Greater Grace — Delivery Transcript

Genesis 29:1–30:24 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, July 21, 2024 · *The Patriarchs*

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Bible, we're going to be in Genesis chapter 29 this morning. And if you're new to... well, there you go. If you're new to Broadview, we preach through books of the Bible and right now we're preaching through the book of Genesis and we've been looking at the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in a series called Patriarchs because that's what they were. They were the big daddies of the faith, and that's what the word patriarch means. Doesn't technically mean big daddy, but you get my gist. Talking about youth camp, I remember youth camp as a kid.

I didn't go to youth camp except for one year. The one year I went to youth camp, it was a tremendous experience. I had an encounter with God. It was the year that I surrendered to ministry. I'd been wrestling with God about a call to ministry on my life, and I finally surrendered. I was so excited, you know, to come back home and to get you know on the ground and start living for the Lord. And I was so discouraged Monday when real life came crashing back in, and I experienced how difficult it is when you have a good intention and a good experience with the Lord, but you're confronted with the realities of the daily grind of life and the reality of human brokenness and your own past decisions and the difficulty of living for the Lord in these days.

And I think a lot of us can resonate with that. The Christian life is a journey. It begins with the first step. The first step is important, but there are many, many, many more steps after that. And one of the things that I've been so encouraged by in the book of Genesis is that God, number one, chooses people who are not so great. He chooses people who struggle with sin and brokenness. They're not super qualified. They're not the strong and the mighty or the super wise. But he not only chooses those kind of people, but he develops them into men and women of greatness.

Not immediately, but through a gradual process of what some people call sanctification. And that's the big idea of today's passage, that God loves us so much that He'll meet us where we are, wherever it is that we find ourselves, but He loves us too much to leave us where we are,

but he gradually, step by step, transforms us more and more into the image of his one and only son. So yes, the Christian life is a journey. But in that journey, through the normal everyday circumstances of life, whether it's disappointments or failures or grievances or sins committed against us, he works through the everyday moments of life to display his greater grace.

And so we're given an invitation to experience that grace wherever we are. And we're going to see that powerfully, I think, in the book of Genesis, chapters 29 and 30, because Jacob comes off his mountaintop experience where he encountered the Lord in a dream and a vision, and God affirmed him and blessed him and said, I'm going to be with you and get you from point A to point Z. And then he's going to hit the grind. He's going to come off of that church camp high and be confronted with the realities of life.

And we're going to see how God works through even the tough moments of life. So let's pick it up in Genesis 29, verse 1. It says Jacob resumed his journey, which if you read a literal translation, it says he picked up his feet, which means he's got a kick in his step. He is excited and ambitious, optimistic for the future. He goes to the eastern country, which was where Haran would have been located. And he looked and he saw a well in a field. You might circle that word well. There were three flocks of sheep lying there beside it, because the sheep were watered from this well.

But on this particular well there was a large stone covering the opening of the well. So the shepherds would roll the stone from the opening of the well, and then they'd water the sheep when all the flocks were gathered there. And then they would return the stone to its place over the well's opening. They probably had the big rock over the well for protection to keep other people from drinking the water or whatnot, but you've got all of these sheep. Jacob shows up, sees a bunch of people there, and water, which was a big deal.

So Jacob asked the guys at the well, my brothers, where are you from? And they said, we're from Haran. Which would have been news to his ear because that was his destination. That was where he was going for. Next question he asked, do you know Laban, Nahor's grandson, which is exactly who Jacob was looking for and they said, yeah, we know him. And Jacob says, is he well? And they say, yeah, he's well. And here's his daughter, Rachel, coming with the sheep. You got to imagine in Jacob's mind, this is so cool.

You know, I get to Haran, the first well I come upon, not only do I meet people who know my uncle Laban, but his actual daughter, Rachel, is coming down to meet me, the very woman that potentially I might be able to marry because he had been sent from his father to Haran to find a godly wife. So when Rachel comes in it says Jacob says to the guys that are gathered there, look it's still broad daylight, it's not time for the animals to be gathered, water the flock, and then go out and let them graze.

