers, sold into slavery, brought to a foreign land, falsely accused, spent time in prison. But now we've seen him be lifted up by God in the last chapter in Genesis 41. And now in Genesis 42 we see Joseph in this really unique position. Joseph is quite literally the most powerful man in the world. He has authority over not just what we see right now, Egypt, but really over all the earth. Because of the way that God's providence has worked to bring famine to the land during this time, Joseph has this unique position of power and authority. But it's interesting that Joseph, in this position of power and authority, it doesn't lead to his brothers just bowing before him, although that happens. Joseph's dreams are fulfilled and his brothers quite literally bow before him at his feet. But I mentioned to you before the final picture of Joseph's story is not one really of his brothers submitting to him as if he's one, but it's really a picture of reconciliation and healing, that there is a forgiveness that happens. Because Joseph doesn't just have a unique position of power and authority in the world, Joseph actually uses his position of power and authority to provide for many, but also to pardon his brothers. Joseph uses this position that God brought him to, to care for many, but also to uniquely care for his family and for his brothers who had so severely sinned against him.

And this is what I want us to see this morning, is that God opens up certain opportunities to us. God provides us with positions that we have. Now again, as we've said throughout this study, Joseph's story is a bit dramatic. Most likely, we will not ascend to the highest position in the land. Most likely, you won't have a position that a lot of people look at as one of power and authority, although some might. But God has given you a unique position in this world. God has given you relationships. He has given you resources. He's given you time and money and talents. Are we using what God has given us to be a blessing to others? God desires that, I think just like Joseph, we would be used by him to provide for others and to pardon others, to bring forgiveness into people's lives. It would be my hope that we would see through Joseph's example the way that we can live in what God is doing in us and through us. And we might follow the example of Joseph to bring glory to God and good to those around us. So what I want to do is I just want to follow this portion of the story by kind of looking at the different scenes and the characters that kind of dominate those scenes. So the first one that I want you to notice, which is why we read the end of Genesis 41, is I want you to see the generosity of Joseph. When we look at this part of the story, it's not just the beginning part. It's really all throughout this portion of the story.

But the beginning that we saw this morning really focused on the generosity of Joseph. You'll notice that it said that Joseph was over all of Egypt. There was these seven years of plenty that God was blessing the land and was producing much, but then famine had started. We read from this portion of the story that the famine had only been two years, but in these two years, not only was the land of Egypt feeling the effects of the famine, but the whole earth was feeling the effects of the famine. And here is Joseph in this unique position, and the language is that he opened up all the storehouses. That Joseph is not withholding anything, but rather blessing all the people of Egypt and actually all the people of the whole earth. As the famine has come over all the earth, Joseph is being generous with all the people. And when it says that they come to buy grain from him, I don't think the language there is that Joseph is doing some type of price gouging, where he recognizes that there's this unique supply and demand, that he's got the only supply so he can charge whatever he wants. I mean, the language here is that Joseph sees his position as being used by God to preserve life. Joseph is being used by God that there might be, he says, a remnant on the earth, that there might be many survivors. Joseph is being generous in this position.

You know, I think if we look throughout history, there's many times when we would see people in positions of leadership or authority that would make us very skeptical of leadership or Many times people abuse their power and their position in a way that makes us question anybody who's in authority over us. But at the same time, I think when we look throughout history, what we see is that actually what is best is not to remove all positions of authority or leadership, but really just to have the right people in authority and leadership. If you look throughout history, if you kind of can just pay attention to even our own lives that when people who are in authority look not just for their own interests, but for the interests of those who they are over. When people who are leading care not just about their own power, but blessing those who God has placed them over, it leads to the flourishing of people. What a blessing it is when people in leadership care for those whom they are called to lead. And that is exactly what Joseph is doing here. Joseph is being generous with what God has blessed him with.

