

# A Revealing Reconciliation

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[ 0 : 00 ] But we're going to turn now to our Bible reading for this morning, and we are in Genesis, and we're picking up the story in chapter 44. So if you have a visitor Bible, we have plenty at the back there. If you don't have a Bible with you, please do grab one.

And that's page 38, if you have one of the visitor Bibles. So Genesis 44, and we're reading through to the middle of chapter 45.

Genesis 44, beginning verse 1. Then Joseph commanded the steward of his house, fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack, and put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, with his money for the grain.

And he did, as Joseph told him. As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away with their donkeys. They had gone only a short distance from the city.

Now Joseph said to his steward, up, follow after the men, and when you overtake them, say to them, why have you repaid evil for good? Is it not from this that my Lord drinks, and by this that he practices divination?

[ 1 : 23 ] You have done evil in doing this. When he overtook them, he spoke to them these words. They said to him, why does my Lord speak such words as these?

Far be it from your servants to do such a thing. Behold, the money that we found in the mouths of our sacks we brought back to you from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal silver or gold from your Lord's house?

Whichever of your servants is found with it shall die, and we also will be my Lord's servants. He said, let it be as you say. He who is found with it shall be my servant, and the rest of you shall be innocent.

Then each man quickly lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack. And he searched, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest, and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

Then they tore their clothes, and every man loaded his donkey, and they returned to the city. When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, he was still there.

[ 2 : 28 ] They fell before him to the ground. Joseph said to them, what deed is this that you have done? Do you not know that a man like me can indeed practice divination? And Judah said, what shall we say to my Lord?

What shall we speak? Or how can we clear ourselves? God has found out the guilt of your servants. Behold, we are my Lord's servants, both we and he also in whose hand the cup has been found.

But he said, far be it from me that I should do so. Only the man in whose hand the cup was found shall be my servant. But as for you, go up in peace to your father.

Then Judah went up to him and said, oh, my Lord, please let your servant speak a word in my Lord's ears. And let not your anger burn against your servant, for you are like Pharaoh himself.

My Lord asked his servant, saying, have you a father or brother? And we said to my Lord, we have a father, an old man and a young brother, the child of his old age. His brother is dead and he alone is left of his mother's children and his father loves him.

[ 3 : 39 ] Then you said to your servants, bring him down to me that I may set my eyes on him. We said to my Lord, the boy cannot leave his father. For if he should leave his father, his father would die.

Then you said to your servants, unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall not see my face again. When we went back to your servant, my father, we told him the words of my

Lord.

And when our father said, go again, buy us a little food, we said, we cannot go down. If our youngest brother goes with us, then we will go down. For we cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.

Then your servant, my father said to us, you know that my wife bore me two sons, one left to me.

And I said, surely he has been torn to pieces and I've never seen him since.

If you take this one also from me and harm happens to him, you will bring down my gray hairs and evil to shale. Now, therefore, as soon as I come to your servant, my father, and the boy is not with us, then as his life is bound up in the boy's life, as soon as you see that the boy is not with us, he will die.

[ 4 : 49 ] And your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant, your father, with sorrow to shale. For your servant became a pledge of safety for the boy to my father, saying, if I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father all my life.

Now, therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a servant to my lord and let the boy go back with his brothers. For how can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me?

I fear to see the evil that would find my father. Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him. He cried, make everyone go out from me.

So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud so that the Egyptians heard it and the household of Pharaoh heard it.

And Joseph said to his brothers, I am Joseph. Is my father still alive? But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence.

[ 5 : 54 ] So Joseph said to his brothers, come near to me, please. And they came near and he said, I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here.

For God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine had been in the land these two years.

And there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you for a remnant on earth and to keep alive for you many survivors.

So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his house and ruler over the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, thus says your son Joseph.

God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me. Do not tarry. You shall dwell in the land of Goshen and you shall be near me. You and your children and your children's children and your flocks, your herds and all that you have.

There I will provide for you. For there are yet five years of famine to come so that you and your household and all that you have do not come to poverty. And now your eyes see and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my mouth that speaks to you.

[ 7 : 12 ] You must tell my father of all my honor in Egypt and of all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here. Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept.

And Benjamin wept upon his neck. And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them. After this, his brothers talked with him. Well, amen.

