

## Seeing God's Power to Change (9)

*The Life of Joseph*

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This morning we continue our series in the life of Joseph turning in the scriptures to Genesis 43 and 44. We're going to begin reading at Genesis 43:15. We're going to read all the way through Genesis 44. It's quite a lengthy passage and all of that will be the text this morning. I know it's somewhat of a lengthy text, but we'll see this morning how it all fits together as we see the work of God in the lives of Joseph's brothers. So we begin reading at Genesis 43:15 and this is when Jacob sends his sons to Egypt the second time for more grain.

15 And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph. 16 And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home, and slay, and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon. 17 And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph's house. 18 And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses. 19 And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they communed with him at the door of the house, 20 And said, O sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food: 21 And it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand. 22 And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks. 23 And he said, Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them. 24 And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender. 25 And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there. 26 And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth. 27 And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is

he yet alive? 28 And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance. 29 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son. 30 And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there. 31 And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread. 32 And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians. 33 And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another. 34 And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

1 And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth. 2 And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. 3 As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses. 4 And 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. 6 And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words. 7 And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing: 8 Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? 9 With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen. 10 And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless. 11 Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. 12 And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. 13 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. 15 And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine? 16 And Judah said, 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. 17 And he said, 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. 18 Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh. 19 My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? 20 And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. 21 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. 22 And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. 23 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. 24 And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. 25 And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food. 26 And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. 27 And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons: 28 And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since: 29 And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. 30 Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; 31 It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. 32 For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. 33 Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. 34 For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

Thus far we read God's word.

Let's pray and ask God's blessing on the preaching.

*Father in heaven, may we see thy power today, the power as it was found in the lives of the brothers of Joseph, those are the power of thee, our God, to save as that is found in our own lives. And may we be encouraged, may we know that if thy were able to save those men, thou art able to save us and our children as well. We are thankful for the testimony in the holy scriptures of thy great power, and may the result of this be through the working of the Holy Spirit that we want to praise thee for the power of salvation. Use this word as well, Father, to turn us from our own sinfulness and to work true repentance in our lives where we need that to be worked in our lives. All these things we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Remember two weeks ago that in the passage we looked at just before this, the question that was on Joseph's mind in regard to his brothers when he saw them the first time was, "Have you been changed? Have you been changed?" You see, over 20 years before this, he knew his brothers as murderers, thieves and liars, and the question was had God worked a change in their hearts and lives. He wanted to know if they had been converted, if God had brought them to repentance for their sins, and at that time, at that time we saw the answer to that question was, no. They failed the tests that Joseph had given to them, but of course, Joseph didn't know the outcome of all of those tests as he sent them back and said, "The only way that you can return and buy more food and get your brother Simeon out of prison is if you bring your youngest brother Benjamin." Also, as we looked at that question that Joseph had in regard to his brothers, we saw the importance of that question for us, too. That's the important question we want to keep before our minds today, too. Have we been changed? Has God worked conversion in us? But the good news of this passage this morning is that somewhere between the first time they went to Egypt and the second time they went to Egypt, God did change these brothers of Joseph. God worked in their hearts a powerful work by his Spirit so that he was beginning to work in them a true repentance for their sins. That's what we're going to see today. Not the actual work of God, we don't know when that happened, but we see in the passage we look at today the evidence that God had worked a change in their hearts and lives, and we see, then, that if God is able to change them, God is able to change anyone, and if God's able to change them, God is able to change us and our children as well.

We're going to see the powerful work of God in changing these brothers of Joseph. The context in which we see this change that God worked is Jacob sending his sons down to Egypt a second time. Jacob does not send his sons to Egypt the second time to rescue Simeon, instead he sends them for food. At this point for Jacob, we don't see much change in him. In fact, his chief concern here is his stomach and not his son. He's not concerned about Simeon, he's concerned about him and his family and his animals having the grain that they need. So Jacob sends his sons, but Judah reminds his father, "We can't go down and expect to buy any grain unless we take Benjamin with us." Jacob had refused to send Benjamin before this but Judah says, "There's no use going and we will not go unless we have Benjamin with us. The ruler in Egypt was very clear."

