

Genesis 42:8–28

When Providence Provokes Repentance

Main idea: Often, one of God’s loving and wise purposes in difficult providences is to provoke us to renewed repentance.

⁸So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. ⁹Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them, and said to them, “You are spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land!”

¹⁰And they said to him, “No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. ¹¹We are all one man’s sons; we are honest men; your servants are not spies.”

¹²But he said to them, “No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land.”

¹³And they said, “Your servants are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and in fact, the youngest is with our father today, and one is no more.”

¹⁴But Joseph said to them, “It is as I spoke to you, saying, ‘You are spies!’ ¹⁵In this manner you shall be tested: By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. ¹⁶Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether there is any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies!” ¹⁷So he put them all together in prison three days.

¹⁸Then Joseph said to them the third day, “Do this and live, for I fear God: ¹⁹If you are honest men, let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house; but you, go and carry grain for the famine of your houses. ²⁰And bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die.”

And they did so. ²¹Then they said to one another, “We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us.”

²²And Reuben answered them, saying, “Did I not speak to you, saying, ‘Do not sin against the boy’; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us.” ²³But they did not know that Joseph understood them, for he spoke to them through an interpreter. ²⁴And he turned himself away from them and wept. Then he returned to them again, and talked with them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.

²⁵Then Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain, to restore every man’s money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. Thus he did for them. ²⁶So they loaded their donkeys with the grain and departed from there. ²⁷But as one of them opened his sack to give his donkey feed at the encampment, he saw his money; and there it was, in the mouth of his sack. ²⁸So he said to his brothers, “My money has been restored, and there it is, in my sack!” Then their hearts failed them and they were afraid, saying to one another, “What is this that God has done to us?”

Introduction

Why is God doing this?

1. Joseph’s Reasons

- a. Not pride or vengeance.
- b. Faith (his second dream)
- c. Love for his brothers (possibly also diligence in his current vocation, knowing them), both earthly but especially eternal. In this, he was following God’s lead (“do this and live,” v18; cf. 50:19–21)...

2. God’s Reasons

- a. To preserve a people and bring a Redeemer (and Your Redeemer!)
- b. To bring to repentance those whom He is redeeming (and Your repentance). And to bring them to faith—to the point that it would be comforting, rather than terrifying, that God is the One who has done this.
- c. God still works this way. Lk 13, 1Co 11, Ja 5.
- d. God calls you to repentance. Through this passage. Through this sermon. Through His providence.

3. Your Reasons?

- a. Loving the whole person (caring for earthly needs and spiritual needs)
- b. Loving the eternal person (willingness for short-term discomfort)
- c. Gaining/recovering a brother until the application of redemption is complete.

Conclusion

What is this that God has done to us? Can be said in an amazement of fear or grief—the sight and sense of the filthiness and hatefulness of our sin can be a powerful motivator against it. Can also be said in an amazement of faith—the apprehension of His mercy is an even more powerful motivator to love, service, and obedience. Often, one of God’s loving and wise purposes in difficult providences is to provoke us to renewed repentance.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are welcome to listen to the audio recording, which you may find via tinysa.com/hopewellarp)

Our gracious god and our heavenly father. Who dwell in unapproachable light. And who have saved sinners. By your perfect son and are now sanctifying. That you might glorify. Attend us now by the help of your Holy Spirit. As your word is proclaimed you would mix the hearing of that word with faith in them who hear?

That it might profit us. That faith coming through hearing the word of Christ would save that. Your word, which is your truth would sanctify. Do this by your spirit we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Genesis 42 verses 8 through 28. These are the words of God. So Joseph recognized his brothers.

But they did not recognize him. Then Joseph remembered the dreams. Which he had dreamed about them. He said to them, you are spies. You have come to see the nakedness of the land. And they said to him no my Lord, but your servants have come to buy food. We are all one man's sons.

We are honest men. Your servants are not spies. He said to them, no, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land. And they said your servants are 12 brothers the sons of one man in the land of Canaan and in fact the youngest is with our father today and one is no more.