And again, I think this is an example for us to learn from, that we would be generous with what God has blessed us with. And again, it's not that we might all find ourselves in positions of great power and authority, although you might find yourself in some type of position or power authority. Maybe at work you oversee a number of people. Maybe at home, just as a parent, you are raising children. Maybe there are people that you have some type of leadership or influence over. But even if not, I do believe God has blessed us with unique circumstances, unique positions to be able to be a blessing to others. I mean, up until this point, Joseph, again, has been a very kind of passive participant, just being used in God's plan by other people to be brought to this position. But now the opportunity has opened up, and he is taking that opportunity to be generous in blessing others. How will you be generous this week? What has God given you that you can be used by God to provide for others? Maybe it's just in small ways. Maybe it is financially or physically, but maybe it's in other ways. But how will you be used by God to provide for others, to be generous to others this week? Joseph is generous with not just Egypt, but again, the whole land, so much that the notoriety of his generosity reaches other places. We hear that it reaches the land of Canaan, and that Jacob actually hears that there is grain in Egypt for sale.

And this leads to really the second part of the story that actually brings back the full circle of Joseph's family and the healing and reconciliation that needs to take place there. And so I want us to consider next in this portion of the story the brokenness of Jacob. The brokenness of Jacob. I use this word brokenness because when I think about this part of the story, what really kind of jumps out to me about Jacob is the effects that sin is having upon his life. It's something that we saw very early on in this story, the effects of sin in this family. But it's really clear that after all this time, this sin is still deeply affecting the family. Joseph is feeling the brokenness of sin in his own life. I mean, one of the things that we see is that it's probably been more than 20 years since Joseph was sold into slavery to Egypt. Or in Jacob's mind, it's been 20 years since Joseph has passed away. And yet it's really clear when you read this portion of the story that Jacob has not yet finished grieving this loss of his son. In many ways, Jacob is still feeling the effects of the sinful action that his sons have carried out. We didn't read this verse, but if you go to Genesis chapter 42, verse 38, when the brothers are making a plea to Jacob that he would send Benjamin with them back to Egypt, he says to them, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is the only one left. If harm should happen to him on the journey that you are to make, you would bring my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol." You can almost hear the sorrow in Jacob's voice as he talks there. He's still grieving the loss of Joseph, and he can't bear to think about losing Benjamin.

Our sin has consequences and effects on others. I mean, the brothers' sin was directly against Joseph. They truly sinned against him, but it's really clear that their sin is also affecting the whole family and affecting their father. Our sin will so often directly impact one person or some people that we sin against, but we often fail to neglect the fact that our sin has far-reaching consequences, that it often affects many people indirectly, and we see this in Jacob's life. But it's also important at this point to be reminded that this sin of the brothers, sinning against Joseph and hurting Jacob in this way, was something that really came about because of Jacob's sin. The hatred that Joseph's brothers had against him was really birthed out of a favoritism that Jacob had towards Joseph, and we actually see that it's a sin that Jacob hasn't really repented of. I mean, did you notice that he says, "If something happens to Benjamin, I'll have no sons left," you know, except those 10 sons that he's talking to right now, right? Like he's acting like Benjamin is all that he has left because he's lost Joseph, and it shows that he's still got favorites. I mean, look at the very beginning of this chapter 42, when the famine is getting so severe, and Jacob's language to his sons is, "Well, why are y'all just staring at each other?" You know, we're going to just die from this famine, so go down to Egypt to buy us grain, but it says in verse 4 of Genesis 42, "He did

not sin Benjamin, Joseph's brother with his brothers, for he feared that harm might happen to him." Didn't seem to care that harm might happen to the 10 other brothers, but only to Benjamin, is he worried.

