

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Afternoon

Date 1st October 2023

Preacher Rev Philip Knowles

Hymns Ps 27:1-8 T Kilmarnock, Hymn 199 292.

Read: Genesis 42:14-24, Text Genesis 42:14-24

Series: Joseph Title: The Conscience Stirred by Proving and Patterns (3)

In our studies in the life of Joseph, 20 or 21 years have passed between **Chapter 37:29 to Chapter 42**, when Joseph last seen his brothers.

On that occasion Joseph's brethren conspired against him, planning his death.

They persecuted him, by slander and cruel mocking's. Joseph suffered and sorrowed, at the hands of his brethren. He was thrown into pit.

Ruben's conscience was guilty, and he knew they shouldn't kill Joseph, so they changed their plan, and betrayed and sold Joseph as slave to Midian businessmen going down to Egypt.

The brothers then took Joseph's coat of colours which was given to him by his father and having killed an animal, they dipped the coat in the animal's blood giving their Father the impression Joseph had been killed by wild beast.

Upon seeing their deceptive plans and lies passed without opposition, it seemed the brethren had gotten away with their sin against Joseph.

It appeared their lies and deceptive plans had worked and was accepted as the outcome.

The brothers had ignored and silenced their own guilty conscience. Hoping the truth would never be known.

However, God has promised that whatsoever a man sows that shall he reap, but the reaping will always be in God's time, in this case over 20 years.

God begins to work, dealing with these men to uncover their hidden sin.

He does this by stirring, awakening their conscience, by providence sending a famine, also by using people, such as their Father's words, his protection of Benjamin and later Joseph himself.

All these together started working on their hearts until they finally confess their guilt in **verses 18-24**.

Leading up to their confession, God will continue to work in their lives exposing their sin, by Joseph probing, examining, asking questions to get answers.

Joseph's actions are upright and full of grace. He lived to honour God, therefore, he could not bless them while they regard iniquity in their against Joseph.

Never forget this occurs during the years of famine, when death will be their end unless they receive provision.

For that reason, Joseph's words are words of life, notice, **verse 18 *And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God***: Obey my command and live.

This scene before us leads to the ministry of Christ when He by the Holy Spirit visits sinners facing eternal ruin as punishment for their own, and convinces them of their sin as the word of life is preached unto them, and then in compassion He has mercy upon them, saving them, giving eternal death, and blesses them with all spiritual blessings.

*We have considered their conscience stirred by **providence, people, probing** but notice also today,*

4 their conscience as stirred by Proving

Verses 14-15 *And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies: ¹⁵ Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither.*

The word **proved** means **to test**. The test now involves the younger brother, who we know from scripture to be Benjamin.

It effects family life. It goes deep into the home. It's to examine and expose if their hearts are still bitter and uncaring.

In fact more details of the conversation between Joseph and his brethren are recorded **in Genesis 43** when the brethren said to their father, in **verse 7** *The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down?*

you see whenever the brethren said in **Genesis 42:13** *“Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not.”*

Joseph knew the brother they claim to be dead, is actually alive then what is he to think when they speak about the younger brother who to Joseph from 21 years ago is Benjamin.

Joseph must continue until answers are given.

Off course we know the answers, but to Joseph was Benjamin still alive? Or is this another a lie?

Is Benjamin even the youngest brother as there is no mention of his name?

If the youngest brother is still Benjamin, was he being persecuted as Joseph was, since Benjamin and Joseph shared the same mother who was Rachel.

Joseph will test his brethren and see they are true men. To test their loyalty Joseph puts them in prison and allows one to leave.

Verses 16-17 *send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies.¹⁷ And he put them all together into ward three days.*

That is for three days 9 brothers will remain in prison and one will go home to return again with the youngest brother we know to be Benjamin.

However, After the three days, Joseph does something remarkable, he reverses the order, instead of nine brothers staying in prison, he said nine of the brothers could return home while one stayed behind in prison until the others returned to Egypt with Benjamin, **verse 19** *If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses:*

Simeon was chosen by Joseph, he singles him out, **verse 24** Joseph *bound him before their eyes*".

Here is the point!

It is interesting to note in proving or testing these men, Joseph didn't lower the standard or requirement to prove they are honest men.

He didn't change the terms, his demands and requirements remained, *except your youngest brother come hither.*

Joseph commanded by His word, therefore, Joseph as governor of the land, demanded full obedience to His command, in order that they live, otherwise they would die, *bring your youngest*

brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die...” Joseph sets before his brethren the path or life and death and he is commanding them to chose life, bring the youngest brother.

By obeying or fulfilling Joseph’s command would the prisoners be set free, sparing their life.

when the brothers return home we learn in **chapter 43** Judah does the speaking, and he sacrificially, pledges, submits himself to be a surety for Benjamin meaning, he will take full responsibility for another and guarantee their safety, which in this case was Benjamin, and should he fail, **v9** states, **he will bear the blame forever.**

Judah essentially guarantees the safety and security of Benjamin and his return to the father’s house.