May God bless his word to us this morning. Well, do turn with me to the passage that Paul read for us there in Genesis 44 and 45.

Now, very often it is a crisis that brings the revelation that changes everything.

A great storm reveals which roofs are signed and which are not. A big test, perhaps, reveals whether you really do know as much as you think you know.

[ 8 : 17 ] And this passage reveals for us a very big test for Joseph's brothers amid a real crisis. And through it comes the revelation of what God has really been doing all along.

And the great reconciliation of Jacob's whole family to one another. And back to their proper place in God's plan as God's people.

It's what's revealed about the brothers and about God that makes this great reconciliation possible.

And reconciliation, the grace of forgiveness, the things that are so central to that reconciliation.

These are not just things that God's people needed to learn about long ago, are they? They're still things that all of us need to learn about today. And Paul says, the apostle says, these things are written for us who live in these last days.

And we'd be very conceited, wouldn't we, to think that we had nothing to learn about these things. Forgiveness, reconciliation in our own lives, in our families, in our relationships and so on.

[ 9 : 25 ] So I want to look this morning at this very revealing reconciliation and to see what we're to learn. There's three movements in the story here. First of all, there's the story of the steward's trap.

And then there's Joseph's test that he sets for the brothers. And then at the end, there's the great revelation that comes in Joseph's tears. So first of all, look at verses 1 to 13 and the steward's trap. A trap that reveals the spirit of real repentance in the brothers. And the brothers' resolute solidarity with Benjamin proves that these men have not just been convicted about their past, but they have been chastened and they really have been changed.

To use John the Baptist's words, they really are showing that they're bearing fruit in keeping with real repentance. This section charts the beginning of the last leg, really, of the brothers' journey on a long, long road to reconciliation.

They've been convicted of their sin against Joseph. We saw that in chapter 42. Their first encounter with Joseph had found them questioning themselves and their hearts really had been pierced.

[ 10 : 40 ] They said, we are guilty concerning our brother. And now comes a reckoning for his blood. And they sensed then that God was on their case. But they were still confused.

What has God done to us? They said, do you remember, on the way back in that journey, in chapter 42 and verse 28, when they found the money in their sacks. And then again, when they came down to Egypt, they were confused and bemused at God's apparent intervention because all these favors were lavished on them in Egypt.

And they were amazed at this ruler, and rather perturbed, actually, because he lavished gifts on them and hospitality on them. And his servant, remember, spoke about the God of your father. And then, do you remember, last time, he seemed to know how to sit them in exact order of age all around the table.

How could he have known? So perhaps they had begun to feel that God was showing himself on their side, after all. El Shaddai, do you remember, whose mercy and grace their father Jacob had called upon in prayer as they set off to Egypt.

But don't forget that the grace of this covenant God, the God of Abraham, it always demands response.

[ 11 : 57 ] Walk before me and be blameless that I may establish my covenant with you. That's what El Shaddai had said to Abraham back in Genesis chapter 17. The call of God's grace is always a call to obedience, the obedience of faith.

Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. It's by their fruit that you will know who are truly mine, said the Lord Jesus. El Shaddai himself in the flesh.

So, have these brothers, for all their chastening by God, from all the conviction of God's probing in their lives, had it really changed them? See, people can hear the gospel, can't they?

People can be responsive to the gospel. They can seem to be very contrite about the past, very chastened for their sin. Even now, they can seem very committed to the church. Jesus says that, doesn't he, in his parable of the sower.

They hear the word, they receive it with joy, and yet, and yet they can prove to have no real root. So they endure for a while. But either when persecution comes or hardship comes, it chokes it.

[ 13 : 06 ] Or it could be the cares and the delights of the world, says Jesus, that choke it. And they fall away. They prove to be unfruitful. So how do we know when faith is real?

How do we know if people really have been genuine in their response to the Spirit of God? Well, Jesus says real fruit endures through the testings in life, through the cares and delights of the world, through all the hardship and persecution it endures.

Because these are God's tests which produce and which prove real steadfastness in faith. That's what James says in chapter 1 of his letter.

And that's what these verses here in front of us are describing, you see. The steward's trap will reveal whether there has been real change in these brothers. Not just words of repentance, but fruit in keeping with repentance.

It's one thing, isn't it, to feel convicted, to feel sorry for your sin. But the question is, if circumstances offer you another opportunity, will you in fact just do the same thing again?