But Joseph said to them. It is as I spoke to you saying you are spies. And this manner you shall be tested but the life of Pharaoh you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. Send one of you and let him bring your brother and you shall be kept in prison that your words may be tested to see whether there is any truth in you.

Or else by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies. So we put them all together in prison three days. Then Joseph said to them the third day do this and live. For I fear God. If you are honest men, let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house, but you go and carry grain for the famine of your houses 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 we are truly guilty concerning our brother. For we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us and we would not hear. Therefore this distress has come upon us. And Ruben answered them saying did I not speak to you saying do not sin against the boy and you would not listen.

Therefore behold his blood is now required of us. But they did not know that Joseph understood them. For he spoke to them through an interpreter. And he turned himself away from them and wept. Then he returned to them again and talked with them and he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.

And Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain to restore every man's money to his sack and to give them provisions for the journey. Thus he did for them. So they loaded their donkeys with the grain and departed from there. But as one of them opened his sack to give his donkey feed at the encampment he saw his money and there it was in the mouth of his sack.

So he said to his brothers, my money has been restored. There it is in my sack. Then their hearts failed them and they were afraid saying to one another what is this that God. Has done to us. The sense the reading of God's inspired and inerrant word we look to him to bless unto us also it's preaching please be seated.

What is this? That God has done to us, what is this that God has done to me. That is one of the questions that often comes up in the Christian life the Lord does something unusual extraordinary often something very good. Sometimes something very hard. And we wonder what God is doing and why he is doing it.

Well this passage before us this morning answers one of the reasons why God does things and that is for those upon whom he has set his love for those whom he is bringing to believe in Jesus Christ those who have believed in Jesus Christ and whom he is making more and more like Christ until he has finished that work and you are perfectly happy forever.

He is in order to make you perfectly happy. Making you perfectly holy. He's bringing you to repentance often one of God's loving and wise purposes and difficult providence is to provoke us to repentance or to renewed repentance that's something that we see God doing here, but we see God doing it here first because we see Joseph doing it here.

There's been a buildup to what is going to happen when Joseph's brothers realize that he is alive what is going to happen when Joseph sees his brothers, how are these dreams from chapter 37 going to come true and when they do come true what is that going to be like and we in God's province us just because family was traveling and wasn't here to preach last week we have been sitting on verses eight and nine for two weeks now so Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him.

Then Joseph remembered the dreams. And so we watch and we've read and we hear with great interest what is Joseph gonna do and the spirit builds that interest for us I say giving us some details like Joseph was using an interpreter and so he was speaking Egyptian but they were speaking Hebrew but he could understand Hebrew but they didn't know that he could understand Hebrew.

The Holy Spirit tells us not only what they couldn't hear but what they couldn't see that as Joseph excused himself from him it turned away from him then that he wept. And Joseph's confrontation and interrogation of them all of these things the decision to put the money back in the sack it's all very interesting and it has us asking what our Joseph's reasons for doing these things thankfully we have the whole book of Genesis and so we are going to as I know many of you like to do not only in school but perhaps some of you even ruin mysteries for yourselves and go ahead and read those last few chapters or.

Last few pages and or you come back after you have read it properly the way the author intended the first time and then you go back through and read it again to pick up all the clues we are here picking up clues and we will we'll look at Genesis 50 and verses 19 through 21 to see how he picks up language and logic from this chapter and how he answers them there, so the first thing the most obvious thing on the surface of the passage are Joseph's reasons for the way he interacts with him and, What he does and as we consider that as we think about that as we see that from the passage we'll see that Joseph is imitating God here that Joseph's reasons for what he does with his brothers and trying to provoke them to repentance is because he sees God doing the same thing loving him and his brothers bringing them not only to full bellies.

