

### **Multi-Color Grace, Pt 9: Transformed to be a Servant-Leader (Gen 44)**

Well, this is a special weighty thing we've done today in installing a new servant-leader before this church in the office of elder or pastor serving over high school ministry. We recognize his role isn't to pastor/shepherd all the youth, you as parents are the shepherds of the youth in your homes. We're not hiring a staff member to do your job in discipling teenagers, God calls you as parents to be their primary disciplers, and dads in particular. I know JP has a heart and desire to come alongside you as he leads and oversees the various parents serving with youth and various programs that are just tools to help families learn God's Word. There are other tools to help you lead and teach your family during the week from our family shepherds study we went through last year, and other resources ... let us know how we can help. None of us are experts or have it all figured out, but we need other believers

As we recognize one who will be laboring among us a servant-leader, it's a good time to also recognize parents are to be leaders of their kids and all of us, young are old, are called to be servants. "Make me a servant" is our song and in God's providence our study today will culminate with a leader among his brothers saying basically that very thing, "make me a servant." In Gen 44, our next chapter in our study through Genesis, in God's timing this very passage shows someone who is a model for all of us in loving the brethren, laying self down with a servant mindset, and so he becomes a great leader. Gen 18:19 says a dad is commanded to teach his children the ways of God.

Last week in Gen 43 we saw God's grace to a bad dad, changing him from someone who became passive and withdrawn when things in life didn't go the way he planned (I'm sure there are men here shrinking back when life and family isn't going like you would like). Dads can become hopeless and frustrated with things they can't fix and so they might retreat to a garage to fix other things they can, or they may seek refuge in a hobby/entertainment - hoping their denial or not talking about issues will make 'em go away, and getting angry when those who love them bring the issues up. That's Jacob in Gen 42-43 as we saw last week, but grace is at work in him as he sees grace at work in one of his family in particular, and Jacob then steps up to his role as a dad again and he becomes active and engaged and leading his family and speaking to them about God and His attributes (43:14, almighty, mercy)

It's a turning point for Jacob, who's now called Israel because he's living up to his new name and becoming more of the new man God intended him to be. The turning point seems to be him seeing the change in one of his sons.

As Jacob sees an unlikely son of his rise up to lead and take responsibility, it seems to be what God uses to move Jacob rise up and take responsibility. As this once hopeless father sees change in this family member of his, this gives him hope. If God can make *this son* a leader, there's hope for his dad. It may surprise you to find out Joseph will not be the most notable leader among his brothers, another brother rises up by amazing transforming grace -- not the favorite, not the firstborn -- an unexpected unlikely hero emerges.

The apex of this story is not a speech by Joseph, it's a speech by his brother. We tend to focus on Joseph in this story, but this chapter focuses on another in his family who is really the centerpiece in the center of this narrative, and if we miss this, we miss one of its biggest takeaways and our biggest hopes. We think of Joseph as saving his brothers, but there's a sense in which this *other brother* is the one who saves Joseph's family here. This man who was able to convince their father when no one else could, the grace at work in this same man will convince Joseph his brothers are truly changed. Grace in this son that brings dad to his senses will bring Egypt's big ruler to his knees

**44:1** *Then he commanded 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."<sup>2</sup> "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.<sup>3</sup> As soon as it was light, the men were sent away, they with their donkeys.<sup>4</sup> 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?'<sup>5</sup> 'Is not this the one from which my lord drinks and which he indeed uses for divination? You have done wrong in doing this.'"<sup>6</sup> So he overtook them and spoke these words to them.<sup>7</sup> They said to him, "Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing."<sup>8</sup> "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?"<sup>9</sup> "With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves."<sup>10</sup> 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."<sup>11</sup> Then they hurried, each man lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack.<sup>12</sup> He searched, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest, and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.<sup>13</sup> Then they tore their clothes, and when each man loaded his donkey, they returned to the city.<sup>14</sup> When **Judah***