Well, Jacob agrees to send Benjamin, but we can still see from the beginning verses of Genesis 43 that Jacob is still feeling sorry for himself in these circumstances, but what does come out is that when Judah has this discussion with his father, we see the beginning of change in Judah. This is the first time we see that change taking place. If you go back to chapter 43, verse 9, where Judah says to Jacob, "I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever." So that's Judah. He's saying, "If we don't bring Benjamin back, I'll be a pledge. I'll be a pledge. You may blame me forever. I will take the burden of that." Quite different from the attitude that Judah and his brothers had when they got rid of Joseph. We see change already in the lives of Judah and his brothers. He makes a pledge for the welfare of Benjamin.

So Jacob reluctantly agrees to send Benjamin along. He sends them with the money that was returned in their sacks on that first visit and gifts of other food as well, and Jacob's sons return to Egypt to buy grain, but as they do so, what we rejoice in today is the change, the powerful change that God had worked in their hearts and lives. That's our theme, "Seeing God's Power To Change." We notice, first, the continued test, there's another test that Joseph gives his brothers that brings out that change; secondly, the amazing repentance; and finally, the beautiful love.

When the brothers return to the marketplace in Egypt to buy food, Joseph saw them and when Joseph saw them, he sent his chief steward, his chief servant, to his brothers and told them that they were to come to the ruler's house, and that they were going to dine with him, they were going to feast with him that afternoon at lunchtime. What a shock that must have been for Joseph's brothers, invited to this ruler's house, and remember, the last thing they heard from this ruler was accusation after accusation that they were spies. He was rough with them. He was harsh on them. And so now they're invited into his home and they think immediately, "This can't be good. This can't be good. He's going to make more accusations. He's going to point out to us that we stole the money, that we had the money in our sacks, and he's bringing us into his home so that he can put us into prison. He's not going to do it publicly, he's going to do it privately behind the doors of his own home. This can't be good."

Well, when they come to the door of the home and the ruler or the steward of the home is there, then they begin talking to him immediately about that. That's what's on their mind. They tried to explain to the steward of Joseph what had happened and they didn't know how the money got in their sacks. Now that's what guilt will do. Yes, God was working his work in their hearts, but there was still guilt they had, and because of that guilt they're thinking the worst in this situation. That's what happens when you're hiding sin. That's what guilt will do. They don't see this as an opportunity to serve God, to trust in God, they're still overwhelmed by the guilt of their sin, and they think everything is against them.

But there's so many surprises here. There's a second surprise now. The second surprise is what the steward says in response to them and we find that in verse 23 of chapter 43 when he says, "Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money." So not only is he admitting that he is the one who put the money in their sacks, but this steward points them to God and the God of their father. He begins, "Peace. Shalom. Peace to you. Don't be afraid." And then he points them to the God of their fathers, he points them to the faithful covenant God who loves his people. That must have come like a slap in the face to these men, these brothers of Joseph. There it is an Egyptian servant reminding them not to be afraid because God's in control of everything. One of the things that this may indicate is that this man was a believer and that's why he's speaking here of God, that Joseph and his influence and his witness had been used by God to save this man. That's possible here. But in addition, we see something that can happen maybe in our own lives where there are people who know we're Christians, maybe they're not even Christians, but there are times when we're afraid, there are times we're doing things that we shouldn't be doing,

and they say something to us. "I thought you were a Christian. I thought you believed in God, that's what you've been telling me and now you're living this way?" What a sharp rebuke this was for them. What a sharp rebuke that can be for us.

There's another surprising thing that happens. Then when they try to explain to the servant then what had happened, he simply says this to them, he turns around and he leaves and then suddenly Simeon is with them. Simeon is brought out of the jail and Simeon is there with them. And then finally the last surprise is that at this feast when they're set down at the table there at the feast, they're put in their order from the oldest to the youngest. You can imagine them looking at each other with their mouths hanging open across the table. "Who knew? How did they know what order we're in."