But to faith in God's redeemer and then we will consider by way of application our reasons and how we are instructed to think about and interact with especially those who need to come to repentance especially those whom we love who need to come to repentance so those are the three main headings categories under which, We seek to hear this portion of God's word preached by his help Joseph's reasons well one of the things we often do and with mixed results as we read Bible and especially as we read history in the Bible as we read our own character into it.

I say with mixed results because often we find that as the Bible tells us the truth about God's people that the same kinds of sinful thoughts and intentions and actions that would. Come out of our flesh, except for the grace of God helping us are what we see come out of God's people and it's much easier actually to understand passages in which that is happening.

To some extent it's a little more difficult when you have a mature Christian who is acting out of faith in God and out of love for others. So we come to Genesis 42 and we are already to read with. Read it as pride and vengeance Joseph finally has the upper hand and he's gonna use it to smash them and we want to take the confrontation your spies who are spies and, Eyes Three times and yeah smash them good those three

times and and I'm gonna make you choose one of your brothers because you've made me choose revenge and I'm gonna put you in prison because I had to go to prison revenge and we want to read those things and we very easily read the text that way.

But it doesn't make any more sense than the brothers on the return trip are gonna make sense when they're wondering what Joseph is doing and why he's doing what he's doing. They don't know who he is yet and they say, I think he's doing this so that he can take us out of the picture so he can steal our donkeys.

I can't remember now in the first time is it. We as a family we're reading through that portion of the passage of this portion of Genesis and donkeys suddenly achieved a great level of fame in our family reading. We laugh together as a family almost every time we read the word donkey in the Bible because we're reminded of the time that the brothers thought that it was all a donkey stealing scheme.

We can read intentions wrongly. If it was pride if he really wanted to get back at them, he could have had them execute he could have had them tortured he certainly wouldn't have filled their sacks with grain and with money and with more grain than even the money was worth as extra provision for the way home.

He wouldn't have been turning aside and weeping. Over them and he tells us he does it again on the return trips so that we can see what that is. So this is not pride this is not vengeance. Joseph the ruler now for all practical purposes of the most powerful and especially now by way of their having the grain during the famine and no one else having it the most powerful nation in the world.

If it was for pride and vengeance, he could have done a lot better than this. But the scripture tells us what it was for if we would pay attention more to what is God is saying than what we are like, then Joseph remembered the. Dreams. Which he had dreamed.

Now Pastor did not suddenly on his vacation acquire a new speech impediment. Emphasizing the plural there, aren't we? How many dreams does Genesis? 37 tell us about children that Joseph had? You can remember these things. We grown ups we have to like flip back and look just to make sure.

You can remember can't you. There were two. The first one was pretty general. We were out in the field and there were sheaves and my sheaf stood up and your sheets bad down the second one was a little more specific. The sun and the moon at that point Leah by Rachel dying finally the who is the true queen of the family question was put to rest.

The Jacob and Leah and eleven stars. So Joseph remembers two dreams he sees that God is fulfilling at least the first right now but God has told him and shone him that Jacob's gonna make this trip too. And Leah is gonna make this trip too. And best of all for Joseph his baby, brother.

Benjamin is gonna make this trip to. And so the first reason that he's doing what he's doing here is in faith. He wants to see the fulfillment of God's Word. He knows that dreams and interpretations belong to God. So that's the first reason that he is treating them this way that the second reason is love for his brothers both for their earthly well-being but also for their eternal well-being and we do well to just kind of go through the passage here and and look at the interaction.

He says to them into verse nine, you are spies, you have come to see the nakedness of the land. Now, This actually might have been for real a little bit. Because Joseph knows his brothers. And he remembers shechem. And he remembers Simeon and Levi once they had disabled the men of Shechem.

Taking their advantage. Joseph has a job. He is now the Vizier of Egypt. And all the world wants what Egypt has. And so it's not outside the realm of possibility. In fact, Joseph probably would be irresponsible at this point if he didn't kind of provoke and test his brothers put them at a situation of disadvantaged strike a little bit of fear into them in his role as a defender and leader of Egypt.

