



## The Sermon

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Genesis 44:1-17

November 13, 2022

"An Awakened Conscience"

TRANSCRIPT

And so if you have your Bible, I would urge you to join with me in turning to Genesis chapter 44. Today, Lord willing, we're going to look at the first 17 verses. And the title of this message is "An Awakened Conscience. An Awakened Conscience. And I want to begin by reading in verse 1, and then we'll read through the rest of the passage.

The Word of God reads, "Then he commanded his house steward," - this would be Joseph commanding his house steward - "saying, '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. Put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his money for the grain.' And he did as Joseph had told him. As soon as it was light, the men were sent away, they with their donkeys. They had just gone out of the city, and were not far off, when Joseph said to his house steward, 'Up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, "Why have you repaid evil for good? Is not this the one from which my lord drinks and which he indeed uses for divination? You have done wrong in doing this.'"

"So he overtook them and spoke these words to them. 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 which we found in the mouth of our sacks we have brought back to you from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves.'"

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So he said, 'Now let it also be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and the rest of you shall be innocent.' Then they hurried, each man lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack. He searched, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest, and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then they tore their clothes, and when each man loaded his donkey, they returned to the city.

"When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, he was still there, and they fell to the ground before him. Joseph said to them, 'What is this deed that you have done? Do you not know that such a man as I can indeed practice divination?' So Judah said, 'What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? And how can we justify ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; behold, we are my lord's slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup has been found.' But he said, 'Far be it from me to do this. The man in whose possession the cup has been found, he shall be my slave; but as for you, go up in peace to your father.'"

This is the reading of God's Word and the passage to which we will devote ourselves to today. Let's go to the Lord in prayer

[Prayer] Father, thank You for the infallible record of Your Word written so long ago; and yet it's living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and speaks directly to every heart here today. We give You praise that we have the written record of Your Word. And so I pray that You will now assist us as we consider what it teaches, what it requires. I pray that You'd bless us this day. All blessing is in Your hands to give or to withhold. And we ask that You would deal mercifully with us today, that You would open Your hand and lavish Your blessing upon us; and that would begin with understanding this text and what You require of us. So Lord, bless now this time, as we look into Your Word. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

The title is "An Awakened Conscience." So what is a conscience? What is your conscience; because everyone who has made in the image of God was born with a conscience. You don't have to be a Christian to have a conscience. Every person in the human race has a conscience, and it's an innate sense of right and wrong, it's like a moral compass on the inside of us. And when we do right, our conscience affirms that we have done right,

and it brings peace to the heart. But when we violate our conscience, when we do what is wrong, we forfeit peace. In fact, we forfeit joy. We forfeit the power of the Holy Spirit. We forfeit our testimony when we violate our conscience.

It's very important that we allow our conscience to testify to us in our heart. Our heart is like a courtroom, and the Holy Spirit puts us on the witness stand and examines us. And when we do what is right, He brings validation to our life, and there is an internal sense that I am pleasing God. But when I fail to do what is right, our conscience accuses us. And our conscience, it's like a smoke alarm, that in the middle of the night suddenly that smoke alarm goes off and you wake up. And it may well be that there is a fire that has broken out, and you need to get out of bed and address this problem immediately or there will be serious consequences for your life. When your conscience goes off inside of you that, "I have done what I should not have done," it should awaken you to deal with this to make the matter right.

When we fail to do what is right, the result is guilt. And guilt is a good thing, because guilt lets us know that something needs to be addressed in my life. Guilt is your friend in that it tells you you've got to immediately stop and make right whatever it is that your conscience is putting its finger on a live nerve in your life. Your conscience is not infallible, the Word of God is infallible; but as you grow to know the Bible better, your conscience is being sharpened. And as you pursue the Word of God with obedience, your conscience is being strengthened and is being made even more sensitive to right and wrong. I will occasionally have someone come up to me and ask for my forgiveness about something I'm not even aware of that they did anything. But their conscience is so sensitive, because they've been sitting under the Word of God that they have to immediately make the matter right.

On the other hand, if you're not in the Word of God, your conscience can easily become dull and insensitive. And if you go down a path of disobedience, the longer you go down this path of disobedience, the more your conscience is becoming desensitized and is becoming numb, and you don't feel what you once felt when you first began to go down this path. So your conscience is a very important thing in your life, especially for us as Christians who know the Word of God and we desire to please God.