Many surprises happened here, but now Joseph comes home for lunch that afternoon. And I said that was the last surprise. No, there's one more. When he returns, he is not harsh with them. He's very kind and nice. He asked about how they're doing, and then he asked about their father. "How is he? Is he still alive?" A much different tone than what he had before. But the question is why doesn't Joseph yet just tell them who he is at this point? Or remember what we saw a couple weeks ago, Joseph is not about revenge here, is not about torturing his brothers, he's not about tormenting his brothers, getting even for the things that they had done to him. We see in the very next chapter, in chapter of 45 when we come to it, that Joseph was willing to forgive his brothers and ready to forgive his brothers. It wasn't about that. But Joseph tests them and he needs to test them. Even though Benjamin is alive and the evidence is right before his face, the question is still for Joseph why is he alive, and now that his brothers have brought Benjamin down to Egypt, are they going to do the same thing to Benjamin that they did to him? They have the opportunity to get rid of this next favorite son in their family. Will they abandon him and get rid of him just like they did to Joseph, and remember the question is have they been changed? Are they still murderers? Do they still hate a brother because of the favoritism shown to him?

So that's the test and Joseph forms a test to bring this out whether or not they have changed. Will the brothers abandon Benjamin when he is shown favoritism, like Joseph was shown favoritism long ago. So this test that Joseph gives to his brothers includes two things and these two parts go together. They're not two separate tests, they're all part of the same test. The first part is the feast, the second part is the cup. First, there's the feast. That's part of the test here at the feast. They're all sitting down around the tables in the order from oldest to youngest. Joseph is sitting with the Egyptians. The Egyptians are not allowed to sit and to eat with the Jews, with the Hebrews, and so they're sitting in a different place. But as they're sitting there for that feast, Joseph shows favoritism to Benjamin by giving to Benjamin five times more food than was given to his brothers. The point was not that Benjamin could eat all that food. He couldn't. The point was it was obvious favoritism. It was obvious that Benjamin was being singled out. It was obvious, plainly obvious that he was given more than his brothers. The idea was that the brothers would take notice of that favoritism. Now the question is when that happens, will those old feelings of envy, will those old feelings of hatred arise towards Benjamin like they did towards Joseph? How will they respond? One part we know from the end of chapter

43, and they drank and were merry with him. That indicates that there was no envy and that there was no hatred. But still, Joseph wants to know more. This is a setup for the cup. Joseph instructs his servant to put his silver cup in the sack of Benjamin when he puts the corn and returns their money into the sacks.

The brothers then left Egypt. Think about how it must have been when they left Egypt. They could probably hardly believe things went as well as they did. It couldn't have gone any better from their perspective. The ruler was nice to them. They were able to get grain. Simeon was out of jail and Benjamin is with them. It couldn't have gone smoother. It couldn't have gone any better. But then soon after they leave, that servant of Joseph comes with other men as well, comes chasing after them with an outlandish accusation, "One of you has stolen the ruler's silver cup." That's his accusation, and the brothers respond to that, "We're not thieves. We didn't do any such thing. After all, we returned the money that was in our sacks. How would you dare accuse us of being thieves, that we stole something? We returned money. Why would we then take the silver cup from the ruler?" And so they say, verse 9, "With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen." We will be his slaves. That's how confident they were, that none of them had that silver cup. But notice what the servant says, "No, you don't have to go that far. Just this," verse 10, "he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless." So the idea is whoever's sack the cup is found, that one will become the servant of the ruler, everyone else may return home. They won't be held responsible for that one. You can see how this is the test. And so the ruler goes through the sacks from the oldest to the youngest, and unbelievably there it is in Benjamin's sack.