But then they said to Jacob, We can't until all the flocks have been gathered and the stone is rolled from the well's opening. Then we'll water the sheep. In other words, there's a big problem. There's a big rock on the well and we got to get it off. And so while he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess, and as soon as Jacob saw his uncle Laban's daughter Rachel with his sheep, he went up, and he said, Let me roll up my sleeves, watch my mesmerizing muscles.

And he rolled the stone from the opening and he watered his uncle Laban's sheep, probably to impress that good-looking lady. And then Jacob kissed Rachel and wept loudly. And then he told Rachel that he was her father's relative and Rebekah's son, and so she ran and told her father. When Laban, that's her dad, heard the news about his sister's son Jacob, he ran out to meet him, hugged him, kissed him, and then he took him into his house, and Jacob told him everything that happened. And then Laban said to him, yes, you are my own flesh and blood.

And after Jacob had stayed with him a month, Laban said to him, just because you're my relative, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be. Now what you see here in some ways is a kind of boy meets girl, immediate love story, and we can resonate with it at that level. But if you're reading closely, one of the things you'll pick up on is the similarities between this chapter, Genesis 29, and another chapter that we read several weeks ago where there was another man in search of another woman in Haran at Laban's house trying to find a wife and the similarities are just crazy.

If you think about them, both men left Beersheba with instructions on finding a godly spouse. Both men, when they get to Haran, meet the woman at a well. Both men are taken to Laban's house. Both men are invited by Laban to stay a little bit longer. The similarities are so striking that I think it's intentional by Moses to say read Genesis twenty-nine with Genesis twenty-four in mind. The similarities being an attention grabber, I think the point is not what they hold in common but what their differences are. And the difference between Abraham's servant in Genesis twenty-four who goes to find a godly wife versus Jacob, who also goes to find a godly wife, is that the servant from the beginning to the very end displays humility, dependency on God, prayer, worship, caution, discernment, spiritual wisdom.

From point A to point Z, the servant is very Godward in his orientation of that whole enterprise. Whereas Jacob, on the other hand, even though he's coming off of this big moment with God, never once does he pray. Never once does he worship. Never once does he say, thank you, Lord, for bringing this woman to me. He doesn't wait to evaluate her character. He goes immediately and I guess because he's impressed with her looks, says, look how muscular and strong I am. He starts serving her. And instead of immediately leaving, once he finds a godly wife to go back home like he should have done, he stays there with Laban for a month, allowing Laban to exploit him for free labor.

Huge differences. One very reliant on the Lord, one not reliant on the Lord whatsoever. Which is the first point from today's message as you think about the normal, everyday, mundane realities of life and the greater grace of God. God often shows greater grace when we are blind, spiritually blind, and self-reliant to reveal his heart of mercy. And what I mean by that is God is demonstrating mercy to Jacob over and over again. In fact, in the CSB it doesn't translate it as often, but if you have an ESV or a literal translation you'll see the word behold show up over and over again.

Behold, there was three flocks of sheep. Behold, Rachel was coming down. Behold, Laban gave him this job. What the author is trying to say is God is showing up in Jacob's life, God is giving mercy, but what you see contrasted to the servant is Jacob doesn't have eyes to see it. And God's mercy is one of the greatest gifts that He gives to each and every one of us, but so often we don't have eyes to see the mercy that he has to give. You experience God's mercy in your finances, many of us, and yet you've rejected him from the whole discussion.

You've experienced God's mercy in your relationships. He's given you wonderful relationships, surrounded you with great people, and yet you rarely give God thanks for the mercy of those things. You've kicked God out of X, Y, or Z domain in your life. But if you're really honest with yourself and you were to look at those areas where honestly your heart is least dependent on the Lord. Often where your heart is least dependent is where God's mercy is most evident, and we rarely have eyes to see. You're just like Jacob. Driven by your gut, driven by your emotions, driven by the need, living by the flesh instead of relying on the spirit.