Which he knows is also for their good. Because the maintenance of Egypt and its grain is the way by which God is going to spare them. They don't know how long the famine is going to last. He tells them later when he does the great reveal. But Joseph knows how long the feminine is going to last.

And if his wicked brothers who are thieves and plunderers and schemers. Do have something up there sleeve and have some measure of success, they might not only harm Egypt, but even themselves. And so there is the possibility here that this is also diligence in his current vocation. But he presses them these three times which perhaps goes beyond that and we see really that there is love for his brothers here.

We see the earthly love fairly easily, don't we? Because he not only gives them the grain but he gives them the money. And apparently, whatever servant did the one guy sack he didn't do the money part, very cleverly, he left the money in the mouth. If you're gonna, Hide the money put it in the bottom and the rest of the grain on top so not until they transfer it to storage at home when they get home.

Do they see that they have the money? But Joseph is lovingly providing for them. He's lovingly providing for them both in this earthly way but also in this eternal way. He knows that it is necessary for his family to remain alive why? Just because it's his family. His daddy is half brothers is full brother.

What family is this? Who's gonna come from this family? And what is he going to do? The seed of the woman the Lord Jesus must come from this family. This is the family in whom all of the families on earth may be blessed. The Egyptians might be the ones who have grain in the famine but Israel the family of Jacob who is called Israel are the ones who have Jesus for those who have a famine of righteousness who are going to die under the wrath of God.

It's to savior doesn't come from this family.

It's actually important for eternal reasons. That this family be physically preserved. And just as the redemption of Jesus must come from this family, Jesus must come and he must live in obedient life because we haven't. And he must be the one who earns are forever blessings. And Jesus must die a sacrificial death because what we had done is we have sinned against Almighty God and we deserve all of his holiness and all of his justice to pour itself out against us in fire and wrath forever.

As second Thessalonians chapter 1 says will happen from the presence of God forever upon those who do not obey the gospel those who do not come to repentance in faith. So not only is it necessary for his brothers that this family be preserved so that the promised one can come.

But it's also necessary for his brothers that they turn from their sin. To trust in the promised one. The ten men who are standing in front of him. If they don't repent of their sin. And come to faith in God's promised redeemer who would deliver them. From the guilt and penalty of their sin.

It doesn't actually matter. If they eat for the next seven or seventy years does it? Because their eternal souls will perish. So Joseph is doing more here than just making sure there's going to be grain and money in their sacks when they leave.

He is seeking to provoke them. To repentance. They said to him no my Lord. Fulfillment. But your servants have come to buy food. We are all one man's sons. Honest. Your servants are not spies. He says to them the second time no you have come to see the nakedness of the land Verse 13, they said your servants are 12 brothers.

I know that looks like there's a lot of us. Oh 10 here that this is some kind of advanced sports or reconnaissance force, but they're actually could have been more. It's kind of like when you're on an elevator in Panama City Beach with just six of your children and someone in sheer masked terror, you know looks in and how are they all yours you already know that they're not getting in they're gonna wait for the next one.

And so well, actually, there's two more. You see what they're saying here, there's a they're actually 12 of us. We we would have all come there would have been more except for the youngest had to stay back with that and. The other one is no more. See what they're saying here.

But he is said to them. No, but you have come to see the negatives of the land sorry verse 13. In the land the sons of one man in the land of Canaan, and in fact, the youngest is with our father today one is no more. Jesus said to them, there's number three.

It is his I spoke to you saying you are spies in this you should be tested by the life of Pharaoh. He is. Probably speaking to Sand as Egyptian as he can at this point. There's some disagreement over whether Joseph is accustomed now to taking oaths and pharaoh's name.

No think there's a reason to make that accusation from here. You shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. Send one of you let him bring your brother and you shall be kept in prison. That your words may be tested to see where there is any truth in you or else by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies.

Then he puts them all together in prison for three days. Not just that their words would be tested, but to see what? To see if there's truth in you. You see Joseph provoking them. Saying which one will you all turn on now? I'm not here for you to turn on.