Now, what was the point? Well, the point is this: they have the opportunity here to abandon the favorite son of their father and leave him in Egypt as a slave. It's much easier than with Joseph, they had to sell him and they had to lie about it all the rest. They didn't have to lie or anything here. It was very easy. Benjamin was caught with something he shouldn't have had. He was taken prisoner. They could explain all to their father, "Father, there was nothing that we could do. The ruler couldn't be talked out of it. The cup was in his sack. Benjamin must have done it." And they could have excused themselves from any responsibility. They wouldn't have had to lie at all to their father. That's the test. It's very easy for them to abandon their youngest brother, but remember, the question is, have you been changed? Have you been converted? Has God changed you? And the answer to it from what happens is, yes. Yes. An amazing change had taken place. God had worked in their hearts. They're not going to abandon this new favorite brother. Instead, they're going to show that they love him and they love their father. Somewhere between the first time they went to Egypt and the second time they came to Egypt, God worked repentance in their hearts and in their lives.

An amazing change took place. How do we see that change? Well, we see in these brothers the two parts of true repentance. Remember the two parts of true repentance? It's a sorrow for sin, which includes a confession of sin, that's the first part, and the second part is a turning from sin and to God. You find both of these aspects of true repentance in the text. First of all, we find that the brothers through Judah, Judah represents the

brothers, he's speaking for the brothers, Judah on behalf of the brothers, confesses their sin before God. Look at verse 16 of chapter 44, "And Judah said," okay, this is when they all go back to the ruler's house and they're speaking to Joseph here, they don't realize it, of course. But Judah said, "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." What's the sin or iniquity that Judah is speaking of here? You might think at first reading that he's talking about the stealing of the cup, but it's not. It's evident from the fact that the brothers knew that none of them, none of them had taken that cup. They weren't ready to admit that they had done that. They hadn't. None of them had. But secondly, notice it's in the plural. If the cup had been stolen, had been stolen by one. Here he says, "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." All of their sin. Well, what's the sin that they'd all committed? It was the sin of what they had done to Joseph. He's not talking about the silver cup that was planted in Benjamin's sack. Judah is talking about the sin of selling their brother.

You have to take notice, as well, of the difference between what they say now and what they said in the first visit. Remember, they did allude to that verse 21 of chapter 42, where they're talking to each other, Joseph understands them, they don't know that he does, but they say, "We're very guilty concerning our brother in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." There I pointed out that they were feeling sorry for themselves. They were all about themselves. Yes, they had guilt, that guilt and sorrow that came because of the consequences of their sin, that's all it was about. They had worldly sorrow, not godly sorrow. But here it's different and the difference is they talk about God, the iniquity that they had committed against God. That's their focus. That's a major shift. That's a major change in their lives. It's not feeling sorry for themselves and what they had done. They recognized, they confessed whether this ruler understands it or not, that they had sinned against the living God. Now they're filled with a godly sorrow for their sin. It's not just about the consequences of their sin. The consequences led them to this, but now they have a godly sorrow for their sin. They confess their sin against God.

That's the first place where we see this change of heart in Judah and his brothers. Secondly, we also see a change of heart in the action of these brothers. You see, what we do outwardly reflects what's on the inside. That's evident here too in the lives of these brothers. They were given two opportunities to go home without Benjamin and actually to be justified in doing so, and they don't. First of all, when the servant of Joseph comes out to them and says, "Well, just the one who does it, he becomes the servant. Everybody else is blameless. You may all go home." And secondly, when they're before Joseph himself and Joseph says that to them. He says that in verse 17. At the end of 16, Judah says, "both we, and he also with whom the cup is found," we will be the Lord's servants but then Joseph responds, "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." Just leave. Just go. You can leave the man who's guilty. Leave Benjamin. And they don't. They won't do it. Instead, Judah stands up and speaks on behalf of his brothers and in that lengthy speech you see the change that took place in Judah's heart and in his brother's hearts.