Even so God gives greater grace. Now I resonate with this personally in a very big way. I think I'm like a lot of people in that my relationship with the Lord, you know, it's kind of like a little roller coaster, and this is an inevitable temptation, especially after the big mountaintop experiences with God, where you can kind of drift back to a place of self-reliance, of independence, of pride and arrogance where you say, Lord, I got things to do, I got to get these things done. I'll worry about all the spiritual stuff after the fact, get to Sunday morning and you're just like Jacob and you're blind to the mercy of God.

Doesn't mean his grace isn't still on display. So I wonder if you were to have a narrator of your life and he said, behold, behold, behold, look at the mercy of God to what things might he point. To what things might you give thanks to the Lord for his mercy? That's not the only demonstration of grace, however. You've also got grace in the fact that Laban offers Jacob a job. He says, I don't want you to work for nothing. He allows him to work for nothing for a month, but then he finally says, let's get you paid.

And so in verse sixteen it says Laban had two daughters. The older was named Leah, the younger was named Rachel. Leah had tender eyes, but Rachel was shapely and beautiful. Jacob loved Rachel, so he answered Laban, I'll work for you seven years for your younger

daughter Rachel. So Laban replied, Better I give her to you than to some other man. So stay with me. Jacob worked seven years for Rachel and they seemed like only a few days to him because of his great love for her. Now when it says that Leah had tender eyes, that doesn't mean that she had bad eyesight.

Although I've always referred to her as lazy eyed Leah. I can say that because I have a lazy eye. But it's not an eye problem, okay? It's the same thing like when we say, that girl's easy on the eyes, what do you mean by that? Good looking lady, right? Tender eyes means she is ugly. I mean big time ugly. Rachel, on the other hand, not ugly. Shapely and beautiful, whatever shapely means. I think I have an idea. But Jacob is saying, I want that one. I'll work for seven years for that one.

And it says that his labor for Laban seemed like only a few days because of his great love for her. So what's going to happen? Well the time comes, the seven years are up. Jacob says to Laban, Since my time is complete, give me my wife so that I can sleep with her. That's pretty forward. So Laban invited all the men of the place and sponsored a feast, and that evening Laban took his daughter Leah, not Rachel, and gave her to Jacob, and he slept with her. And Laban gave his servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah as her slave.

And when morning came there was Leah! So he said to Laban, What have you done to me? Wasn't it for Rachel that I worked for you? Why have you deceived me? You might underline that phrase, deceived me. Every time I read this, I always think to myself. How do you sleep with a girl and not look at her face? How did he go to bed with Leah? With her eye drifting off, you know, be crazy. How did he not notice? Does anyone else think that? I just do not understand. But if you think about it, you know, no electricity, all right, so it's late at night, probably no candles in the tent.

The custom of ancient Near Eastern cultures for a wedding ceremony was to veil the bride. So I'm guessing... and then you've got the alcohol, right? He probably drank a lot of alcohol because it's a big feast. Yeah, you know he didn't see it coming until the next morning and there was Leah, as the Scripture says. There she is. That's humorous; I guess that's how it happened, but the point is that phrase, you deceived me. This word translated deceived is the same exact word used in Genesis 27, where Jacob in conversation with his mother about tricking his father says, no, I don't want to trick my dad because he might think I'm a deceiver.

I don't want to be perceived as a deceiver. And it's the same word that Esau uses of Jacob when Jacob is exposed in his whole scheme to steal the blessing. He says, isn't he rightly named Jacob a deceiver? And so this is the trickster getting tricked, right? This is the deceiver getting deceived. What goes around comes around. You get the idea. Sow the wind, you reap the whirlwind. And so he's asked the question, why'd you do this, Laban? He's

probably very angry, very upset. And Laban answered, well, it's not the custom in our country to give the younger daughter in marriage before the firstborn.