The apostle Paul testified in Acts 23:1, "I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience." And while he is being attacked by people in the world, all that really matters is, "Is my conscience clear? Is my conscience clean before God regardless of what others may accuse me of; because I couldn't live with myself if I did not have a clear and clean conscience." Paul said in Acts 24:16, "I do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience." Paul strives to keep his conscience clean. And in Romans 2:15, Paul writes, "They show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience being witness and their thoughts" – now listen to this – "alternately accusing or else defending them."

As you live your Christian life, your conscience – which again is like this inner voice of right and wrong – it's either, according to Paul, accusing you, or it is defending you. And that's why it's so important that your conscience is clean and clear. In Romans 13:5, Paul writes, "It is necessary to be in subjection," – referring to the emperor – "for conscience' sake." So your conscience is a very important part of your inner soul, your innermost being. And you and I need to live our Christian lives so that our conscience is continually defending us in the courtroom within our soul.

Joseph's brothers in this passage committed a horrible sin 22 years ago against Joseph. They were filled with jealousy towards him. They conspired a plan to do away with him. They put him in a pit. They sold him to slave traders, never to see him again, "Just get him out of our lives." And then they lied to their father through their teeth to give him the impression that some wild animal had just devoured him. And they lived with that for over two decades. And the only way that they could live with themselves is to suppress it and to bury it. And when you do that, your conscience becomes seared as with a hot iron, the Bible says, where it's just like there's a – the result is you don't feel what you once felt, that your soul becomes numb toward what it once was very sensitive towards.

Well, they have, for over two decades, they have buried this smoke alarm that would be going off inside of them telling them, "You've done wrong. You've done wrong. You've done wrong." And they buried this for so long, but it never goes away. And in this passage, God in His mercy awakens their conscience so that they can deal with this; and what has been buried for years is now resurrected and brought before their eyes.

This should speak very directly to our Christian lives. This isn't just Joseph and his brothers so long ago, because you and I have a conscience as well. And there's not a person in this room who's without sin. Every single one of us have sinned, and we have either repented of that sin, and confessed that sin, and gotten back on the right track, or we have failed to deal with it and we have lived in denial of it, and we have buried it, and we have thought it has long since been gone; but it has an effect on our Christian life. And there are times as God orchestrates the circumstances of our lives in which it is brought back to the forefront something that maybe even happened 22 years ago in your life, or in my life, so that your conscience will be clear and clean before God. What I desire for you today is for you to give thought to your conscience and how sensitive your conscience is to doing what is right and how sensitive it is when you do wrong that it would be like a foghorn going off inside of you, "I must deal with this."

So let's walk through this passage. And I must tell you, this is somewhat, at least for me, of a complicated little narrative. I've had to rewrite my notes a couple times. And there's so many hes and they and them you kind of have to pay attention to keep your eye on the ball as we walk through this passage, and I'll try to help us with this. But just remember, this is all about your conscience.

So the first thing I want you to note in the first five verses is "the strategy." There is a strategy here that Joseph puts in place. It is a plan to test these brothers to see, "Do they really love Benjamin? Do they really have a love for their family? Or are they just still self-absorbed and self-centered and self-focused, or do they love their brother?"

So beginning in verse 1, "Then" - which just indicates immediately after dinner in Joseph's house; we looked at that last Lord's Day - "he" - Joseph - "commanded his house steward" - he's the chief of staff in the palace - "saying," - now here's the strategy, here's the plan - 'Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as you can carry,' - and this is just how generous Joseph was with his brothers, though they do not know that this is Joseph - 'and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack.' - In other words, give them their money back; this is my expression of love for them, they may have this grain without cost. Now verse 2, the plan unfolds - 'Put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest' - that would be Benjamin - 'and the money for the grain.'"

Now this cup is a silver goblet. This cup is extremely valuable, one, because it belongs to the Prime Minister who is Joseph; two, because it is this precious metal of silver, and it is the cup from which Joseph drinks in his formal meals, meals of state with dignitaries who come in. In today's terms this would almost be a part of the crown jewels of the monarch of England. Very valuable silver cup. "Put it, hide it into Benjamin's sack," unknown to Benjamin. It's a plant. It's a setup that none of the brothers know about.

And so in verse 2, "And he" - the house steward - "did as Joseph had told him." Verse 3, "And as soon as it was light," - meaning at sunrise, daybreak, early morning - "as soon as it was light, they were sent away." They were sent away by Joseph himself, because he wants them to get out of town so that this plan can unfold rather quickly. "The men were sent away, they with their donkeys." And so they start this journey back to the north to Canaan where their father Jacob is, who's in the middle of the famine. They have their grain. They have their corn. And it's 250 miles; it will take them three weeks to return to Canaan. So they start off on this journey.