Now we don't know that it took place in all of the brothers' hearts, but we should understand that Judah stands here as the representative of his brothers, and that we can understand that at the very least, there are others of the brothers who were changed as well along with Judah. But what Judah says reveals the change that had taken place in their hearts and in their lives. This speech that you find here in this chapter is the longest in the book of Genesis, and in this speech Judah pleads, he pleads for the life of his brother. Why? He does that because he loves Benjamin. He does that because he loves his father. And in the end he does it because he loves God. That's what we see here. That's the change that took place. These men who hated their father, who hated the brothers who were shown favoritism and each other, and in the end who hated God. They now love each other. They now love their father. And they love God. That's a radical change. It doesn't get anymore radical than that.

That's the amazing change we see here and it's Judah who speaks this. We have to ask ourselves why Judah, and we'll come to that a little bit later in the third point of the sermon, but there's a reason here, too. You know what kind of man Judah was? We don't have time to look at it, but you go back to Genesis 38, Judah was an awful adulterer, a man of all kinds of sexual sins. Read of him there, thinking that he was going in unto a harlot and instead it was his own daughter-in-law. He was an awful adulterer. In addition to that, for over 20 years he had lied to his father about what had happened to his brother Joseph without flinching, without batting an eye, tried to comfort his father in his grief and loss but really he hated and despised his father and wanted his father to go through that loss and that pain in his grief. For over 20 years he had hid that from his father.

He didn't love his father, didn't love his brothers, didn't love the Lord, but notice now there's a change, 14 times in this speech Joseph mentions his father, and that's the main thing that he's setting before this ruler, what will happen to his father if Benjamin doesn't return home. "He's going to die and do you want that to be on your head? My father is going to die if this son does not come home. It will kill my father." We see in this that God has brought Judah and his brothers to repentance for they stand there with Judah, those brothers do, and in his love for his brother and his father, this is what Judah says he will do, "I'll take his place. Keep me instead of my brother." What an amazing thing that is. Judah had a family of his own, wife, children, grandchildren, and he's saying, "I'll give that all up. I'll give up my inheritance. I'll give up going back to the Promised Land. I'll give up seeing my father again. I'll give it all up so that my brother Benjamin may return home." What motivates that? It's love. There's no greater love than that, than that a man would lay down his life for his friend. That's what Judah is offering to do for his brother, to lay down his life, to forsake and abandon everything that he knew and that he loved for the good of his father and the good of his brother.

What an amazing change. It's not just that they confessed sin but there is a change that took place in their lives. There's not just a worldly sorrow that they have but a godly sorrow that leads to real change in their hearts and in their lives. Judah, on behalf of his brother, takes ownership of those sins, but secondly, they won't continue in those sins. They're not going to do to Benjamin what they had done to Joseph. That speaks of the

change that took place in their lives, and they're willing even to face the consequences of what they had done to their brother Joseph.

When we see here what took place in the hearts and lives of Judah and his brothers, we learn, then, what true repentance and conversion are. We see here the same work of God that takes place in us and our children. But that makes us face the question again: have we been changed? Do we see this work of conversion and true repentance in our hearts and lives? Let's remember what true repentance is and what true conversion is. It's not simply outward change. It's not simply going to church on Sunday. It's not simply confessing that Jesus is your Savior and confessing that you believe in Jesus. This conversion and change is not having some feeling and being able to identify a time at which you had this feeling where Jesus was working in you. It's so much more than that. True repentance and conversion is not either simply being delivered from some great sin in your life so that you don't do it any longer. There are plenty of people who are not converted who give up a behavior that's sinful. They quit drinking and they quit drug use not because they love the Lord, because it was destroying their lives. Their reasons weren't wrong. They they quit the behavior. Just quitting a certain behavior is not true repentance and conversion in and of itself. But remember what it is, true repentance is a heartfelt confession of sin against God and a radical turning from sin and to God. Let's hear that again. True repentance is a heartfelt confession of sin and a radical turning from that sinful behavior and to obedience to God. The repentant sinner is broken, broken not by consequences of sin, that's worldly sorrow, but he's broken by the sin that he's committed against God. He's broken by that because that man, that woman, understands, "This God has done so much for me. He sent his Son to die for my sins. He's given his Spirit to live in my heart, and this is how I repaid him, I've repaid him with this gross dirty sin in my life." That's the reality of one who understands true repentance and has true repentance worked by God in his heart. "I've walked in sin." He's not doing any blame shifting. It's not, "Yeah, I've done this, but...." And when genuine repentance, where there's confession of sin, there's no "but." There's no looking at anybody else. There's no pointing the finger at anybody else. "It's me and what I have done." It's saying before God, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