[ 14 : 17 ] And think you can get away with it? Well, here you see our circumstances made to test the brothers' hearts and to show if their attitude is simply one of remorse and regret because of all

the fallout of their sin over Joseph, or, in fact, if they are really penitent, truly changed.

So the end of chapter 43 saw them banqueting, making merry with Joseph. And fresh from the banquet, or maybe not so fresh, it seems that there was a lot of Joseph's best wine on the go. Fresh from all that banqueting and that lavish favoritism with Benjamin, which, remember, in the past had so enraged them when Joseph had such favoritism. But now, verse 3 of chapter 44, they're setting off.

But what they don't know is there's an unexploded bomb in their luggage in the form of the silver cup planted by the steward. And then we have this rapid pursuit and the sudden accusation in verse 5 of theft and all the immediate protesting innocence there in verse 7.

Very like a previous episode of Pursuit. Do you remember way back in chapter 31 when the whole of Jacob's family fled from Laban? And then there was a search just like this, wasn't there, with the same sort of tension. Look at verse 12. It's just one verse.

[15:33] But imagine the scene. Every sack being opened one by one, starting with the oldest. Reuben, it's clear. Simeon, it's clear. And all the way down. Isaac, it's clear.

Zebulun, it's clear. Only one left. We, Benji, were surely in the clear. But then, bang, the cup, verse 12, was found in Benjamin's sack.

And as Derek Kidner puts it, the sudden threat to Benjamin was a thrust to the heart. And in a moment, the brothers stood revealed. All the conditions were there, weren't there, for another betrayal.

They'd rashly promised, in verse 9, death to the culprit. And all of them as slaves. But notice how the steward so cleverly set the trap. No, he said, verse 10, only the culprit needs suffer.

He'll be a slave. The rest of you will be innocent. You'll be free to go home with your food. Now, years ago, they had not hesitated, had they, to sell their brother Joseph for silver.

[16:38] But look at verse 13. They don't hesitate here either, do they, about how totally different their action is. In unison, they tear their clothes in anguish and grief. None of them had torn their clothes over Joseph, had they?

Poor old Jacob had. And in unison, they all load their beasts and they all return to the city. You see, chastening has done a gracious work in them.

And the spirit of true repentance, and therefore the fruit of true repentance, is revealed in their complete solidarity with their brother here.

Their loyalty to him in his distress. Now, I suspect that the brothers thought Benjamin was guilty. I mean, that was the most obvious conclusion, wasn't it? He'd been the one so favored at the feast by Joseph, maybe he'd given this silver cup for Benjamin to drink out of, and he maybe drunk too much out of it, and then thought he would pinch it and take it away as a souvenir.

But you see, that's the point. They stand with him anyway. Out of concern for him, and out of concern for their father Jacob. What a real transformation in these men.

[17:52] By the way, it's interesting, isn't it, how often the Bible makes love for our brothers in the household of faith the test of true faith. Truly, I say to you, you did it to one of the least of these, my brothers, says Jesus.

You did it to me. Solidarity, loyalty to Christian brothers and sisters. That's a great test, according to Jesus, of whether your faith really is real. And whether it will stand on the day of judgment.

Read it yourself in Matthew 25. The Apostle John is just as explicit. 1 John 3, verse 14. We know we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers.

And real love, like real repentance, you see, is visible. It's tangible. It bears fruit. When put to the test, it shows itself in real brotherly loyalty.

Solidarity with your believing brothers. Especially in times of danger and suffering and great need. It's a big challenge, isn't it? The Lord often tests his people to see if they will stand in loyalty and in solidarity with those who are his.

[19:03] Even when they might look as if they're in a very dangerous situation. Or perhaps when they look as though they are in the wrong. And to associate with them may harm you.

May put you in trouble. May put you under opprobrium. Give you a bad reputation. Like associating with a Christian preacher accrues the wrongdoing.

Like the Apostle Paul. Put him in prison. And he tells us many were ashamed of his chains. In fact, nearly everyone deserted him. Everyone, he says to Timothy, in the province of Asia.

Or it could be associating with Christians in your school who go to the SU group. The Bible group. But are teased for it.

Scorned because of it. You don't have to go. You'd be much more popular if you don't associate with them. Or in your college. Or in your office. Or your lab. Or your place of work. Whatever it is.