and his brothers came [note name Judah rising up here] to Joseph's house, he was still there, and they fell to the ground before him.<sup>15</sup> 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?"<sup>16</sup> 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.**"<sup>17</sup> 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."<sup>18</sup> Then **Judah** approached him, and said, "**Oh my lord, may your servant please speak a word in my lord's ears, and do not be angry with your servant; for you are equal to Pharaoh.**"<sup>19</sup> "My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?'"<sup>20</sup> "We said to my lord, 'We have an old father and a little child of his old age. Now his brother is dead, so he alone is left of his mother, and his father loves him.'<sup>21</sup> "Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me that I may set my eyes on him.'<sup>22</sup> "But we said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.'<sup>23</sup> "You said to your servants, however, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will not see my face again.'<sup>24</sup> "Thus it came about when we went up to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord."<sup>25</sup> "Our father said, 'Go back, buy us a little food.'<sup>26</sup> "But we said, 'We cannot go down. If our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.'<sup>27</sup> "Your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons;<sup>28</sup> and the one went out from me, and I said, "Surely he is torn in pieces," and I have not seen him since.'<sup>29</sup> "If you take this one also from me, and harm befalls him, you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow.'<sup>30</sup> "Now, therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life,<sup>31</sup> when he sees that the lad is not with us, he will die. Thus your servants will bring the gray hair of your servant our father down to Sheol in sorrow."<sup>32</sup> "**For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then let me bear the blame before my father forever.'**"<sup>33</sup> "Now, therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers."<sup>34</sup> "For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me—for fear that I see the evil that would overtake my father?"

**45:1** Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried, "Have everyone go out from me." So there was no man with him when **Joseph made himself known to his brothers.**

<sup>2</sup> *He wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard of it.* <sup>3</sup> *Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! ...*

The weeping or wailing could not be louder, the drama could not be higher. Judah breaks the hard facade Joseph had been keeping up until now. Judah's plea cracks the dam, and tears now gush out like the Nile from this Egyptian lord. Emotions that had been welled up for 22 years now flow in loud cries that even Pharaoh's house heard. He yells for all the Egyptians to leave, and then this dignified ruler starts sobbing uncontrollably at the top of his lungs. Up till now everything he had said was in Egyptian (chapter 42 tells us that) but now with tears washing away Egyptian makeup he says "*anee Yoseph!*" In fluent Hebrew he asks '*is dad ok?*' Again v. 4 '*I'm Joseph your brother!*'

I know most of you know this story, but did you know that Judah's speech is really the pivotal and critical center of it? Judah's words are really the peak of this up and down story. Judah's amazing transformation is one of the high points of the Bible, and in light of who he once was, what he says and does here is what will make Judah more significant than Joseph in redemptive history. Judah here rises up to become the leader among all his brothers and Gen 49:8 promises: '**Judah, your brothers shall praise you ... Your father's sons shall **bow down to you**** [that position Joseph had is passed on to Judah and God's Word goes on to say] *The scepter shall not depart from Judah,* [in other words, the leadership] *nor the ruler's staff from between his feet...*'

We'll study that more in future weeks in chapter 49 but this a huge turning point in chapter 44 with Judah in the history of redemption, not just Joseph's story. From here on out, Judah is seen as the leader among the 12 sons who become the 12 tribes of Israel. Judah's brothers will bow to him as his tribe will be the line of Israel's leader-kings, following their forefather's footsteps

[Judah's tribe, not Joseph's becomes the preeminent one and the messianic one]

Part of us may want to skip to chapter 45 and the joyful reunion of Jacob's whole family, but we can't miss what's happening here in Judah that makes that possible. And we can't miss Judah's crucial role in this story and in the Bible's story line to make that possible for our families through Judah's seed

The great writer F.B. Meyer argued that there is nothing more emotional in 'all literature...than this appeal' of Judah in Gen 44. A writer named Leupold called it 'one of the manliest, most straightforward speeches ever delivered by any man...depth of feeling and sincerity of purpose...unexcelled.' Donald Grey Barnhouse called it 'the most moving address in all the Word of God.'<sup>1</sup>

Before we look at the speech in v. 18-34, first let's see the setting (v. 1-17). We can divide this chapter into two halves, the setting and the speech. In the setting or context leading up to Judah's speech, the repeated key word is 'found' (6x). In the second half, his speech repeats the key word 'father' 15x. The setting shows sin has found them out. His speech centers on his father rather than himself and shows how grace has amazingly transformed Judah.