And verse 4 says, "They had just gone out of the city," - they're barely out of town - "and we're not far off, when Joseph said to his house steward, 'Up, on your feet, arise. Let's implement the plan now. Up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them. So you are to pursue them as fast as you can, you are to overtake them, and you are to halt them and stop them and address them and speak to them, "Why have you repaid evil for good?" You were to charge them and accuse them of doing evil.'" They don't even know what this is about. "Why have you committed this great evil against the Prime Minister?" is what the house steward says to them.

Verse 5, "Is not this the one from whom my lord drinks? You have the silver goblet, not just a silver goblet that everyone else would drink from. No, you have the silver goblet. Why have you done this and which he indeed uses for divination?" Now I don't believe we are to assume that Joseph practiced Egyptian divination. It's a part of the scheme, it's a part of the test. And here's what would happen in this day and time.

There were many gods in Egypt, as I told you last week, and they believe that these different gods (the moon god, the sun god, the river god, the locust god, et cetera) would communicate their will to the Egyptians in various ways. And one way would be to take a cup and pour water into it and then pour oil into it, and the oil and the water cannot mix, and so there begins to be a movement inside the cup of the oil seeking a path of less resistance, and so it was believed that you could read or discern God's will for your life and the movement you need to take by looking at the movement of the oil with the water. Divination.

And so the house steward says, "How could you have taken his silver goblet? It's the one that he uses for practicing divination." Now what is happening here, Joseph was not practicing divination, but what's happening here is they are planting the seed in the mind of these brothers that Joseph can detect and discern the secrets of men's hearts, that "Joseph with this cup of divination can read you like an open book, and he can see into you, he can see through you. He can see the secret sins of your life."

Now this is all intentional, because they have been suppressing and suppressing this sin that they committed 22 years earlier. And right now through this, their conscience is being plowed up, and the soil that has been packed down by their continued disobedience is now being tilled and broken up for what's about to follow. "So this is what you're to say to them," - Joseph says to this house steward, at the end of verse 5 - 'You've done wrong in doing this.' - he charges them with being thieves - 'You have committed a sin of high treason against the Prime Minister, and you're accountable for this.'"

Now this is all just a scheme. Benjamin has not stolen the silver cup, but it is a way for Joseph to have their heart to be pried open to get the unconfessed, unrepented of sin to come to the surface that's been buried for all these years. They've never yet been caught. They assume they just have a free pass to glory. They'll never have to answer for those sins; it's been 22 years. And so that's the test.

And there are times in our Christian lives when God puts us to the test to see where our heart is, something God puts before our eyes, something God puts into our hands, something that is dangled in front of us. How will we

respond? Where is our heart? James 1:2 says, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance."

It's like a pop quiz in school. You remember those pop quizzes in school? I hated those. I remember when I was in seminary one day in Greek class, I had not done my homework. And the professor came walking in and he said, "Everyone take out some paper, we're going to have a pop quiz." But instead of really writing it down, he then went up and down the row calling on each person one at a time to stand up in front of the class and translate and parse the verbs, et cetera. And I'm sitting towards the back of the class and I'm seeing this inevitable car wreck that's about to happen. And it got closer and closer to my time to have to stand up, and so I just folded my books and walked out of class. You know, you may be able to do that in school, which I did, but you just can't do it in life, in real life, when those pop quizzes come. And so that's what's going on here.

So I want you to note, second, "the search" in verse 6, the search. "So he" – the house steward – "overtook them" – referring to the brothers – "and spoke these words to them," – exactly as Joseph had told him to speak, which is recorded in the previous verse.

So verse 7, "They" – the brothers – "said to him," – the house steward – 'Why does my lord speak such words as these things? Why are you saying this to us? We haven't done anything wrong. Why are you accusing us of evil? Why are you saying we have done what is wrong? We have not.' – he says – 'Far be it from your servants to do such a thing.' – And in verse 8, they give their defense as to why this is totally implausible. They say in verse 8 – 'Behold, the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks we have brought back to you from the land of Canaan.'" Just pause for a moment.

As you will recall, the last time they came down to Egypt Joseph put money in their sacks of grain; and on their way back to Canaan, they discovered the money that they had given to buy the grain. The money is now back in their sack. And when they arrive home to Jacob, Jacob says, "You're going to have to go back and you're going to have to give the money back, or



they're going to think you stole the money, or they're going to think you stole the grain. Either way, it's bad.