[ 20 : 01 ] Where you're being tested publicly as to your witness. Or associating with a church fellowship or ministry. Which is under a cloud in establishment circles.

Or with believers who are facing real persecution in different parts of the world. Real hardship. Violence. Because of their loyalty to Jesus. John says, whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother.

Is still in darkness. But whoever loves his brother. Abides in the light. And in him there's no cause for stumbling. 1 John 2 verse 10.

See the steward's trap reveals the spirit of true repentance. Of genuine love and light in these brothers. What would it have revealed about you do you think?

Or me? In that situation. Well the revelations continue. And in verses 14 to 34. We see the response to Joseph's test.

[ 21 : 06 ] His test. Which reveals the spirit of the true redeemer in Judah. You see the focus in verses 14 to 34. Now it's all on Judah as the clear leader.

Verse 14. When Judah and the brothers come to Joseph's house. The next scene unfolds. And verse 15. Joseph confronts them. What is this you've done? Don't you know?

I practice divination he says. I think that might actually be a bit of a poke at Egyptian religion. Because if divination was so good. Why did they have to check all the sacks? Why didn't they just find it immediately?

Why does Joseph have to ask all these questions now? But at any rate. Judah verse 16 speaks for them all. And he protests their innocence. But. He acknowledges that they can't possibly clear themselves.

Given the evidence. And then he says something very significant. Do you notice this? He confesses that they are nevertheless guilty men. God. He says in verse 16. Has found out our guilt.

[ 22 : 05 ] He means our real guilt. If you're the Egyptians listening. Just thought he meant the theft. But Joseph knew. Didn't he? Joseph knew. He was referring to something far deeper. To all their guilt.

All their former lives. And above all. Their great guilt. And their sin against him. And Judah seems truly penitent. Here. We shall all.

Have to become your slaves. He says. But notice verse 17. How Joseph twists the knife. See once again. He puts liberty before them. Doesn't he? At the cost of losing Benjamin.

Their beloved brother. And the beloved son of Jacob. Do that. He says. And you can go up in peace. To your father. And you see the juxtaposition of those words.

Peace. And your father. Just crystallizes the tragic dilemma. Because Judah knows. And Joseph certainly knows. That there could never possibly be peace. For his father.

[ 23 : 00 ] Without Benjamin. If Benjamin's lost. There will only be desperate pain. Desperate sorrow. Probably. He says. Later. Untimely death. For his father. The old man. And a permanent destruction of peace.

For that whole family. Forever. Forever. So what will the brothers do? What will Judah do? Well in verse 18. You see. Judah approaches Joseph.

And he delivers. This extraordinary oration. That we read. It's the longest speech. By the way. In the whole of the book of Genesis. And what a revelation it is. It's full of pathos.

Isn't it? Full of emotion. Notice the repeated references. To father. Your father. My father. Fourteen times. The old man. Verse 20.

Verse 22. At risk of despair. Of death. And all the references. To Benjamin. The younger brother. The youngest brother. The only surviving son. He says. Of Jacob's wife.

[ 24 : 00 ] And then these references. To Joseph. Being torn to pieces. And never seen again. It's an extraordinary. Passionate speech. About what a revelation. It gives. About the heart.

Of this man. Judah. This brother. Who now. Offers himself. Do you notice. As a substitute. As a sacrifice. So that Benjamin. Might go free. So that his father's heart.

Will not be broken. What a transformation. In this man. Judah. Remember his callousness. Back in chapter 37. He wasn't the one. He was the one. Not willing to just lose.

Joseph. Sell him off to. To death. In Egypt. But to make money. Out of it. Then think about his life. In chapter 38. All his. All his. Corruption.

All his descent. Into complete paganism. And yet. Through. The chastening. Through the conviction. Of God's patient mercy. His. His painful mercy.

[ 24 : 57 ] Through his. Own personal failures. And now through this. This whole famines. Family's famine. And crisis. Through all of that. God. He's been changed.

And he's revealed now. Isn't he? As a man of great compassion. A man of real courage. A man of real. Deep character. No doubt.

The Egyptians. Listening to the speech. They would have. Seen it as an admirable speech. A noble speech. On behalf of a brother. But to Joseph. You see. And to us. Who know. What's really going on. It is a revelation.