I thought you knew. Complete this week of wedding celebration, and we will also give you this younger one in return for working yet another seven years for me. Now some people wrongly assume that Jacob had to work another full seven years before Rachel came home. That's not true. It says to finish the week of celebration, which was literally just seven days of a wedding celebration, and after the seven days were up, Rachel comes to live with him. So he's got Rachel and Leah both living with him in Laban's house for another seven years.

Jacob did just that, verse 28. He finished the week of celebration, and Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife, and Laban gave his slave Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her slave, and then Jacob slept with Rachel also. And indeed, circle this phrase, he loved Rachel more than Leah, and he worked for Laban another seven years. So God shows grace when we're blind and self-reliant to reveal his heart of mercy. The other thing we see in this passage is that God shows grace when we're wronged and angry to reveal the heart of sin.

Now what do I mean by this? I don't know about you, but when you get angry... if you've raised kids before. Sometimes in raising kids your kids will do things that really get on your nerves. And you get really frustrated and angry and you usually lash out at them and say things or say things in a way you really shouldn't have or didn't mean to say. And once you get a little bit of hindsight or distance from the outburst of emotional anger, you realize they're just like me. They're doing the same thing that I do or that I used to do.

The only problem is they're not as sophisticated in having a filter and so it's just a little more out in front. And that's true not just of raising kids, it's true of any relationship in your life where maybe your best friend gets on your nerves because of that little thing she does, but if you were really honest, she gets on your nerves because you hate that thing about yourself. Often the thing that we hate most in others is the thing that we hate most in ourselves. The problem is sin is very easy to see in other people.

It's very difficult to see in the mirror. And so, what the Lord will often do is He will confront you with your sin in the mirror through a sinfully expressed emotion like anger or anxiety or any other number of emotions that are on the surface, not themselves sinful, but they can have sinful expressions. And this really came home for me. You remember Jesus' statement that out of the heart, the mouth speaks. So often what comes out of your mouth is a window into your heart. When we were, this Easter, studying the book of Colossians, chapter three, and it talked about this laundry list of sinful heart attitudes followed by sinful expressions of that through your speech.

One of the things that I saw is the connection between sinfully expressed emotions and idols in the heart. So often when you sinfully express an emotion, it's because you're reacting to an

idol of your heart that's under threat. For an example, Tim Keller talks about anger as love in motion. So anger itself is not bad. Anger is just love in motion, trying to protect against the threat to the beloved. Okay, when you get angry about a threat to your kids, that's a good righteous anger. You want to protect your kids because you rightly love your kids.

When you get angry because your idol is what people think about you, and because you're saying what you're saying or doing what you're doing, and now people are going to think of me a certain way, so I'm going to get super angry to protect my image. That might be a sinful expression of anger because your idol is what people think about you. And the same could be said of anxiety or any other number of things. Sinfully expressed emotions are often exposing idolatry in the heart. And Jacob's idol was what people thought about him.

And I didn't know that until this week when I was studying in Genesis chapter 25, I think it's chapter 25, verse 28, or 25:27. It gives these descriptions of Esau and Jacob. It says Esau was a man's man, hunter man, liked wild game like his father, but Jacob, it says, was a quiet man. Some translations say he was a gentleman. But it's not really, if you look at the original language, it's translated quiet, but usually it's translated wholesome or perfect or complete. Or righteous. And the idea is that Jacob, he was still a mama's boy, and you know, maybe I make jokes about him being effeminate.

I don't know if he was effeminate or not, but he was a perfectionist, can we put it that way? He cared a great deal about what people thought about him. And you know that again because when he's talking with his mom Rebekah about deceiving his dad, he says, no, I don't want to do that because I'll be seen as a deceiver. I don't want them to call me a deceiver. He's crushed when his brother calls him a deceiver. He cared a great deal about what people thought about him, and now he's married to an ugly woman.