So what their argument in verse 8 is, they're pointing back to that, and they're saying, "Why would we have traveled 250 miles to return the money to you, and while we're here now steal something and take it out? It doesn't make sense. We wouldn't have returned the money only to steal the silver goblet." The end of verse 8, "How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? He has dealt so graciously with us. He has given us abundance of grain and corn. He has returned our money. We just the night before had a banquet feast in his palace with him. Why would we steal from him?"

Verse 9, the brothers continue to speak: "With whomever of your servants, with whomever of your servants it is found." So they're desperate. And to prove their innocence, they make this extreme statement, that they go to the nth degree to indicate how sincere they are in what they're saying: "With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die." That's pretty strong. "If it's this brother and it's found in his sack, put him to death. If it's found in this brother over here, then put him to death." That's how sincere they were that, "We're clean."

And then he adds at the end, "and we also will be my lord's slaves. So we'll kill the one brother, and all the rest of us, the rest of us brothers, we will be your slaves for the rest of our lives. We will never go back to Canaan. We will never see our father again. We will stay here and we will be chained to you as slaves for the rest of our life. That's how certain we are of our innocence."

So verse 10, "So he" - the house steward - "said, 'Now let it be according to your words,' - but he softens it and he says - 'he with whom it is found shall be my slave.'" He says, "We're not going to kill the one that we find the goblet in, he alone will simply be my slave, and the rest of you shall be innocent, the rest of you will be released and you can go back to Canaan." So he lowers the terms that they have set for themselves.

Verse 11, "Then they" – the eleven brothers – "hurried, each man lowered his sack to the ground." They are in a hurry to show their innocence. They hop off their donkeys, they take the sack off the donkey, they put it on the ground, and it says at the end of verse 11, "each man opened his sack," so that the steward could look in and see, "We don't have the goblet."

So verse 12, "He searched, beginning with the oldest" – that's Reuben – "and ending with the youngest," – that's Benjamin – "and lo and behold, the cup was found in Benjamin's sack." It's an entrapment. There's the evidence of the crime right there. Benjamin has no idea it's there. The other brothers obviously have no idea that it's there.

So in verse 13, we see the sorrow: "Then they tore their clothes." It's a sign of self-humiliation. It's a sign of self-grief and sorrow, like a sword has been thrust into their heart. They rip up their clothes because their heart is being ripped up. It's an outward expression of the inward reality within their heart. They are devastated. They are crushed.

"And when each man loaded his donkey, they returned to the city." They did a 180 and headed back to town where Joseph was. And through this traumatic crisis, this gathering storm that has now hit, has now made landfall and hit their heart, God is in the process, through this trial, of plowing up their hardened conscience, and giving them an awakened sense of what's right and what's wrong, as they have attempted to defend their rightness.

You know, God does this in our lives. There will be times when we have not dealt with something – a sin issue, a selfish issue in our lives – and God will bring a trial into our lives to crush us and to drive us to our knees; and it's a part so many times of God awakening our conscience, because we have been so caught up with ourselves and so caught up with the world that we have desensitized our own conscience.

So in verse 14 we see "the submission." When Judah – he plays the lead role, he becomes like the spokesman. "When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house," – it's where they had just been the night before, where they had just been brought in and treated as dignitaries and giving this

incredible banquet feast in Joseph's presence – "they were brought to Joseph's house, and he was still there." Of course, he was still there; he's waiting on them. He set the whole thing up. I mean, they're like a yo-yo. They go out; they're just being reeled back in.

"And they fell to the ground before him," in self-humiliation. Now this also is a part of God breaking up the hardened soil of their conscience. They fell to the ground, and they are in lowly humility and lowly submission, and they are expressing with their body posture, "We are at your mercy, and you may do to us whatever you please."

Verse 15, "Joseph said to them, 'What is this deed you have done? What is this evil? What is this wrong that you have done?'" and he indicts them in his own palace. And they're on their heels and they're backpedaling.

Verse 15, "Do you not know that such a man is I can indeed practice divination?" I want to say again, in reality he's not practicing divination, but the Egyptians did; and he is wanting to give them the impression that because of divination, he can pry open human hearts, and the gods can enable him to see secret sin and it come dancing out of closets that have long since been locked up.