Of total transformation. What's brought all this change? Well. It's simply that. That the grace. Of the covenant God.

The great redeemer. Of his people. Has touched this man's life. Has changed him. And the wonderful heart. Of the redeemer. Has touched his heart. The spirit of the Lord himself.

[ 25 : 53 ] Was forging his own image. In Judah's heart. That's why Judah was able. To humble himself. Before God's sovereignty.

You can see in verse 27. Actually. What an evidence. There is of submission. Because he's. Accepting Jacob's. Own attitude. Isn't he? That.

Only Rachel's two sons. Were the real heirs. And none of the rest of them were. Now Jacob was wrong about that. And it caused a lot of pain. Didn't it?

And yet. Do you see how Judah's. Accepting it here. He's able to seek his father's good. He's able to. Serve him lovingly. Anyway. Even. Even.

Even at the point of his own life. Being forfeit. See he's learned. The great secret. Of all spiritual life. And that's. Not to allow other people's sins.

[ 26 : 49 ] To make our own hearts. Embitter towards God. God. But rather to allow God's sovereignty. To make our hearts bow. Before him. And his sovereignty.

The one whose ways are perfect. Even when. So often his people's ways. Are far from perfect. It was that spirit. That enabled Judah. To submit himself here.

To the will of his father. To sacrifice himself. Out of real love for his father. And for his brothers. Even when it seemed so hard.

So painful. So perplexing. Even when there was. Such great loss to him. And look at verses. 32 and 33. That language. As somebody has put it. Has a strange familiarity.

For us. Who live in the New Testament age. And that's because of course. You see. It is a foreshadowing. Isn't it? Of the great sacrifice. Of the great substitution.

[ 27 : 46 ] The true fulfillment. The complete expression of that. In the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus. The great son of Judah.

Who gave himself for his brothers. Out of love for his father. On the cross. At Calvary. To save us from our sins. You see.

The Bible teaches us that. At the very heart of the experience of salvation. It's not just. That his people are saved. By our Redeemer's life. And death.

But that we are called to share in his life. That we are called to be united to him forever. To become like him. Paul says.

All whom he foreknew. He also predestined to be conformed. To the image. Of his son. That he might be the firstborn. Among many brothers. Like him.

[ 28 : 40 ] That's what we see. You see. In a most striking and particular way. Here in Judah. He is revealed. Isn't he? As the. As the true servant leader.

As the. As the priestly intercessor. For his brothers. Who gives his own life. For his father's sake. To save his brethren. Another. Extraordinary revealing test.

And it reveals for us. The spirit of the Redeemer. Lord himself. Truly shaping this man. Into his image. And yet it's not just history.

Is it? Because. Just as this family of faith. Couldn't fulfill their destiny. As God's chosen agents of blessing. Without being forged. By God's grace. To be like him. On that anvil of testing.

And discipline. Well just so today. God's people are tested. And proved. For the work that God gives us to do. Because we too.

[ 29 : 37 ] Need to be like him. If we're to bring the spirit. Of the Redeemer. To the people of this world. That spirit must inhabit us. There was a very great deal.

Of painful humbling. Wasn't there? To bring Judah. To this great. Zenith. Of his life's purpose. And God also.

Will spare us no sorrow. In making us. What he wants us to be. And wasn't it. Wonderfully worth it here. Because. It was Judah's actions.

You see. That finally opened the way. To full reconciliation. For this family. And that's what's displayed. At last. In. In chapter 45. Verses 1 to 15.

And displayed most. Wonderfully. With Joseph's tears. Tears. That reveal. The spirit. Of the great reconciler. In Joseph. See.

[ 30 : 33 ] These verses. Give us a wonderful revelation. Of Joseph's extraordinary grace. But even more importantly. They reveal to us. Joseph's extraordinary God. Joseph's grace.

Is visible. And audible. In his tears. Apparently. The Egyptians. Didn't approve. Of. Lavish displays. Of emotion. They valued. A cool.

Controlled spirit. Says one scholar. So. Perhaps. They were a bit like us. Brits. You know. They valued. The stiff upper lip. And maybe. That's. That's often. What people think.

Of God. That he's somehow. Cool. And distant. And free. Of emotion. But that is not. How the Bible. Portrays. Our God.