Which for him, that ain't good. People are going to think what they're going to think. And I think what God is doing as an act of grace in Jacob's life is he's saying, you're the deceiver. You're the man, just like Nathan pointing his finger in David's face, you've got a sin issue. You've been pointing the finger, you've been dismissing your failure, you've been justifying your actions, you've been blind to your own self-righteousness. You are not who you hope to be, you are not who you present yourself to be, you are the deceiver.

And that is one of God's greatest gifts to us. So don't let your grievance be an excuse to point the finger. Let your grievance and your anger or your anxiety be a stethoscope, be the doctor's diagnosis of the sin in your heart, the idol that you're trying to protect, it can be one of God's greatest gifts to you. So he shows grace to the blind and the self-reliant, he shows grace to the wronged and the angry. Thirdly, he shows grace to the despised and the rejected. It says in verse 31, when the Lord saw that Leah was neglected, he opened her womb, but Rachel was unable to conceive.

So Leah conceived, gave birth to a son, and named him Reuben, for she said, the Lord has seen my affliction, so surely my husband will love me now. The word Reuben means the Lord sees. She conceived again and gave birth to a son, and she said, the Lord heard that I'm neglected and has given me this son also. And so she named him Simeon, which means the Lord hears. She conceived again and gave birth to a son, and she said, at last, my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne three sons for him.

Therefore he was named Levi, which means attached. And she conceived again and gave birth to a son and said, this time I will praise the Lord. And therefore she named him Judah, which means praise, and then Leah stopped having children. I want you to circle that phrase when the Lord saw that Leah was neglected. Leah's big problem was that she wasn't loved by her husband. The thing that she wanted more than anything else was to have her husband's love and affection. The thing that Rachel wanted more than anything else was the ability to have children.

Rachel was trying to cover a shame in her life by not being able to have children. Leah was pursuing an idol in her life to have the love of someone finally because her whole life she's been ugly and her whole life she's struggled with the insecurity and doubt that comes from being despised and rejected because of your looks. And you can see this in the way that she names her children. I don't know if you're paying attention to this, but the first three names of the first three children were the Lord sees me, so maybe now my husband will see me.

The Lord hears me, so maybe now my husband will finally hear me. The Lord is, I'm going to name him attached. What was the last third boy's name? Simeon. No, that's the secondborn. Levi, there it is. Maybe now my husband will be attached to me. And the answer implicit in every one of those three kids is no, no, no. He still doesn't love me. He still doesn't see me. He's still not attached to me. And it's not until the fourth born that she finally, it's like there's a breakthrough in her life and she says, well, even if my husband won't love me, I'm going to praise the Lord because the thing I really deep down need the most isn't my husband's love.

It would be nice. And I think every spouse, every wife deserves their husband's love, but the love of your husband is not the love you're ultimately looking for. It's the love of your heavenly Father displayed toward you in Christ Jesus. And when you can come to receive that love and praise the Lord, even though you're despised and rejected, it is one of the greatest graces that God can give to you. God gives grace to the despised and the rejected to create a heart of praise. Now it is painful. It is gut-wrenching.

I'm sure Leah struggled for years and years and years getting to a place where she could praise the Lord even in the midst of her disappointment and discouragement. But she finally gets there and she realizes that God's grace is greater. And that he meets me in my neglect, even when I'm despised and rejected, and he creates a heart of praise. And what's so cool is that Jesus comes from the line of Judah. He's the lion from the tribe of Judah, who was

himself despised and rejected, who had an appearance that was not very favorable, contrary to the blonde-haired, blue-eyed, hippie Jesus pictures you see everywhere.

He was not an attractive man like his mother in that way, but he is God's preeminent example of how deeply God loves us. His love letter to us is seen at the cross of Christ saying, I love you this much. And the love you're looking for in a man or a woman or a career or whatever it is that you're chasing in life, that will never satisfy you. And even if you get it, it will not fulfill you in the ways that you desire. Only praise of God through Jesus Christ can satisfy that longing in your heart.