That true repentance also means a change of life. It's fleeing from sin to follow Christ because we love Christ more than anything else. There's not wanting to continue in sin. It's fighting against sin. It's not that we won't sin anymore, or even walk in that particular sin, but there's a commitment to a life of change, to a turned life and doing that in God's way, using the tools that God has given in his word to turn from that sin, being in the word, being in prayer, being accountable to others, cutting off, amputating that sin from life so that where we can, we cut off accessibility to that sin. Those are the the tools, some of the tools that God gives us. We're committed because we hate sin to using the tools that God has given to us within the church.

Now the question is: do we find that in our hearts and lives, true, heartfelt sorrow that's expressed in confession of sin and a radical turning from sin in our lives? That's what we need. God calls us to that, this morning. "Repent of your sins and believe in Jesus Christ." Repent. That's what we need in our marriages in our homes. That's what we need in our

marriages, husbands and wives who are willing to humble themselves and confess sin to each other and to confess their sin before God, to acknowledge the awful things that they have done. Beloved, this is why so many marriages in our day end in separation and divorce. There's an unwillingness to confess sin in humility and to turn from that sin. Men and women are entrenched in their sins. They don't want to give their sins up. Well, that's what destroys marriages. We have to know there's going to be sin in our marriages. There will be sin in our homes. Don't expect anything different. There will be sin, but the question is how do you deal with that sin, do you confess it? Do you do that willingly? Do you do that humbly? Do you do that without pointing fingers? Do you acknowledge the simple things that you have done?

That must happen as well in relationship between parents and their kids. If there's going to be peace in our homes, there must be true repentance. As parents, we ought to be confessing our sins to our children humbly. They see and know our sins. We ought to be turning from those sins as well, confessing where we've been angry like we shouldn't have, or confessing as well where we've not disciplined like we should have, when we've let them get away with things we shouldn't let them get away with. We confess that to our children. Children, that's the right response when your sin is pointed out. Not, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry," after you hit your brother or sister because you don't want them to tell mom or dad. No, real sorrow. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry I hurt you. Are you okay?" And willing, then, to take the consequences for what you've done and to learn from that.

It seems to us when we're young, but sometimes when we're older too, that the best thing to do is to hide our sin, cover it up. "It's just between me and God," we reason after all. Well, no, it's not the best thing to do. God says confess it. Confess it. That's the right response to our sin and turn from that sin in our lives. We're called to turn from hatred and envy and live in love with each other, even as these brothers were turned from their hatred and envy and learned to live in love with one another. And we're to do that because we are those who know the self-sacrificial love of Jesus Christ. That brings us to see in the text this morning, beautiful love. That would be easy for us just simply to look at the love of Judah for his father and his brother, and to be amazed at that, and that love is beautiful. Really, it is. And that love even ought to bring us to tears when you see that. What an amazing love that is that Judah was willing to give his life for his brother. That's the end of chapter 44, verses 33 and 34, "Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father." He couldn't bear to see his father broken and grieving anymore for the loss of another brother.

What love that is, beautiful love, but that points us to a higher love. Remember the question that was asked earlier: why Judah? In all of it before this, we don't hear much about Judah. Now all of a sudden it's Judah. Judah's on the foreground. Why Judah? Let's not forget Judah's place in the family of Jacob. You find that in Genesis 49:10 when just before Jacob dies, he speaks words to each one of his sons, and remember what he says to Judah and about Judah. Genesis 49:10, that's the main verse. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall

the gathering of the people be." What's that talking about? It's talking about Jesus Christ. From the line of Judah will come the Savior Jesus Christ. We have to see Joseph and Judah in the bigger picture of what God is doing in this Old Testament history, and the bigger picture is this: Judah is the father of the father of the father of the father of that king who before he was king, went out on behalf of the people of Israel and stood up to the giant Goliath. And remember the idea of that great struggle was, is that David represented all of Israel just like Goliath represented all of the Philistines, and the winner, the winner in that struggle between those two men, that winner would represent the entirety of his people, so that if David won, he would give victory to his people. That's the idea there, and that David was the father of the father of the father of the father of our Savior Jesus Christ who was born in Bethlehem. Remember, Judah gave himself to be a pledge for Benjamin pointing us ahead to David who would be a pledge for the people of Israel when he went out to fight Goliath, pointing us ahead to Jesus Christ who would be the pledge and surety for us, his people. The greater love that we see this morning is the love of Jesus Christ for his church. He came to this earth to be the pledge for his people, to save his people, his brothers from their sins. This history as it focuses on Judah, points us ahead not just to David, but to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

What's so beautiful about the history of Joseph is that part of this history of Joseph is weeping. We saw last time that Joseph wept. He wept because his brothers hadn't been changed. In this passage, we read that he weeps because he sees his youngest brother Benjamin. He's overcome by emotion when he sees his younger brother because they, of course, have not only a common father but a common mother. In the next chapter, we'll see Joseph weeps again, and there he weeps because his brothers are changed. But there's something more emotional and something more that we would weep about this morning and that's the love of Jesus Christ for us. It's one thing that Judah would stand up for Benjamin, but that Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God would take our place with all of our sin, with all of our iniquity, with all of our murder, with all of our hatred, with all of our adultery, with all of our lust, with all of our sins, that he would take our place shows the amazing love of God for us in Jesus Christ. And this is what we see and know this morning, the answer for our repentance is Jesus Christ. The guilt of your sins, the guilt of my sins that we see and know this morning, the only answer to that sin is this Savior Jesus Christ. The only answer is his love, his death in our place by which we have the victory. We're not left in our grief and sorrow this morning. Have we been changed? Yes, by the grace of God we have been changed. Jesus Christ is the one who works that change in us by his Spirit. But it all goes back to the cross, the payment that has been made, and because payment has been made he works in us to change us and to save us.

Have we been changed? Well, that question indicates we need a change, we're sinners, and an important part of that is, "Yep, my punishment has been paid in full. My guilt is taken away by the death of Jesus Christ and now he has worked this change in me and in us." May we praise him for the powerful work that we see not only in Judah and his brothers but for the work accomplished in us. Amen.

Let us pray.

*Father in heaven, what amazing things we've seen today, change that took place where change wasn't expected, where it seemed impossible. So also we have the confidence that such change can take place in our hearts and in our lives. We pray for that, Father, true change, true repentance, godly sorrow for sin, a radical turning so that we're not walking in the sins of past but continuing in the way of obedience. Father, use this word to humble our hearts, but also may we praise thee for where we see this change taking place in us, and we glorify and honor thee. All this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Introduction

- I. Joseph wanted to know about his brothers, "Have you been changed?"
- II. The context of this change being seen is Jacob sent his sons to Egypt for grain again.

**The Life of Joseph**  
**(9) Seeing God's Power to Change**

I. **The Continued Test**

- A. When they returned to the marketplace in Egypt to buy grain, surprisingly Joseph's steward brought the men into Joseph's house for a feast.

- B. Will the brothers abandon Benjamin when he is shown favoritism like they did to Joseph? Joseph tests them with a test that includes two things: a feast and a cup.

II. **The Amazing Repentance**

- A. We see in the lives of these brothers the amazing change (repentance) God worked. We see the two parts of true repentance: confession and turning.

- B. We learn from the text what true repentance is. Do we see this work of God's Spirit in us?

III. **The Beautiful Love**

- A. The beautiful love we see is not simply the love of Judah for his father and brothers, but the love of Christ for His people.

- B. This Jesus is the answer to the guilt of our sins for which we repent.