The true God. Nor is it. How the Bible. Portrays. Those who are most like. Our God. In heart. Joseph's passion. Here. Is absolutely. Nothing. To be ashamed of.

[ 31 : 25 ] He wasn't ashamed of it. He didn't clear. The Egyptians. Out. So that they wouldn't hear. Him. Weeping. We're told. They did hear him. Even heard it. As far away. As Pharaoh's palace. But he put them out.

So that. He wouldn't expose. His brother's sins. In front of them. John Calvin. The great reformer. Certainly not a softy. But he says. It is a heroic.

Virtue. To be touched. With compassion. And he says. That Joseph's. Softness. His tenderness. Here is a wonderful thing. And indeed it is. Because it reflects.

The reconciling love. Of God himself. Do you see. He's the one. Who shows love. To the loveless. He's the one. Who does so. To make them lovely.

He's the God. Who reconciled. Those who were still enemies. Through the death. Of his son. But look at verse 3.

[ 32 : 23 ] Joseph's brothers. Are utterly terrified. They're dismayed. At his presence. Oh no wonder. Here they are. Utterly in his power. All their guilt. Is completely exposed.

Before him. And yet. Aren't his words of grace. So staggering. In verse 4. I am your brother. Joseph. Whom you sold. Into Egypt. And now.

Verse 5. Do not be distressed. Or angry. With yourselves. His real love. You see. Real reconciling love. Must be tender love.

As well as tough love. Joseph. It had to be tough. Hadn't he? We've seen that. To break open. The hardness of these men. To humble these men. To humble their pride. In fact. It was God. Who was doing all of this.

But Joseph. Had to be part of it. But see how tender. He is here. To bring healing. To bring forgiveness. To these brothers. John Calvin.

[ 33 : 19 ] Has a. A beautiful word here. He says. By this example. We are taught. To take heed. Lest sadness. Should overwhelm. Those who are truly. And seriously humbled.

Under a sense of shame. That's the grace. Of the great reconciler's spirit. Isn't it? We'll sing at the end. Bernard of Clairvaux's.

Lovely hymn. Oh hope. Of every contrite heart. Oh joy. Of all the meek. To those who fall. How kind. How kind thou art.

How good. To those who seek. William still. Puts it very characteristically here. He says. This should not be forgotten.

By very righteous folk. Who ruthlessly. Drive sinners to their knees. What do you do when you get them there? And they turn out to be more repentant. Than you bargained for.

[ 34 : 16 ] And appeal to your mercy. Are you. As merciful. As you are righteous. If not. Your righteousness.

Is self-righteousness. A vile thing. As far removed. From the grace. And truth. Of Christ's righteousness. As heaven. Is from hell. See.

Joseph's tears. Revealed the tender mercy. Of the great reconciler. Of his fruitful grace. Now. Now rooted. In his life. Through the many trials.

The tribulations. In his life. He too. Had. Had come to terms. With God's sovereign grace. Hadn't he? And that. Is what made this reconciliation. Possible. The great reconciliation.

That we see displayed there. Verses 13 to 15. With Jacob. Jacob. His father. To be sent for. And the true peace. And intimacy.

[ 35 : 13 ] Of the brothers. Restored here. They're weeping. They're kissing. They're talking together. That's an intimacy. They never had before. Even before Joseph. Was sent away to Egypt. Yes.

This was Joseph's. Gracious doing. After all. He had hoped for. Since his brothers. First came. To Egypt. And yes. It was. It was. It was. Judah's. Courageous action.

That at last. Opened the way. To that great reconciliation. But Joseph. Knew more than that. Didn't he? He knew. It was all. God's doing. And he's determined. Do you see? In this moment of revelation.

He is determined. That the wonderful revelation. Of God's. Supreme. And sovereign workings. Won't be eclipsed. Won't be set aside here. And forgotten. And so he points his brothers. With all their confusion. And all their fear. And all their consternation. And relief. He points them to God. God. And in fact. The real heart. Of this whole story. Lies in the revelation.

[ 36 : 10 ] In verses 5 to 9. About Joseph's extraordinary God. Look. He's speaking about his sovereign. Providential control.

Isn't he? Over even man's worst evil. To work glorious good. For those that he loves. We'll come to it again. In chapter 50.

Verse 20. The famous verse. But just look at. Three things here. In verses 5 to 9. That he emphasizes. About God's amazing. Sovereign control. Not only over their. Little family life. But over all the events.