The setting at the start of chapter 44 is really a set-up to test these brothers. At the end of chapter 43 Joseph had them serve Benjamin 5x the amount of food as the other brothers. Was that because Benjamin was so big he needed way more food than the rest? No, it's part of the test and preparation for the final exam the next day. The test is how will these brothers respond to their half-brother when he receives preferential treatment and favoritism, a bigger better blessing than the others, marked out for all to see he's special? Like it was with their half-brother Joseph, the favorite? How do they feel about the favorite Benjamin now and will they do the same with him if they're tested?

And so while the brothers are headed home, a black and white chariot pulls them over to the side of the road, Cairo Highway Patrol. The boys are under arrest for grand theft. Whoever is convicted will have to do time as a slave, and the innocent ones will be free to go. Only the one with the stolen stash has to come back, and guess who's got it as they inspect their rides? It's the daddy's little favorite Benjamin. This is a perfect opportunity for them to get rid of him if they wanted to...like Joseph, the original daddy's little favorite.

But these are not the same sons as before. Look at v. 13 *Then they tore their clothes, and when each man loaded his donkey, they returned to the city.*

With Joseph's loss only dad tore his robes. Now all the sons tear their robes. They are united now, not divided like before. If Benjamin goes, so will we. They're a band of brothers now and no man will be left behind. Like armies that use that term "band of brothers," this platoon won't leave behind Private Benjamin. And Captain Judah steps forward as a leader to make sure of this

<sup>14</sup> *When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, he was still there, and they fell to the ground before him ... [now look at v. 16] 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 ...**"*

This is true repentance: falling on your face before the lord, admitting God is just and your sin has found you out, and making no excuses to justify self.

Sinners have been making excuses since the first sin in the garden. Men and women have been passing the buck since Genesis 3: 'the woman...she gave to me the fruit,' and 'the serpent tempted me and I ate' (the devil made me do it). But Judah says in essence 'the buck stops here,' 'the shekel stops here'

[story of boy in kitchen and mom asks what the little hand is on...'a cookie']

God sees all. Judah sees he's caught, and sees this as justice for what he did with something far more valuable, their brother's life. He's not talking about the sin of a silver cup, they didn't steal that, he's talking about their sin from years ago God saw. So in essence as they fall to the ground here they're also falling before the mercy of God who he's acknowledging in this verse, and he sees this Egyptian ruler as an agent of God's sovereignty. Notice what he says after he says God has found our sin '*...behold, we are my lord's slaves*'

Judah remembers selling Joseph as a slave to Egypt, and he says 'we'll all be slaves in Egypt.' He's speaking for all of them, *we deserve to be your slaves*. But in v. 17 the ruler of Egypt says basically 'no, only the one who did the crime can do the time. You can't serve it for someone else, only the brother with the cup will receive wrath, the rest of you must go home to your dad.' This is the bar exam of biblical transformation. And Judah, who once ripped off Joseph's coat of many colors and said to his brothers *let's sell him as a slave to Egypt*, Judah by multi-color grace passes this test with flying colors

This takes us from #1. the setting (v. 1-17) to #2. **The Speech** (v. 18-34)

<sup>18</sup> *Then Judah approached him, and said, "Oh my lord, may your servant please speak a word in my lord's ears, and do not be angry ..."*

Notice first in the speech his HUMILITY. He comes before the Lord as an undeserving servant, and by way of application, we must come that way to the Lord we offend by sin or to family members we have hurt, in humility. He sounds like Jacob's grandfather Abraham in Genesis 18: "*I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes ... May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more ...*" (v. 27, 32 NIV).