So Leah learns that lesson and now Rachel's going to learn hers. Verse one of chapter 30, we've got to move. It's 12 o'clock. So when Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she envied her sister. Circle that phrase envied. Give me sons or I will die. Notice that phrase. I want this more than life itself. Rightly so, because to not have children in that culture, there's a biological imperative for many women to want to have children, but to not have children in that culture meant you didn't have security, that was your retirement plan.

It was one of the worst things that could happen. Jacob does not respond well. Husbands, do not say this to your wife when she's struggling with infertility. He says, am I in the place of God? He has withheld offspring from you. Then she said, well, here's my maid Bilhah. Go sleep with her, and she'll bear children for me, so that through her I too can build a family. Just what Sarah did with Abraham and Hagar. So Rachel gave her slave Bilhah to Jacob as a wife, and he slept with her.

Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son, and Rachel said, God has vindicated me. Yes, he has heard me and given me a son, so she named him Dan, which means vindication. Then Rachel's slave Bilhah conceived again, and bore Jacob a second son, and Rachel said, in my wrestlings with God, I have wrestled with my sister and won. And she named him Naphtali. Isn't this interesting? Now she's having children not just to do for Jacob, but to get back at her sister. Then when Leah saw that her sister was gaining on her and about to have two kids, maybe three, she was not able to have children, so she took her slave, Zilpah, said, Oh yeah, well if you can, I can, and she gave her to Jacob as a wife.

I wonder what was going through Jacob's mind. Leah's slave, Zilpah bore Jacob a son, and then Leah said, what good fortune. Oh, well good fortune. And she named him Gad, which means good fortune. And then when Leah's slave Zilpah bore Jacob a second son, Leah said, I'm happy that women call me happy. So she named him Asher. I'm sure she didn't use that tone of voice, but I just think of the envy, the back-and-forth between these two sisters, which by the way is why you should never marry two women. And if you're going to marry two women, don't marry two sisters.

That is forbidden in Leviticus 18:18. I think God added that rule because of this chapter. Not a good idea. So she has two kids, the next one's named Asher, and then Reuben, the firstborn, Leah's firstborn, went out during the wheat harvest and found some mandrakes in the field, and when he brought them to his mother Leah, Rachel said, Please give me some of your son's mandrakes. And Leah replied to her, Isn't it enough that you have taken my husband? Circle that phrase. Isn't it enough that you've taken my husband? Now you want my son's mandrakes?

So you're being a little greedy, Rachel. And when Jacob came in from the... or no, then Rachel said, well then he can sleep with you tonight in exchange for your son's mandrakes. Jerry Springer's got nothing on Genesis 29 and 30. When Jacob came in from the field that evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, You must come with me, for I have hired you with my son's mandrakes. So Jacob slept with her that night. God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. And Leah said, God has rewarded me for giving my slave to my husband.

No, he didn't, but that's what she says. And she named him Issachar. Then Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son, God has given me a good gift. This time my husband will honor me, because I've borne six sons for him, and so she named him Zebulun, which means honor. And then later Leah bore a daughter, named her Dinah, and then finally verse twenty two, God remembered Rachel. He listened to her and opened up her womb, and she conceived and bore a son, and she said, God has taken away my disgrace.

Circle that phrase, disgrace. And so she named him Joseph, which means the Lord adds, and said, may the Lord add another son to me. The chapter opens with Rachel's envy. She envied her sister. The chapter in the middle talks about her greed. She wanted the mandrakes, and Leah says, is this not enough? Do you have to keep taking and taking and taking? And then it says at the end that the Lord removed her disgrace. So the takeaway, God gives greater grace to the jealous and the greedy. To remove a heart of shame.

Now, why was Rachel so envious of her sister? It's because her sister had children. Why was she greedy? It's because she felt like she wasn't sufficient. And deep down, when you engage in moral compromise, spiritual compromise, when you maybe pursue a noble goal in a sinful way. So often what you're doing deep down is you're trying to cover and hide a deep-rooted shame in your heart. And Rachel's deep-rooted shame was not being able to have children. For many of you, it's something else, but it's the it's the impetus behind much of the sin in your life because deep down what you want most is not the Lord, it's the gifts.