Of world history. The rise and fall. Even of nations. First in verse 5. He speaks about. God's mighty. Sovereign power. Joseph.

Doesn't deny. That the brothers. Really are responsible. For their sin. Yes. You sold me here. But what he says. Is that. What they meant for evil. God meant for good.

[ 37 : 04 ] God sent me before you. He says. What a wonderful thing. Isn't it? That even. Even God's people's. Worst mistakes. And sins.

Cannot. Cannot. Upset. God's plans for good. His power is invincible. And then verse 70. Speaks about.

God's marvelously. Steadfast purpose. To keep alive. His remnant. His people. To save them. No matter how. In battle.

God's people. God's church. Might seem to be. No matter. How much opposition. There is from without. How much sin. Even from within. God's purpose. For his people. Is absolutely. Sure. Utterly certain.

It cannot. Fail. I will. I will. I will. Build my church. Said the Lord Jesus. And not even the gates of hell. Will prevail. Against it. He has a marvelously.

[ 37 : 58 ] Steadfast. Purpose. And then all through these verses. You see. He's speaking. Isn't he. About God's. Mysterious. Saving pattern.

God sent me. He says. To preserve life. To save many. Me. Verse 9. Who God has now made. The Lord of all Egypt. The world emperor.

The pattern. Of a deliverer.

Who's despised. And rejected. And suffers. And yet is exalted. To glory. In order to bring. Many brothers to glory also. See God's. Pattern. Is to bring reconciliation. It's to bring salvation. To many.

[ 38 : 53 ] Through lives. That are shaped. By the pattern. Of his son. And that's what we see here. But an extraordinary. Revealing.

Reconciliation. It is. Above all. Revealing. The power. And the purpose. And the pattern. Of our extraordinary God. The true God. As he brings.

Reconciliation. To his people. In order. That through them. He may bring. Reconciliation. To the whole world. What a comfort.

It was to Joseph. To have come to rest. In the knowledge. Of God's sovereignty. Over his own life. Over his family's life. In fact. Over all life. And what a mighty.

Source of peace. And security. And comfort. It is to us. When we can come. To that knowledge. Also. Isn't it? Because the power. And the purpose.

[ 39 : 48 ] And the pattern. Of our great reconciling God. It hasn't changed. God is still at work. The same way. Always. Always for good. Through all the changing scenes in life.

In trouble. And in joy. And even in the most tangled. Even in the most. Apparently tragic. Complexities. That are wrought in our lives.

By our own mistakes. Our own folly. Our own sin. And rebellion. He's at work. To reveal himself to us. To reveal. Himself in us.

And to reveal him through us. To others. As he works in us. A spirit of real repentance. And as he shapes us.

By the spirit. Of the true redeemer. And as he makes us at one. With him. The great reconciler. And that's his purpose.

[ 40 : 48 ] And to that end. His power is at work in us. Conforming us. Just like. Judah and Joseph. Conforming us. To the pattern of his son. The Lord Jesus. So that we might bring that. Reconciling grace to others.

Doesn't that encourage us? Especially when life is. Mysterious and hard. We may feel very often. I'm sure that. The church is a pretty. Unimpressive. Family really. This family was pretty bad. And yet God was at work.

Forging loyalty. Brotherly love. Bringing about real confession. Of sin. Bringing about real. Self-sacrifice. Submission. To see others as more important.

Than self. Bringing compassion. Real tenderness. Real forgiveness. Real reconciliation. Even. Even in the face of the most.

[ 41 : 48 ] Grievous. And great sin. Well as one scholar says. A dysfunctional family. That allows these graces.

To embrace it. Will become a light to the world. Will become a light to the world. So may we be people who.

Who reveal to the world. A great. Reconciling God. Let's pray. Heavenly Father. We thank you. For your heart. Of tender.

Mercy. Compassion. And great love. That so loved us. That you sent your only begotten son.

That whoever believes in him would not perish. But know. The everlasting life. Which you made us for. And which now you have redeemed us for.

[ 42 : 50 ] How we thank you. That you are. The great reconciling God. And so we ask. That the spirit of the great redeemer. The great reconciler. Who will be seen in us.

And heard in us. And be real. In our hearts. And we ask it for his sake. Amen.