Seems that Jacob is not only still feeling the effects of sin that has happened by his sons, but he's also still struggling with his own sins himself. This is why I speak of the brokenness of Jacob, a sinful person, feeling the effects of sin, needing healing, needing reconciliation, needing to find forgiveness in many ways. So he sends his sons down to Egypt, and that really kind of leads us to the next portion of this part of the story, which is the testing of the brothers. Jacob says, "We need food. Go down to Egypt where they're selling grain." And so he sends his 10 sons. He has 11 left. He keeps Benjamin back. He sends 10 sons down to Egypt. And really what makes this portion of the story so long, why it takes up really four chapters, is because there's this interaction between Joseph and his brothers. It happens throughout these chapters. It's this kind of back and forth. And what's really clear is that Joseph is going to put his brothers through some hardships. He's going to put them through some really difficult circumstances. I mean, we saw it really briefly there when we were reading the beginning of Genesis 42, that he kind of immediately accused them of being spies, coming to the land of Egypt, seeing how the famine has affected that land. He didn't listen to them when they said, "We aren't spies. We're just sons of one man." And he had them thrown into prison for three days. Then when he releases them from prison, he says, "I need you to go back and get that younger brother that you told me that you have and bring him back here, but I can't just trust that you'll do that. So I'm going to keep one of you with me." And so he keeps Simeon with him in prison, in custody, while the brothers go back. Then the brothers have to convince Jacob to let Benjamin travel with them. And when they do, they come back and they have this meal and this feast together. And things seem to be going probably pretty well for them. But then all of a sudden, Joseph decides to slip a really valuable cup into Benjamin's bag. And he accuses Benjamin and the brothers of trying to steal from him. At this point, Judah has to step up and really offer himself as a sacrifice. He says, "You've got to send Benjamin back. It'll kill our father, so keep me instead."

All these hardships that Joseph is putting his brothers through, you have to kind of ask yourself, "Well, why is he doing all this?" I mean, is Joseph just trying to be vindictive? Is this just little brother getting back at big brothers? I don't know if you ever had siblings. And if there was ever a younger sibling who finally hit a growth spurt and all of a sudden was a little bit bigger than their siblings that kind of deal some payback for all those things that were done to them, is this just Joseph getting back? Does Joseph want to see his brothers earn his forgiveness? Actually, I don't think any of those are really the case. It seems to be that Joseph really isn't so interested in making his brothers earn his forgiveness as rather just considering whether or not they recognize their guilt. Joseph wants to see, did they really understand what they did was wrong? Do they really seem to be repentant of the sin that they had done against me? Have they changed at all in these 20 years? And I think some things that we see in the story lead us to believe that they actually are experiencing some change. Maybe they have in these last 20 years, or maybe this testing, this time that Joseph is putting them through hardships, brings about this change. But notice some of the things they say in Genesis, chapter 42.

It seems that they come to this realization that that sin against Joseph is coming back to visit them. It says in verse 21 of Genesis 42, that 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." This is the first time we really hear about the fact that when they sold Joseph into slavery, he was not just quiet in that pit. He did not just go off into Egypt without any complaint. He was begging them as his soul was in distress. And now they say, "This distress is upon us because we are guilty of this great sin." It says in verse 22, "Ruben answered them, "Did I not tell you to not sin against the boy? But you did not listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood." It seems that they are realizing the guilt of their sin. It doesn't just seem that they are only realizing the guilt of their sin. It seems like they are being changed throughout this process. I mean, as they leave Egypt, they left with the grain that they need in, except they were just leaving Simeon in custody. They could have returned back to Canaan and just told their father another lie. They could have said, "Well, an animal attacked Simeon. He's no longer with us, but we got the grain. Look, we even got some extra money too, and everything could have been good." But they chose to try to get Benjamin to come with them so that they would not leave their brother abandoned to Egypt like they had done with Joseph. As they come back to Egypt and Joseph accuses Benjamin of trying to steal from him, they could have just left Benjamin there to take the punishment. Could have gone back to Jacob and made up another lie, but they don't. Judah actually offers himself as a substitute.

It seems that throughout all of this, there is this repentance, this change of heart, change of action that the brothers are led to. The Bible says this is the way that God works, that God brings us to a place of realizing our sin, being able to confess our sin, being able to repent and turn from our sin. This is a really hard and difficult step, but it is a really needed step. In many ways, we cannot receive the good news of a Savior who has come for us unless we've grappled with the bad news that we need to be saved from something. Joseph's brothers, I don't think would have been ready to have this time of reconciliation with Joseph had they not come to grips with what they had actually done to him. So often we need to see our sin, come face to face with the bad news before we can hear the good news. We need to confess our sins, the Bible says, and then God will forgive us.

