

Series: Lessons from God's Servants

Lesson 9: Joseph's Forgiveness and Grace

*Announcements, encouragement to invite people and opening prayer.



Connect: an opportunity for people to immediately interact and connect with each other; icebreaker/attention getters. **Icebreaker:** What is the greatest example of grace you have seen displayed in your life by a normal every day person?

Transition: Grace is not a natural function that saturates the life of most people. Today we want to look at someone who was the purest example of faith. His faith was so pure that God gave it as model for us even today. His grace was truly an image of the grace of his Creator.

Bottom Line: Joseph was an example of pure grace.

LESSON PLAN

Background: Last week we learned how his brothers were jealous of him. In fact, they were so jealous they wanted him dead. However, they decided that selling him as a slave to a caravan of Ishmaelites who in turn sold him to Potiphar, the captain of the Egyptian guard. They faked his death so their father would never find out the truth. Joseph has been dealt a nasty hand in life. However, his faith and trust in God has brought down blessings on him, on Egypt and everything he touches. He is an example of taking a horrible situation and accepting it with dignity. He lives as a slave to bring glory to God. God's blessing on him causes him to be placed in charge of the whole land of Egypt. What an incredible lesson for us! Now let's see the rest of the story.

Read Genesis 42:1-24

1. What is Jacob's dilemma?
2. Why do you suppose Joseph's brothers did not recognize him?

Joseph was about 17 when the brothers sold him. It has been 20 years. Living in the Egyptian sun would definitely cause the 37 years to look a lot different than the 17 year old. His clothing and appearance as

Series: Lessons from God's Servants

Lesson 9: Joseph's Forgiveness and Grace

an Egyptian would also alter his appearance to them. Joseph is looking at Israelites. The brothers are looking at an Egyptian governor.

3. What is the situation that Joseph sets up to challenge them?

4. What happens when they are discussing the situation and what they will do?

Question: Why is it impossible to hide ungodly choices?

Question: Do you think Joseph was being unfair to his brothers in playing out this deception?

Question: After this Joseph turns away from his brothers because he is moved to tears. The entire situation is touching him with brokenness rather than anger. How can anger be replaced with a sense of sadness from such a horrendous act?

Question: Joseph has Simeon bound before their eyes and sends them back to get Benjamin. They leave with their money replaced and their sacks filled with grain. They cannot understand what God is doing to them. What was God doing to them?

The boys return home and tell Jacob that Simeon is being held in Egypt and unless they return with Benjamin they will never see this governor of Egypt or Simeon again. Jacob mourns that Joseph has been killed and now Simeon will be and now you want to take Benjamin. He is broken hearted. Once the grain they brought was gone Jacob had no choice. He tells them to take the choice fruits left, some balm, honey, gum myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. Take double the money that was in your sacks and take Benjamin and beg for mercy.

Joseph now tests his brothers. He has his servant put food and money in each brother's sack. He tells them to put his silver cup in Benjamin's sack. After they leave chase them down and find the silver cup. Confront them for stealing the cup. The servant catches up and they deny they would do such a thing. They go through the sacks and there in Benjamin's is the silver cup.

Series: Lessons from God's Servants

Lesson 9: Joseph's Forgiveness and Grace

Question: What was the point of this test?

Read Genesis 45:1-15

5. How did Joseph respond once Judah offered his own life in return for Benjamin's release?
6. Why would Joseph say that it was God who orchestrated his time in Egypt?

Question: What are some historical events where God has taken evil and turned it into good?

The Greek and Roman domination of the world. It was evil and yet it produced a language and roads and waterways that prepared the world for the coming of Christ and the communication of Christianity.

7. How could Joseph embrace his brothers after what they had done to him?

Question: Can you think of a time when you have seen love flow where hate could have prevailed?

Read Genesis 45:16-46:4

8. What did Pharaoh think of this strange behavior coming from Joseph?
9. What did Jacob do on the way to Egypt?

Question: How does God long to bless and multiply you?



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Question: What are you doing to make God's blessing a reality?

Final Question: What is the one idea that stands out to you most from this lesson?