This mention of divination was intentional by Joseph's part, again, to plant the seeds within their mind that God sees the hearts, and that hidden sin on earth is open scandal in heaven. And it is the fear of being caught doing wrong that is causing their conscience to be aroused and to be awakened. It's the fear of God that now is stirring the pot within them, that God knows, that God sees, "We're being found out." And the Bible says in Ezekiel, "Be sure your sin will find you out." So all of this is preparatory, the plowing of the field of their heart to bring them now to verse 16, "the sin."

"So Judah said," – again, the spokesman for the brothers – "What can we say to my lord? What shall we speak?" In other words, given the fact that Joseph can see the secret things about the lives of men, "What can we possibly say to defend ourselves?" And what's going on here is more than just the supposed sin of stealing the silver goblet. When this door is open,

the whole warehouse comes out, and they have brought back before the forefront of their mind the sin that they have committed in years past, and they say, "There's nothing that we can say to show ourselves to be without sin." And they now are going from the lesser sin in their mind now to the greater sin, and there is this renewed realization on their part of their sin that has long since been buried. It is now on the front doorstep of their soul.

And so they say in the middle of verse 16, "How can we justify ourselves?" The question is rhetorical; it implies a negative answer. "We cannot justify ourselves. We cannot prove ourselves to be without sin. If our secret sins are brought out into the light of day, there's no way we can acquit ourselves, justify ourselves, if all of our secret sins are brought out into the open." And so this is an argument from the lesser to the greater. It started out dealing with the silver goblet, but what is escalated is now dealing with the sins of the past.

Now I can only imagine what a Christian counselor would say today: "It's all under the blood; doesn't matter how you live. You're just being too hard on yourself; that was a long time ago. If God wanted you to confess that sin, I mean that would have happened decades ago. Just get over it." That's not what the counsel is here.

They say, rightly so, at the end of verse 16, "God has found out the iniquity of your servants." Now what caught my eye as I read the text at the beginning of this sermon is that last word "servants." It's in the plural. The silver goblet's just all about one servant, the one goblet put into the one sack of the youngest son, which was Benjamin. But now they're all under conviction of sin.

Again, this isn't about the silver goblet anymore, this is about their sin that they committed collectively, together in the past when they sold their brother down the river and totally abandoned him and gave up on him; and they have suppressed it and buried it and kept it under wraps. But now this thing has come to the forefront. "God has found out the iniquity of your servants," plural. And Judah comes to the strong realization that "God knows our secret sins." And all the brothers realize that "God knows all of our secret sins, and they're being flushed out and brought back before us,

and we're being held accountable for it, and we've got to deal with it." They are unusually aware that God knows all their sins.

And we would say today, the fact that you've been justified by faith does not cause the guilt to go away. There is grace, there is forgiveness, if you will confess it to God and repent of it in your Christian life. The issue is not eternal salvation, the issue is your present walk with the Lord. "God has found out the iniquity of his servants." Hebrews 4:13, "There is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Second Chronicles 16:9, "The eyes of the LORD roam to and fro throughout the whole earth." Proverbs 15:3, "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, watching the evil and the good." Jeremiah 16:17, God says, "My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is there iniquity concealed from My eyes." Psalm 33:13, "The LORD looks down from heaven; He sees all the sons of men."

They realize there is no hiding place to escape God and to escape the all-seeing, all-searching gaze of God; and they are now actually convinced that they deserve this ordeal with the silver goblet to force them to deal with a far greater issue in their life. Again in verse 16 at the end, "Behold, we" – the brothers, all of us; not just Benjamin, all of us together, because we all stand guilty – "behold, we are my lord's slaves." And again, they humble themselves and surrender themselves in submission to Joseph who's the Prime Minister, and they are saying, "We are willing to remain in Egypt and be your slaves. We're not going to leave Benjamin here. We're not going to throw him under the bus. We're all going to stay. We're all in this together; we all have sinned together." And Joseph is able to see before his eyes and hear with his ears that they do love Benjamin.

This was their chance to get out of this thing, and they could have said, "You found the goblet in Benjamin's sack. You got him, we're heading north." No, they are so bonded together. I mean, their conscience now is being softened, it's being sharpened. There is a renewed sense of right and wrong that's taking place in their life. "We are my lord's servants," plural, "both we" – the ten brothers – "and the one" – that's Benjamin – "in whose possession the cup has been found." Rather than Shifting the blame to Benjamin, Judah says, "No, we stand together," – and in the back of their minds – "because we have all sinned together against Joseph. So we deserve to become your slaves."