Because you don't know it's me. You don't know it's odd. Benjamin's not here for you to turn on. He's back in Canaan. Is there truth in you? Will you turn? On one of your brothers. So you get some out after three days. And he says do this and live.

For I fear God if you are honest men, let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house. Since actually it sounds like you know. It sounds like mercy and it is merciful only one of them is going to be in prison but as far as the test goes he's actually kind of ramping it up, isn't he?

Because now it's not just one of them who goes have to go back and face. Jacob alone. It's one of them who's going to be left in Egypt. By himself. And the other nine are going to go back now. To Jacob. And so, he's increasing the test. Do this and live for I fear God.

If you are honest men, let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house, but you go and carry grain for the famine of your houses and bring your youngest brother to me, so your words will be verified and you shall not die. And then when it says and they did so at the end of verse 20, the implication is not that they did all of that right then but that they that there was general agreement to the terms and, Then they said to one another we are truly guilty.

Concerning our brother. For we saw the anguish of his soul. When he pleaded with us. He provokes them and they see their guilt. Now when he says do this and live for I fear God. He is he's using language that we're going to hear again when they come back and apparently the horror of knowing that Joseph is alive has not yet worn off because in chapter 50 when Jacob dies.

They come and they say beginning in verse 15 chapter 50. When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said perhaps. Joseph will hate us and may actually repay us for the all the evil which we did to him. So they sent messengers to Joseph saying before your father died he commanded saying it's completely implausible Joseph was the one that that Jacob had asked for the extra interview with apart from the brothers with his name, oh dad had to secret meeting with us too and in that meeting he said thus you shall say to Joseph which would be weird why wouldn't Jacob say it himself to Joseph I beg you please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin for they did evil to you now, please forgive the trespass of the servants.

Of the God of your father Joseph leaps when he speaks when they speak to him then his brothers also went and fell down before his face they said behold we are your servants see we're willingly redoing the dream thing, but then listen to Joseph's answer Joseph said to them, do not be afraid for am I in the place of God.

As for you you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring it about as it is this day to save many people alive now therefore do not be afraid. I will provide for you and your little ones now a lot of fakes think that the many people in verse 20 is all the land of Egypt and all the the the, Neighboring nations and perhaps that is true, it is true.

But it seems in the context I will care for you and your little ones he's pointing out to them that God's plan to prosper the family of Israel is coming true because by this point in Genesis the fact that 70 have come to meet Joseph and his family has been emphasized the number has been emphasized this has been a not just a preservation but a prospering of the family of Israel in fact they're gonna prosper so much in Egypt that when there arises a pharaoh who does not know Joseph the multiplication of the Israelites is going to be a problem and you get to that in the next chapter in Exodus chapter 1.

But here Joseph says, Do not be afraid for am I in the place of God. There's a couple things here. First of all, he says, you shouldn't be fearing me. You should be fearing God. Why are you afraid of what I could do to you? When you have sinned against this God who in order to flatter me, you just claimed to be his servants.

Why aren't you afraid of what he would do to you? But. And here's the good news. The God of whom you should be afraid he's the one who's lead. I am following when I love you. Do not be afraid for am I in a place of God as for you you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring it about as it is to say not just good for me but good for you to save you alive to make you many to bring Christ through you through our family.

And that's what we hear him saying in our passage this morning. Do this and live for I fear God.

I am not taking vengeance upon you because that belongs to God. And the God whom I fear. His agenda for your life. Dear. 10 sons of one man one and there's one who's not in the baby one is back home. The God whom I fear his agenda right now is for you to live.

And so my agenda right now is for you to live. You see what Joseph is saying about the reason that he is forgiving and the reason that he wants them not only to thrive physically, but to come to repentance and faith is because that's what he sees. God doing.