But the point is not that they have to do something, but rather they merely have to come to a place of recognizing their guilt, but then grace is given to them. And that's the next part of the story, and that is the graciousness of Joseph. The graciousness of Joseph. After Joseph has this time of testing with his brothers, where he wants to see have they really changed, are they really repentant, are they any different than they were 20 years ago, when he sees that they are, he doesn't then give them some steps that they need to do to try to earn back his forgiveness. It actually is really clear throughout this whole portion of the story that really Joseph still loves his brothers. I mean, throughout this whole portion of the story, if you go back and read portions even that we skipped, there's these times when Joseph gets so moved by his emotions that he has to step out the room, that he has to push everybody away, because he's just overcome with emotions and with weeping as he considers these relationships. It seems that throughout this whole process, Joseph loves his brothers. Yes, he wants to see if they've changed and turned from their sin, but his desire is to forgive them, to be reconciled to them. And that is what happens. When Joseph finally is ready to reveal himself to his brothers, who he truly is, he has everyone leave the room, and he comes to his brothers and he says, "It's me, Joseph." And it says that they were dismayed at his presence. They were surely concerned having to face this person that they have sinned against.

Have you ever had to come face to face with somebody that you had wronged, somebody that you had done something really horrible against, and for the first time you have to look at them in the face. It can be a really daunting task. But Joseph doesn't try to leave them in this place of feeling guilty, rather he seeks to comfort them right away. In Genesis 45, starting in verse 4, says that, "Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, please." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life." You think about it, Joseph has this very unique position, really one of the most powerful men on earth at this time, to provide for many. But what's maybe more shocking than the fact that Joseph uses his position to be generous and care for others, is that he also uses this position to pardon his brothers, to extend forgiveness to these people who had wronged himself. I mean, he was crying out to them in distress, and they just sold him off into slavery. In Joseph's new position, he could have had them thrown into prison. He could have had them killed. He could have had them put into any position he wanted, but yet he chooses to extend grace and forgiveness. It seems that God had brought Joseph into a position to not just provide for many, but to specifically pardon those who had sinned against him.

And so it is with us. Just as I believe God places us in many positions where we could be generous and care for others, I also believe that God puts us in positions to be gracious and to forgive. God gives us opportunities, even by cases of people wronging us and sinning against us, to extend forgiveness and grace to others. Is there someone that you need to forgive? Is there someone that God has placed you in the position to be able to extend that grace to? We're actually going to look at it a little bit more in a couple of weeks as we end out Joseph's story, but I just want you to notice here that Joseph's foundation for forgiving his brothers is his belief about God. He believes that God has been sovereign and providential over this whole affair. He believes that God was behind it all, and that's what gives him the ability to forgive his brothers who had sinned against him.

Friends, our theology is not just theory. What we believe about God is not just important on a Bible study trivia, you know, or just answering questions about our faith. What we believe about God really impacts who we are and what we do. Because Joseph believes that God is sovereign and working in his providence, he is able to forgive his brothers. And he is able to not just have them kind of excused, but to welcome them in. Notice again that it doesn't just end with them bowing before him, but him embracing them. It says at the end of where we read in verse 14, "Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck, and he kissed all his brothers and wept upon

them. And after this, his brothers talked with him." What a powerful picture of reconciliation and healing that has come to such a broken family. I mean, listen, I know your family might have problems, but it would probably be hard to top the problems of this family. This family had some deep-seated sin and problems, and yet here is some healing that is taking place. Here is some reconciliation that is beginning because of grace and forgiveness. God working through Joseph, and that's really the way that Joseph sees it. Joseph sees it as his position to be able to provide and to be able to pardon, but you recognize in his language that Joseph sees that this is all of God.

That's really the last part of this whole portion of the story that I want us to consider. It's not really just one scene. Rather, it's the underlying theme of this whole story, not just what we're considering today, but the whole story of Joseph and the whole story of the Bible, and that is the providential God. God's providence is something that we've talked about basically in every sermon throughout this series. It's what I think is the major theme of Joseph's story, to see that God is sovereign. He is over all things, but also that he is good. He is working all things together for good, for a purpose. It's this recognition that God is providential that allows Joseph to be able to do what he does. This is what I want us to recognize today, that God is at work to provide, and God is at work to pardon. It's whenever we believe that, and whenever we receive that in our own lives, that we can then be used by God to provide and to pardon for others.

