

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Afternoon

Date 22nd March 2024

Preacher Rev Philip Knowles

Hymns

Read: Genesis Text Genesis 44:1-17

Series: Joseph Title: Joseph's Final Test.

The opening verses of Genesis chapter 44 details Joseph's final test that he gives to his brothers.

Upon hearing his brothers confession for the first time in 21 years, we read in **chapter 42:21** ***we are very guilty concerning our brother in that we saw the anguish of his soul....***

Joseph begins to examine their words to discern was it a genuine confession, true repentance, or just emotions getting the better of them as they were in prison.

For that reason, from **Genesis chapter 42 through to chapter 44**, Joseph examines their words, by their deeds to see if there's the witness and change regarding their pride, lust for wealth, hatred, jealousy, and treatment of one another.

The final examination focuses upon their treatment of Benjamin.

Because how they treat Benjamin the youngest brother will show if their confession is a fruitful confession.

Likewise, when confession is made to God, concerning our sin against Christ, that confession will be evidenced as good and fruitful confession, by how we now view the Lord Jesus Christ and show love one to another.

The saving grace of God restores, and changes our view and treatment of Christ, as **Peter** said in **1 Peter 2:7** ***“Unto you***

therefore which believe He is precious, and as **Ruth** said in **Ruth 1:16** ***your people shall be my people and thy God my God.***

Joseph's final test centres upon Benjamin and the silver cup that is found in his sack.

Joseph will finally get his brother's attention.

Likewise, **the Lord sends silver cups symbolising trials to get our attention.**

Its interesting to note, that in **Ex. 3:1-10**, God used a **burning bush** to speak to **Moses**.

(In **Num 22:28-31**, God used **a donkey** to speak to the pagan prophet **Balaam**.)

(In **1 Sam 15:14**, God used **the bleating of some sheep** to speak to the wayward **king Saul**.)

(In **1 Kings 17:9-24**, God used an **empty meal barrel and a dead son** to speak to this poor **widow of Zarephath**.)

(In **1 Kings 19:1-18**, God used **a touch, a meal and still small voice** to speak to His discouraged prophet **Elijah**.)

(In **2 Kings 5:1-14** God used an **Israelite slave** to speak to the great general **Naaman** about his need for cleansing.)

In **Matthew 26:69-75**, God used **a rooster** to speak to His distanced preacher **Peter**.

Now in **Genesis 44**, God will use **a silver cup** to speak to **the children of Israel** for their restoration.

Joseph's final test.

I FIRST, JOSEPH'S COMMAND.

It's clear from **verse 3**, that Joseph commands his steward in the early hours of the morning before morning light.

Joseph orders his Steward to **fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth.**

Remember, Joseph was providential placed over Egypt to be a preserver and provider for His brethren.

All who came to Joseph none left empty handed. All who came seeking bread were abundantly supplied, as we see here.

However, different from the first time when the brethren left Egypt, Joseph commands his Steward in **verse 2** **put my cup, the silver cup in the sacks mouth of the youngest, and his corn money...."**

Verse 17 shows that the one whom the silver cup is found **shall be my servant.**

The silver cup belonged to the sovereign of the land and according to **verse 4** his cup to drink from.

Joseph's silver cup that he drinks from is a **symbol of His Humiliation, sufferings and sorrows, by the hands of his brothers**, but ordained by God to save them.

Joseph sends his Steward who pictures the ministry of the Holy Spirit, to search and find the brethren, to carry out the words, and will of Joseph and lead them to Joseph, as **verse 2** shows **...he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.**

Remember, Joseph was sold by his brothers, for pieces of silver, therefore he uses a silver cup to examine his brothers, to teach them the sorrows he endured due to their rebellion against him.

We will see Joseph's silver cup symbolising his sufferings pictures Christ's sufferings in the highest form of suffering ever known to man.

Therefore, we see the cup symbolising Christ's humiliation.