That's God's agenda for them. And when you're a believing. When you're a believing brother or sister or nephew or relative or friend or business, associate or neighbor. It's not just those points of connection that produce in you the affection that wants to help the one that you care about in their earthly needs at once to help the one that you care about come to faith.

It's ultimately because you are reflecting what you see your God doing. And you fear him and you take your cues from him and because you see him doing good and being generous you want to do good and be generous because you see him wanting to see them come to repentance from their sin you want to see them come to repentance from their sin because you see him calling them to faith in Jesus Christ, you want to call them to faith in Jesus Christ.

Is ultimately what we see Joseph doing here and as you see his words in verse 18 and the echo of them later in chapter 50 and verses 19 through 21. Is that he is imitating God here because what does God doing God is preserving a people. God is bringing a redeemer.

God is going to trace the genealogy of Jesus Christ through this family. Through Judah. There are. Half relatives of Jesus. In the world.

Because he came through an actual family.

God is preserving and bringing a redeemer and he was bringing them to repentance as much as Joseph did it really did have to be the work of God didn't it to soften their hearts and say bring to mind what they did to Joseph? When they say we are truly guilty concerning our brother in verse 21 and then we see that they don't just feel guilty before Joseph do they?

Because by the time they get to verse 28, they're not saying what is this that that man has done to us? That that new vizier in Egypt has done to us what do they say what is this that God has done to us and there are two ways that you can say what is this that God has done to us you say it either in fear or in faith.

When some dreadful calamity comes into your life and you are not clinging to Jesus Christ, the Bible tells us a bunch of things that you know, you know that there's a God who created this world, you know that you exist to worship his glory, you know in your hearts many of the basic precept of his law, you know that those who break them deserve to die everyone knows that.

Romans chapter one tells us you might be sitting here this morning and saying you don't I don't think that. You don't know my well. So many people use this phrase to mean. I am excused even though you think I'm not God knows my heart. Yes, he does. And he's told me all about it.

So that I might proclaim to you that that uncomfortable feeling when a difficult providence or even when something that is so good that you know that you don't deserve it and you've got that weird idea that the other shoes got to drop. That that uncomfortable feeling is because you know.

You know that he made you you know that you exist for his glory, you know that you must obey his law and you know that you will be eternally punished if you don't. But here's what you don't know. That the reason that he doesn't let you push down and maybe you will succeed maybe he will leave you to yourself you should cry out that he won't.

Because so long as he has you saying I am truly guilty. Verse 21, or what is this that God has done to me verse 28.

He is still pressing upon you the guilt of sin. So that you may see and hear the Lord Jesus when he is proclaimed to you so that when a man stands up and tells you from the Bible that God himself became a man to take on himself what sinners deserve.

It was so that if you believe in Jesus Christ, you will be saved. His obedience will be counted for you you will be as righteous in God's judgment as Jesus is.

And you will be completely forgiven. Because his sacrifice has wiped away all all of the guilt of everything. Of everyone who ever believes in him.

And he in different circumstances in your life and in what happens in the world presses you to see that you need to turn from your sins.

It's not just something that he did through Joseph for these ten brothers that stood before him in Genesis 42 verses 8 through 28 as something that he continues to do you remember Luke 13 some of you remember Luke 13 pretty good because when we were in the midst of the whole coveted thing ramping up and starting to see even that it's not the disease that has been the judgment so much as the response to the disease without minimizing.

It. We went to Luke 13 and we heard people ask Jesus. About those Galileans whose blood pilot mixed with their sacrifices as we heard Jesus challenge them about the ones upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell is not just Galileans it's Judeans it's those from Jerusalem as well and what did we hear?

We heard him say don't wonder about them wonder about yourself come to repentance yourself do you think that they were worse than you all of God's hard provinces call us to consider whether we yet need to turn from our sin to trust in Jesus Christ, unless you repent you shall all likewise perish.

The first Corinthians 11 when they're sending against Christ and his body in this in the supper. One of the things the apostle says is having to notice how many Corinthian church members are getting sick and dying.