[Judah basically says here to this lord 'make me your servant today']

Notice not only his humility but his HONOR of his father. Even though his dad had not always acted honorably, Judah honors his father and is blessed. We saw this in Gen 9, Noah acts dishonorably drunk in his tent, but 2 sons honor him anyways and are blessed. Ham dishonors his father and is cursed. God wants us to get this from the first book, it's the first commandment with a promise, that it will go well with us on the earth, blessing for honoring our father and mother. Boys and girls God wants you to get this and adults, too.

Judah didn't always honor his father, but he does now throughout his speech even while acknowledging in v. 20 Jacob's preeminent love for the youngest son. In v. 30 Judah has come to grips with the fact that the lad Benjamin is his dad's life (just as Joseph had been before), but this moves Judah to want to do everything to save the lad unlike Joseph before: <sup>30</sup> *Now...when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, **since his life is bound up in the lad's life,*** <sup>31</sup> *when he sees that the lad is not with us, he will die.*

[dad's life shouldn't be all about Benjamin, but Judah honors his sinful dad]

This is an amazing transformation: their dad's special love for a half-brother that once drove them to anger now drives Judah to affection. The favor dad had toward Rachel's son doesn't make Judah envious or break his heart like before, it makes him eager to protect his father's heart from breaking now. Judah's care for dad gushes in v. 34: *how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me—for fear that I see the evil that would overtake my father?*

Remember Judah is representing all his brothers. They all had said we'll be your slaves in v. 9. They all loaded their animals and came straight back to this ruler and threw themselves on the ground before this ruler. Judah just so happens to be the first to rise up and speak on their behalf. Hughes writes 'That the sons of the hated wife Leah had come to terms with their father's special love for Rachel and her two boys was amazing. That Benjamin ... should now be loved by the other brothers was astounding. And that Judah could reference his father's favoritism *as the reason for freeing Benjamin* meant that a transformation had taken place in his soul.'<sup>2</sup> Go back to Gen 37

Judah's transformation by grace is even more amazing reviewing his story:  
 - in 37:4 it says the brothers with Judah hated how dad loved Joseph more  
 - in v. 5 it says when Joseph told them his dreams, they hated him more  
 - the end of v. 8 says they hated him not only for his dreams, but his words  
 - in v. 24 they throw Joseph into a pit, and notice who's idea it is in v. 26 to make a profit with Joseph? Judah says let's make money off him and in v. 27 he says 'let's sell him to the Ishmaelites.' Judah sells his brother for profit

**38:1** *And it came about at that time, that Judah departed from his brothers ...* [other translations say he 'parted from his brothers' (NAB, i.e., he parted ways), 'left his brothers' (NET) or 'left home and moved to Adullam' (NLT)]

[to abandon a family, esp. a father mourning was a great dishonor]

Judah who was the ringleader in the plan to leave his brother in Egypt for a profit, Judah now leaves the rest of his family and moves to Canaan and he has relations with a pagan. He's got a bag of money now, and he leaves.

The sense of the language is he's leaving home like a prodigal, showing no love for his bereaved father at the end of Gen 37, he leaves to live his life. He leaves the covenant community for a Canaanite one, he leaves the clan of his family and his father's land, and he's gone from them over 20 years. We know that because in v. 3-10 there's time for 2 sons born there to grow up, marry (late teens?) and die. This is that semen-spilling story that's not in the flannelgraph set and we wonder why is this story here in Joseph's story?