In **Matthew 26** when Christ instituted the Lord's supper, on that same night and time Judah betrayed him in heart, having given bread to symbolise His wounded body, ²⁷ **And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; ²⁸ For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins**

Then when Christ entered the garden of Gethsemane, **John 18:1**, He speaks of that cup in **verse 11** as "...**the cup which my Father hath given me**...." He knew He must drink this cup to fulfil the will of God, as stated in **Matthew 26:42**.

It was in this garden Judas betrayed Him in action for 30 pieces of silver.

The cup symbolised the command of God for His life as seen by His humiliation, sufferings, sorrows, shame, agony of soul, and the wrath of God upon Him at the cross to deliver a people from eternal death and preserve them.

Christ willingly drank that cup for all who trust in Him to the saving of their souls.

Christ's action of drinking the cup symbolised that He took the sins of all His people and made them His own.

Therefore, Christ is fulfilling His role as our surety, and substitute, as this cup is given to Him by the Father to suffer in behalf of sinners He came to seek and save.

Oh believer you are saved today, because God commanded that Christ be given the Cup of suffering to pardon and preserve sinners, and He willingly accepted it.

Oh sinners, the cup of wrath that Christ drank is become a cup of salvation, and you need to take the cup of salvation and drink of it to the saving of your soul, as **Psalm 116:13**, instructs ***"I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord."***

I Joseph's Command

II SECOND, JOSEPH'S CHOICE.

verse 2 *put my cup, the silver cup in the sacks mouth of the youngest, and his corn money...."*

These words are interesting.

The cup is to be placed in sack of the youngest brother who is Benjamin.

Why not Judah! whose idea it was to sell Joseph for money?

Or any of the other brothers, who all conspired against him.

Really all the brothers deserved the silver cup to be placed in their sack.

But why Benjamin? Why was he chosen by Joseph.

Well, there are several reasons.

Only Joseph and Benjamin are the sons Jacob and Rachel, whereas other 10 brothers had three different mothers, **Leah (6), Bil-hah (2) and Zil-pah (2)**, as recorded in **Genesis 35:21—26.**

Since 10 brothers persecuted Joseph the son of Rachel, so Joseph wants to know are they persecuting Benjamin, the only other son of Rachel.

Also, Between **Genesis 34-37**, Joseph's older brothers were involved in evil reports, scandalous sin, wicked deeds, deceitful, living lies, betrayal, and persecuted Joseph.

Also, Benjamin is the youngest brother with them, whereas, Joseph, was the youngest brother among those present at Dothan, remember was at home.

Also, Benjamin was innocent he had done nothing amiss, nothing out of place.

The cup in his sack was not of his own doing, but it was for the well being of his brethren.

Yet Joseph the Lord of the land, the sovereign ruler, has chosen the silver cup to be in Benjamin sack because the one whose sack the cup is found will be viewed and treated as guilty.

Joseph's wants the brethren to think and understand, when they left the first time their money was returned, but how, it must have been by another person.

This second time, more money and corn are given in abundance, but both occasions it was not their doing, so it must have been by another person.

And now the silver cup found in Benjamins sack. It should have directed their minds there is another person who has done this and given this.

What another picture we have in the gospel.

We are sinners fallen short of the glory of God, spiritually lifeless, dead in trespass and in sin, the children of disobedience, guilty, corrupt, under the curse of sin.

Jesus Christ is the innocent one, without spot, who has done nothing amiss, yet by the command of God He is the chosen one, viewed and treated by God as guilty.

The cup of God's wrath was not for His own doing, as He had no sin of His own.

He has taken the cup on behalf of sinners He came to suffer to and save.

He who knew no sin, but became sin for us, that we might be the righteousness of God in Him.

Just as Joseph chose no other, but Benjamin to bear the silver cup of suffering to bring the brothers back to Joseph's house, so there was none other chosen by God to carry out His will to suffer to save His people from their sins, only Christ.

Joseph's command and choice.

III THIRD, JOSEPH'S CHALLENGE.

V4 At morning *when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? ⁵ Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing.*

The phrase *Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?* means ***in receiving good why have you done evil.***

The challenge confronted the wickedness of their actions.