Just to continue on with Joseph's line of thinking, he told his brothers, "Don't be worried. Don't be distressed that I'm going to be angry with you, because God was at work in this all." He continues on in verse 7, he says, "God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on and to keep alive for you many survivors." Notice it's not just about him or about people in general, but specifically he says, "For you." I think he means to the promised family that God had made a covenant with. God was going to keep a remnant in keeping his promises, that one was going to come from this line who was going to save all people from their sins. So it was that, verse 8, "Not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and Lord of all his house, and ruler all over the land of Egypt." See what Joseph's saying is, yes, I have the chance to be generous and provide, but ultimately it was God who was providing. God in this story is providing for the whole earth that people might be saved.

In fact, a commentator I was reading on this passage said that the story of Joseph is really kind of a contrast to the story of In Noah's story, God chooses one man and his family to save, but brings the rest of the world to perishing. It's a punishment for their sins, to restart the creation, if you will. So in Noah's story, it's like one man is saved and the whole world is perishing. But in Joseph's story, God puts one man into a position where all the earth can be preserved. As the famine is over all the land, God is bringing all the people to Joseph that he might preserve life. God is the one who is providing here, but yet he is working through Joseph. God's not only the one who is providing, he's the one who is working in the lives of Joseph's brothers. This time of testing, this time of bringing Joseph's brothers to repentance. Again, that was Joseph at work, but it is ultimately God is at work. God is the one who works in our lives to bring us to a place to confess our sins and to turn from our sins.

The Bible says that God will discipline those whom he loves, bringing them to a place of turning to him. God will allow us to experience trial, testing, that we might see if our faith is genuine, that we might really and truly turn to him. God is at work in this situation to bring Joseph's brothers to a place to realize their guilt, but God works through Joseph to accomplish this purpose. God is at work to not just bring Joseph's brothers to a place to realize their guilt, but also to receive grace. Yes, it was Joseph who extended grace in this time, but this picture of Joseph's grace to his brothers is really a picture of God's greater grace to all those who come to him confessing their sins. Just as Joseph said, "Come near to me," Jesus came and invited those who would feel burdened and heavy laden to. In fact, you know, in this story, I mentioned it earlier, but you should go back and read it at the end of Genesis 44. There's this time with kind of one final test that Joseph is putting his brothers through, and Judah steps up and he says, "You've got to let Benjamin go free and I'll take his place."

Essentially, Judah is putting himself as a substitute in the place of Wouldn't you know, in God's providence, many years later, one of Judah's great-great-great-great-great grandchildren, Jesus would come from the Lion of Judah, known as the Lamb of God, but also the Lion of Judah, and he would come and he would substitute himself. But not in the place of just one brother, but in the place of all sinners. Jesus went to the cross so that you and I might become his brothers and sisters, so that you and I might be adopted into the children of God. And he did so that we would be pardoned and forgiven of our sins and we don't have to do anything to earn it. It is all by God's grace that we are saved. God is working

in that grace in this story and he's doing it through Joseph. In other words, in many ways, Joseph is like an ambassador or a representative of God in this story. He has the chance to reveal God's character in his actions, to use the position that God has given him to show that there is a God who provides and there is a God who pardons.

And I would ask you today, in what position has God placed you? What opportunity has God given you? Would you just consider that this morning? Where God has placed you? A chance to provide for others in their need. A chance to pardon and extend forgiveness and grace. Doing so, not just in your own power, but because of who God is and all that he has done, because of his work in your life. And not just for the purpose of caring for others, although I think that's a major purpose, the good of people, but also for the glory of God. That they might know that there is a God who provides and who pardons. How does God want you to be generous and gracious this week so that people would know that there is a gracious and generous God who is ready to provide for them, who is ready to pardon them from all their sin?