Because it's not Joseph's story, it's the story of Jacob's sons, including Judah <sup>15</sup> *When Judah saw her [Tamar], he thought she was a harlot, for she had covered her face.* <sup>16</sup> *So he turned aside to her by the road, and said, "Here now, let me come in to you"; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law ... [now look at v. 18] He said, "What **pledge** shall I give you?" And she said, "Your seal and your cord, and your **staff** that is in your hand." So he gave them to her and went in to her, and she conceived by him.*

Judah's pledge and Judah's staff will become significant later in his life. In v. 26 is his turning point, or the beginning of it. As he finds out his daughter in law is pregnant with his child, he says '*she is more righteous than I.*' She may have played the harlot, but I am far more unrighteous than any harlot. This is the beginning of repentance, and we see fruit of it later in Gen 42:21 as he with his brothers recognize and verbalize their sin against Joseph. The timeline seems to be it's been 20+ years since Judah left home. He comes back to his father and family before Gen 42 repentant, restored, transformed

So go back to Gen 44, and that context helps us see how radically changed Judah is by grace. We see in his speech humility, honor, and lastly, HOPE. I think this explains the change in father's spirits in Gen 43. He sees change in this prodigal son of all people, the son who could care less for his family and father. He left dad in his time of great mourning. Now Judah is pleading with his father and his family in love and promising he will never leave his brother again. Seeing grace at work in Judah gives hope to his father (and should give hope to us). Judah's very staff used in payment for immoral sin becomes a staff of leadership by dad's decree in Gen 49:10. And the word *pledge* that the harlot asked Judah for is the very word Judah uses in 44:32 in the ESV: '*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*

...

This is exactly what Judah said in 43:9 "*I will be a pledge of his safety...if I do not bring him back...let me bear the blame forever.*" He'll take the blame.

If that gave Jacob hope, how much more should the gospel grace at work in Judah give us hope, knowing Judah's descendant Jesus 'took the blame, bore the wrath, we stand forgiven at the cross.'<sup>3</sup> These brothers are about to stand forgiven; Judah's words point to the cross. Jesus bore the blame so we don't have to bear the Father's wrath forever. He gives to us a *pledge* so we know for sure He will bring us safely to the Father (see Eph 1:14). The NKJV has the word *surety* in Gen 44:32; Heb 7:22 says Jesus is our *surety/guarantee*.

God chooses Jesus to come through Judah's line, not Joseph's, as we might expect. It becomes clear Jesus is working in his heart, v. 33 *Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a servant to my lord...* Judah rises up like a lion to defend his brother and offers *himself as a lamb*. He's willing to sacrifice himself, to pay his brother's fine and do his time. In earlier years he abandoned his brothers, now he's willing to give his life for one. This is grace by substitution: "let me be a servant instead of the guilty."

Judah wasn't guilty of having the cup in his sack, but he offers up himself as a substitute to take the place of the one with the cup. Just like One who later came through Judah's line, Jesus doesn't let the cup of wrath pass from Him, Jesus becomes a suffering servant in our place. Jesus does our time on the cross, pays the fine He didn't owe for His brothers. We're no more righteous than harlots, but He bears our blame and gives us His righteousness instead when we repent, even though by nature we are all unrighteous like Judah. Judah comes before the throne of Egypt below with his strong plea. Before the throne of God above we have a stronger perfect plea, Judah's descendant

[Jesus from Judah's tribe wasn't just willing and able, He died for us]

Before the throne of Egypt, the question is will anyone be worthy or willing to step forward on behalf of others to be a ransom. In Rev 5 none is worthy:  
<sup>4</sup> *I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy...*  
<sup>5</sup> *And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah..."*  
<sup>6</sup> *And between the throne ... I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain ... [v. 9 says He's] ransomed people for God from every tribe...*" (ESV)

Jesus the Lion from Judah's tribe is also the Lamb slain for all His brothers:  
 HUMILITY - we need to fall on our face before the grace of Judah's Lion.

HONOR - we need to honor father and mother and others the Bible calls us to honor (wives to husbands, members to elders in church, other authorities)

HOPE - if God could transform *Judah* and his family, He can transform you

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<sup>1</sup> As cited by James Boice, *Genesis*, p. 1043.

<sup>2</sup> Kent Hughes, *Genesis*, p. 514.

<sup>3</sup> Keith and Kristyn Getty, "The Power of the Cross."