The lesson was this, **Joseph had only ever done good to them, yet in Dothan they rewarded him evil in place of his goodness.**

They understood the lesson, notice the end of **verse 8** “...*how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?*”

Men and woman do you understand the challenge of what Joseph is doing through his Steward.

The cup belonged to Joseph, not them.

The cup that was in Joseph's house was not there anymore.

Joseph knew where the cup was, he knew what happened to the cup.

He had purposely placed it in Benjamins sack. It was given to another.

The point is like his silver cup, Joseph was not at home anymore.

They knew where Joseph was, and they knew what happened to Joseph.

They purposefully sold him. He was given to another.

But now that the cup is found in Benjamin's sack, **verse 10 now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless.** Such words reflect the past 21 years.

The brothers are saying we have nothing to be guilty of, we are blameless without fault, but the one who is guilty he deserves death which is a punishment for sin.

The stewards challenge brings conviction and by their own words, and deeds they stand condemned.

When they had planned to kill Joseph and then sold him, and lied about their actions, they seen themselves as without fault, but viewed Joseph as the one deserving of death.

But now that Benjamin is condemned as the guilty one.

By their own words he deserves death.

Will they sell him to another, as they did Joseph? Will they abandon him as they did Joseph? Will they make up another plan as they did against Joseph?

What will they do with Benjamin?

The Steward sent by Joseph to challenge the brethren, pictures, the Holy Spirit, sent out by Father to challenge

sinner's about their sin against Christ, and how they view Him worthy of death.

Men and woman are challenged about their sin against Christ, you know your sinful activities, ***ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:***

On the day of Christ's death, the people wanted a robber released from prison and Christ crucified.

They viewed their own lives as blameless and Christ's worthy of death.

Believer that is how we viewed ourselves, blameless, when in fact we are the guilty ones, however the Holy Spirit, touched our hearts, challenging our sin, bringing conviction of sin, and testifying of Christ, who died the just for the unjust to bring us unto God.

Joseph's command, choice, and challenge.

IV FOURTH, JOSEPH'S CAUSE.

Joseph's cause remained the same as given by the Father in **Genesis 37:14** ***Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren.*** Joseph left the father's presence to seek out his brethren and their well being.

There are wonderful words in **verse 4** ***when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men***

When the brethren sold Joseph they let him go out of the city, and a far off, and had no interest to follow him. They hoped never to see him again.

But now, 21 years later, the reversal. They leave the city, but not to far, Joseph sends His steward who follows after them, for their return.

What a picture of work of Christ and the Holy Spirit in salvation.

Believer, in your sin you had no interest in Christ, after hearing the word of God, you left, walked away, but not yet far off, not long after, the Holy Spirit followed, and pursued after you.

He didn't allow you to go further away and deeper into sin, but lead you to Christ.

For many, have been not far off into life, such as Jonathan Edwards age 7, Matthew Henry age 10, Charles Spurgeon age 12.

Joseph would draw his brothers to himself by the ministry and service of the Stewart.

Notice **verses 13-14**

(Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city. ¹⁴ And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground)

When they returned by the work of the Stewart they **came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there**, Joseph was there to receive and welcome them into his house and dine with them.

As they came, **they fell before him on the ground**. They bow before him once more. They bow in humility to acknowledge they bow before one greater than they.

They revered his person, they acknowledge his power, and position as the Lord of the land. There is respect.

They are in the presence of the law giver. One who has all power and authority in the land to condemn them and put to death Benjamin.

They acknowledge their sin by the words spoken by Judah in verse 16 ***What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out***

the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found.

The sovereign answered, in **verse 17** God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

Joseph taught them the one whom the cup was found was one chosen for purpose, he shall be my servant, he has fulfilled my purpose, and because my cause was fulfilled ***get you up in peace unto your father.***

There was peace for the brethren on basis of Joseph's cause carried out by Benjamin.

See the gospel in these OT pictures and illustrations, there is peace for sinners, because God's cause of redemption was fulfilled and accomplished, in Jesus Christ, the chosen servant, and on that basis the Holy Spirit applies that work in bringing to sinners to Christ, setting them free to new life.