It's not contentment in God or resting in his love for you, but rather your misguided belief that only if I have that is life worth living; only that savior can save me from this hell. And that's a counterfeit savior. It's a counterfeit hell. And Rachel learned that lesson through great pain and great dysfunction. You see all of this brokenness in this family, but even

through all of it, their weakness and brokenness, God shows greater grace. He shows greater grace to the envious and the greedy by removing their heart of shame.

And you know that happens for Rachel because at the very end, she finally has her own child, biological child, and she names him Joseph. Which means the Lord adds another, which is a direct comparison to what Jacob said to Rachel at the very beginning. It's not my fault you're not having children. The Lord opens and closes the womb. And she protested, she resisted: that's not true. I'll do it, I'll force it, I'll make it my own way, but now she's finally come to realize that was a foolish approach to covering my shame.

My shame is covered by the Lord. So let the Lord add another. She names him Joseph. And Joseph is really a great way to end this passage. Because it's through the life of Joseph that we see despite human brokenness and rage and bitterness and scheming and evil. What people intend for evil, God intends for good. And there is no level of human brokenness that can extinguish the redemptive plans of God for your life, in the lives of the people that you love. He chooses weak people, he chooses sinful people, and he works even despite their sin and weakness to accomplish his redemptive purposes.

And it's so powerful in Joseph's life, he gets into the king's quarters, he has terrible things happen to him, but his brothers who sold him into slavery and despised him and rejected him are at his mercy as he's king and has authority to take their lives, but instead he says, no, I'm going to pardon you, I'm going to forgive you, because what you intended for evil, the Lord intended for good. Which is really powerful because that quote from Joseph is eerily similar to Jesus' words from the cross, who is the greater Joseph, by the way, and the greater Jacob.

Who said when cruel, sinful Romans were crucifying him and nailing his hands and feet to a cross, and when Jewish authorities like the Pharisees and the Sadducees put him through a mock trial and accused him of something he didn't do. Even in the midst of all of that human brokenness and wrong and grievance, he says to his torturers, Father, forgive them. Because they don't know what they're doing. Greater grace, the greater grace of God on display through even the most grotesque human evils. And if he can do that at the cross, he can take your brokenness and the difficulties of your life and your anger and your grievance and your disappointments and all the people who rejected you and despised you and the barriers that you're having to overcome, and he can give you greater grace through the Lord Jesus Christ, which is ultimately what the Lord's Supper points us towards.

And so as we bring our time to a close and we prepare our hearts to take the Lord's Supper, I want to encourage you to receive the greater grace of God by repenting of sin, namely the sin of thinking I can only be happy if only if I have children, only if I have his love, only if I'm married, only if I'm..., only if this works a certain kind of way, we have all ways of misleading

ourselves into thinking the blessed life is a life with God plus or without God but the only blessed life is a life that is resting in nothing less than Jesus′ blood and righteousness.

And so as the ushers come up and prepare to distribute the elements, I want to invite you to respond to the Lord however he may lead. If you′ve never given your life to Jesus for salvation, and that′s something God is calling you to this morning, the altar will be open. I′d be happy to meet with you. You can also scan that QR code and indicate a spiritual decision in that way. But as the ushers distribute the elements, you respond to the Lord as he leads. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this text and it′s such a practical text that resonates, I know, with each and every one of us because we too wrestle with envy and jealousy and anger and arrogance and self-reliance and all of these things.

We thank you that you don′t choose the strong and the wise, but you choose the weak and the foolish to shame the strong and the wise. We thank you that there is no brokenness that cannot be redeemed because where sin is great, your grace is greater. So help us to receive that grace as we respond to you now in repentance and faith. And we pray these things in Jesus′ name. Amen.