And though the text does not say it, it is rightly to be assumed their conscience is now so sensitive to what is right and what is wrong that they can no longer just gloss over the sin that they have committed together. "We deserve to stay in Egypt. We have sinned against God; and the consequences of that sin, every one of us deserves to stay here in Egypt and just be a slave." That's what's going on here.

So what does Joseph say? Verse 17 is our last verse: "And he said," – that's Joseph – "Joseph said, 'Far be it for me to do this.'" You see, Joseph also has a conscience, and Joseph also has a sense of right and wrong. And Joseph knows under this scheme with a silver goblet, "I only need to punish the one in whose sack it is found. I'm not going to punish everyone for one person's sin. Far be it for me to do this. That would be too heavy-handed. The man in whose possession the cup has been found, he alone shall be my slave." That would be Benjamin. "But as for you," – pointing to the other ten, the other ten brothers – "go up in peace to your father."

It's interesting he uses the word "peace," because that is what they have not known, because they have not dealt with their sin against Joseph. We have peace with God through the gospel and through the doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ alone. Romans 5:1 says, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." That is objective peace.

But this is referring to a different kind of peace. This is subjective peace, which fluctuates. Objective peace stays the same you'll never be more justified for the rest of your life than you are right now. You'll never be more eternally right with God through the gospel with objective peace than you are the moment you believe in Christ. And we all are equally justified by the imputation of the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ based upon our faith in Him; God declares us forensically to be right with God.

However, there is subjective peace; not peace with God – listen to this – the peace of God; and that's up and down and all around. Philippians 4:6, "Be anxious for nothing, but through prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." When we fail

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to pray, when we fail to commit our burdens to the Lord, when we fail to confess our sin to the Lord, then we forfeit the peace of God, though we still have peace with God.

Well here, they are told by Joseph, "Go up in peace to your father." This is the subjective piece of God, which is the inner tranquility of heart, the inner contentment and satisfaction of soul, that in the midst of the storms of life I have peace that surpasses all comprehension. They now are called to return home with what they did not come with: the peace of God.

So as we bring this message to conclusion, as we will stop here at verse 17, it's been a complex narrative; it has been for me, trying to connect the dots and keep your eye on the ball, as well as even bring commentary on what's not directly stated, but what is clearly implied in the passage. There are a lot of moving parts here in this passage. But as I bring this to conclusion, let me make this very simple.

Your conscience is a very important part of your soul, and your conscience will either be defending you or accusing you; and you want to have a clear and clean conscience. And what really matters for you to have peace with God is that you have maintained a clear conscience. To be in the Word sharpens your conscience. It brings it more and more into alignment with what the Scripture says. And as you walk in obedience, it strengthens your conscience, such that even the smallest little step of disobedience arouses you and awakens you. But if your conscience is not clear, it's almost like it takes a sledgehammer to knock you across the head, a major trial to awaken your conscience and to get your attention.

As I conclude this, I must say to you that the most important thing, even more important than having the peace of God, is for you to have peace with God. And until you come to believe in Jesus Christ, you need to understand that you are an enemy of God, you commit sins of cosmic treason against God, and there is only one way for you to become the friend of God and the child of God, and there's only one way for God to cease His warfare with you, and that is for you to come to His Son Jesus Christ and to believe upon Him, Jesus Christ who is the eternal Son of God, who was born of a virgin, who lived a sinless and perfect life, who was taken to the cross, who was lifted up and died for the sins of all who will put their faith and trust in

Him, who was taken down, buried, and on the third day was raised from the dead, who has ascended back to heaven, who is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high; and whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

And so if you have never believed upon Jesus Christ, for your sake I pray that your conscience is killing you, and that there is only one way for you to have relief, and that is for you to believe upon God's Son Jesus Christ. And if you will believe upon Christ, you will have peace with God; and your conscience, the guilt will be erased, and you will find acceptance with God. May God do that in your life today if you have never believed in Him.

[Prayer] Father, thank You for the life of Joseph, his brothers, this whole narrative. Sometimes we read a passage like this and we think, "What does this have to do with me?" And then as we look at it further, we see that we're looking into a mirror, and we're seeing ourselves. We're seeing ourselves even as You see us.

So allow us to take home from this message what You have intended for each and every one of us. May no one here today say, "I wonder who he was talking to." May each one of us say, "It's me, it's me, it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer." Father, bless everyone who's here today. Help them to find a clear and clean conscience before You, in Jesus' name. Amen.