Unless you're a repent. You'll like last perish and God does this even in the lives of believers? James chapter 5. If you're sick, you call for the elders and one of the elders do they come and they anoint you and what does anointing do? It shows that God has set you apart as as.

A royal priesthood in Christ as those who are anointed those upon whom he has laid special claim those who may set apart as holy those to whom those whose lives belong to the Lord Jesus Christ and in the context there of that anointing and that praying he also says what and confess sin?

And if the illness was tied to something specific from which to repent and you confess it at that point, you'll be healed immediately. The apostles saying there the brother of Jesus writing under apostolic authority is is saying there that God still in the lives of believers does specific things to call us to repent from specific sins, and as soon as the usefulness of that affliction is over.

He says if it's not true with every illness don't say oh well I you know, I was sick three years ago did I repent of well if the reason for that sickness was to call you to a specific repentance and you didn't repent? You would still be sick. Because the logic of James chapter five is that as soon as the usefulness of the affliction to call you to the repentance has been completed you'll be healed.

And that part of the way he does that is by having the elders come and anoint and pray and ask you. Is there anything that God might be trying to get you call to your attention?

God has reasons in his provenance and one of those reasons is frequently to provoke us to renewed repentance. In fact Genesis 42 verses 8 through 28 isn't just is it an account of how God was provoking Joseph's brothers to repentance. Because that happened. And then the Holy Spirit carried Moses along to write it down.

And then the Holy Spirit preserved the written word of God. For. 3400 years or so. Caused it to be translated to English. Saved an Egyptian. Called and gifted him. To preach the word of God and Christian worship as a mouthpiece of Christ. And now Jesus calls you to consider.

From what sin in your life. Do you still need to repent? Repentance is in continual ongoing thing. God didn't just do this for Joseph's brothers, did he? He did it for you who sit here in southern middle Tennessee in 2021. Because he wasn't just bringing Christ into the world.

He is also applying what Christ has done to specific people. Whom he calls to repent from their sin and believe in Jesus Christ the Savior of sinners.

And so if God does this through His Providence in our lives through His providence in the nation through His Word. How are we to respond? Well, If we fear God, let's follow. His lead. Let's love people. His are hungry feed them. But don't ignore eternal souls. Because what's the use of a temporarily full belly?

If you never turn from your sin and come to faith in Jesus Christ.

You love the whole person love them in an eternal way. Be willing to make them temporarily uncomfortable. Now, I'm not saying Joseph is completely sacrificed there's a almost certainly a fleshly part of him that enjoyed those three days.

But is there not also can you not read in the tension of these chapters into Genesis into which we have entered now. Joseph wishing desiring to announce himself to pour the riches of Egypt out on them as he is going to do.

But he's willing for them to have short-term discomfort. For their long-term good. Just like your heavenly father Hebrews chapter 12. Who knows that chastening is unpleasant for a moment, but he wants to produce in you that holiness that peaceful fruit of righteousness and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

Children. If your parents love you. They will frequently make you uncomfortable. Because they want you to be perfectly holy and perfectly happy forever and God who has that agenda for you has commanded them to make you uncomfortable. In fact, it's our flesh, that keeps us. From doing it as consistently as we ought to.

Your heavenly father sends it in love to doesn't he?

And not just that which is hard but even that which is good. Because it really was a good thing wasn't it when they stopped at the rest stop. And they opened the sacks and. In eight sacks there's grain in the mouth and the ninth sacks the guy who screwed up there's money in the mouth.

We got all the grain and the money what is this that God has done to us.

But it's not just cause for fear because if you are trusting in God, if you're a trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. Then you say what is this that God has done to us. He has put on Christ. All that I deserve. And here is abundantly more. He just keeps doing things that are beyond expectation.

And I say, I don't deserve it. I'm marvelously Christ is deserved it, what is this that Christ has done to us and that provokes repentance too, doesn't it? In fact the hatefulness and guiltiness of your sin is one motivator unto repentance you hate this sin and you see what it is you realize how bad it is and so you don't want anything to do with that anymore.