What a picture we have in the gospel. Believer you were set free from the prison house of bondage, because the requirement demanded by God was not lowered, or set rather it was upheld.

God will only save sinners by His demands being met.

For that reason, there was one chosen to take the place of another, yeah of many, and become their surety their substitute to obey God’s command.

This requirement was fulfilled by Christ, He became our surety, He came to take responsibility for our sin to save us, **Hebrews 7:22** **By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.**” Christ by His sinless life pledge, to submit Himself to sacrificially be the Surety of the sinners, guaranteeing all who given to Him will be brought to glory.

Through His obedience unto death even the death of the cross, He has secured the arrival of many sons to glory.

The point is this, believer and sinner, eternal life is based on Christ doing what God said.

Every soul by sin oppressed, these are words of life to you, obey the gospel, ***This do, and live;*** confess your sin to God alone, ***This do, and live.***

Life is offered to you Hallelujah, chose life, enjoy everlasting life by believing on the Son of God, ***This do, and live.***

Oh believer, our souls rejoice, for that day we looked to Christ and stated to live, Christ lives within us, the Holy Spirit dwells within us, we are a new creation in Christ.

The brother's conscience was stirred by providence, people, probing, proving ***notice finally***

5 their conscience as stirred by Patterns **v21-22**

It's interesting to note that Joseph patterns all that took place 21 years previous at Dothan in Genesis 37.

Though the brethren acted in jealousy and hated, yet Joseph will act by pattern in what he experienced in his sufferings, and sorrows but without hatred.

Genesis 37:4 ***They hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him,*** notice Joseph in **Genesis 42:7** ***spake roughly unto them.***

Just as the brothers spoke of Joseph as dreamer in **Genesis 37**, so Joseph speaks of his brothers as spies, in **Genesis 42**.

Just as the brothers throw Joseph into the pit at Dothan, so Joseph cast the brethren into prison in Egypt.

Just as the first plans were to slay Joseph, but after a while, they changed their plans and sold Joseph into slavery instead of slaying him.

So after three days, Joseph, instead of keeping nine in prison and sending one to Canaan, he will keep just one in prison and send nine back to Canaan.

As the brothers remained silent to Joseph pleas in the pit so Joseph remained silent to their pleas.

Just as the brethren singled out Joseph, so Joseph singles out Simeon.

It seems Simeon was experienced in making and seeing through murderous plans, as in Genesis 34 by the shameful slaughter at Shechem. He may have been the ring leader to slay Joseph until Reuben intervened and Judah sold him.

The pattern of the events that took place was to bring conviction and confession of sin.

Joseph is laying the pattern of his sufferings and sorrows.

Joseph put them in their proper place, the place of shame so that they might know their guilt and acknowledge their guilt and sin.

And this is what exactly took place, notice, **verses 21-22**

In prison, the brothers begin ***said one to another, We are verily 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. ²² And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required.***

By Joseph's words and how he dealt with them, and by giving them a sight of his sufferings. Genesis ch 50 shows God sent Joseph before the brethren to save them.

the brothers' guilt was exposed, their conscience awakened and stirred, because they thought of Joseph.

They remembered their sin, and treated of him, they understood they deserved the punishment of their sin. They remembered their hated caused his sufferings.

This is how the Lord deals with sinners He has purposed to save and bless with gospel benefits, He gives us a sight of Christ's sufferings due to our sin.

He impresses upon the soul, we despised Him, we saw no beauty in Him, we did not desire Him, we caused his sorrows, and shame, and it was our sin that nailed Him to the rugged tree.

He wounds before He binds up. He slays before He makes alive, He pierces before He heals.

He brings sinners to the point where they understand they have sinned against Him.

Convicted sinners will see themselves as deserving of hell.

For this reason, Christ will never save a sinner until they are at the place they know they need saving.

That is how he dealt with us believer and how he deals with you now sinner.

You will not go to the doctor for tests unless you are concerned, like the woman in the gospels with the issue of blood.

So, sinners will not come to Christ for pardon until they know they have sins to be pardoned.

Think of the repenting thief in **Luke 23:41**, he said to his fellow man also a thief, "...**we are in the same condemnation, and we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds.**"

One thief seen himself a sinner, and justly condemned, only then was the man gloriously saved from sin and entered paradise immediate when he died.

The other thief on the cross, refused to see himself a sinner and in need of Christ, therefore he entered hell.

Believer, bless the Lord, for His mercy toward us in Christ, that He saved us from sin's penalty and punishment.

When we understood, coming to Christ, its not a get out clause, a weekend thing, something to new to try, or get by, if that's the case you have many things but not Christ.

But where the gospel seed has been sown on good ground, it grows, it bears spiritual fruit, the signs of life, give the evidence of spiritual life.

Joseph heard their confession, but did it bear the fruits of genuine repentance, or was this merely a prison-house repentance?

If they got out of their distress would they return to their former ways? The way to see this would be seen in how they dealt with Benjamin, coming the way Joseph required.

All who come and seek God way for forgiveness through Christ will find forgiveness of sins.