But is it not a stronger motivation. To see what God has done for you despite that sin. That you would love this God. That you who know that you belong to him. Would hate the sin for your God's sake. What is this that God has done to us. Can be said in an amazement of either fear or grief.

Yes the sight and sense of the filthiness and odiousness hatefulness of our sin can be a powerful motivator against it.

But the apprehension of his mercy is a more powerful motivator. And often one of God's loving and wise purposes in both difficult and surprisingly wonderful providence is to provoke us to renew repentance, let's pray.

Father, thank you for. What you had done? In Joseph by this point what you were doing and as brothers lives at this point what you did from their family and sending Christ as our Savior. And in for what you are doing. And have done for us as we heard this portion of your word preached we pray that you would continue that work.

We ask God. That you would be pleased to bring a revival in our nation. That you would soften our hearts for our countrymen. The way we have been thinking about softened hearts here. Desiring that they would come to repentance and faith because that is the age in which we live in which you are applying the redemption of Jesus to otherwise hopelessly lost and certain to be damned sinners.

We have seen oh God in recent times. In our nation. The effects of rebellion against you and. In these recent days and weeks and months and. Years. We are forced to confess that what you have been providentially doing would be just if it ends in utter destruction. And that the kind of government and the kind of public morality that we see.

Is actually no worse than we deserve. But we ask oh God that you would use it in the way. Of the Galileans being slaughtered or the Tower of Siloam falling. That you would use it in the way of the brother's experience in the three days in the prison.

And that you would. Use which you have done to bring us to repentance we pray, oh Lord for your church. That you would give us faith to be sure of what you have promised just as Joseph is sure of the dreams we pray that you would make us sure of the kingship of Christ even now of the power of the Holy Spirit and softening hearts of the power of your word as an instrument by which men are brought to repent of sin and believe in Jesus Christ.

To be sure that the little stone that grows will indeed replace all the kingdoms of the world. That although you the United States is time limited. The kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ is forever and ever. Give us that faith and that strength that we may not only love and serve you and and cling to all that you have commanded us despite whatever pressure man puts upon us.

But give us that faith so that we may love our neighbor. In a way that aims not only at the earth the earthly but the eternal. And as even willing for him to be made uncomfortable. If it is a means by which you bring repentance. Well, God we pray for the resolution of.

What has been happening in the election and the coming days. We pray for a resolution that is gentle and merciful and there's not give us according to what we deserve. We pray that you would bless protect company those who are traveling this week unto that end. And that you would be pleased to give them not just a good political and patriotic testimony but a good Christian testimony.

That you would give them opportunity. By which. Citizens of the United States may become citizens of the kingdom of Jesus Christ and brothers and sisters. We pray Lord for those who are ill. That if there is something that you are trying to call to their attention that they would see it that they would enjoy the mercy of their father in the difficulty of their providence.

We know that there are other purposes and so we pray that you would be glorified in all of our hard circumstances that your spirits work in us and the goodness of Jesus would be displayed by how your people suffer. We ask for the purposes to be quickly fulfilled so that the suffering might have served its usefulness and come to an end.

We pray oh God, for those loved ones of ours. Him. We know need to come to repentance. Oh Lord granted our hearts break over them. We suffer much from wondering how much to say and when give us opportunity grant that whatever we do, it would be from faith in you and not from a desperation that hopes in ourselves and what we are going to say.

We pray oh God for this congregation in the next year. How we thank you. For what you have done in so many minds and hearts so many households. For us and in us as a corporate body. And we pray that you would be pleased to continue to grow us in Christ.

For your glory in Him. We pray Lord that as you display the goodness of Jesus to us weak by weak and all of the parts of your worship which are the also the means of your grace. That not only would he be exalted? But that that which He has earned would be given.

Him and that which He is doing might succeed. Thank you for hearing us and we know that you do because we ask it in His name. And your people here say Amen.