

Final Exam

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[0 : 00] In chapter 43, we saw Joseph's brothers make their second trip to Egypt to buy more grain.

! Joseph was still concealing his identity, but he saw encouraging evidence of God at work in his brothers and his father's lives. Jacob finally let Benjamin travel with his brothers. Benjamin trusted the older brothers enough to at least come with them to Egypt.

You remember that the brothers originally were fearful that the Egyptian ruler would enslave them when the brothers were told to come to the ruler's house. Instead, they were reunited with Simeon, who'd been in jail since that first trip.

Then the brothers enjoyed a nice lunch with the Egyptian ruler. That lunch is where Joseph saw the most encouraging sign yet that God was at work in his family. When Joseph had the staff provide Benjamin with five times as much food as the others, the older brothers gave no indication of envy. The brothers also received a few more hints that Joseph was different than the typical Egyptian ruler. When the brothers told the steward about the first trip where their money had been returned to them, the steward replied in verse 43-23, Peace to you, do not be afraid, your God and the God of your father has put treasure in your sacks, I received your money.

[1 : 29] If that statement registered with the brothers, they should have wondered why an Egyptian steward would know about the Hebrew God. The boldest hint so far of Joseph's true identity came just before that lunch with the ruler.

The brothers were seated in order by age. We talked about last week how that would have been a 1 in 39,916,800 chance if the brothers' order was unknown to the ruler and his servants.

Meanwhile, the Egyptian ruler ate lunch at a table alone instead of eating with the other Egyptians. Because the older brothers believed that Joseph is dead, they failed to pick up on the clues that this ruler is Joseph.

Joseph has a final exam for the brothers before he reveals his identity, and that exam will determine whether the brothers' character truly has changed. Followers of God show evidence of genuine repentance from their sins.

And that's the main idea for tonight. Followers of God show evidence of genuine repentance from their sins. Before we read chapter 44, consider how Joseph's brothers must have been feeling.

[2 : 49] At the beginning of chapter 43, ten of them were dreading their second trip to Egypt to face the Egyptian ruler. That ruler had talked harshly to them and had kept Simeon in jail.

Now the eleven brothers were about to leave Egypt for home. They'd all been reunited. At least they thought they'd all been reunited. And they had the needed grain after being honored guests for a meal at the ruler's house.

The mood on the return trip must have been very positive. The ten who made the first trip probably could hardly believe the difference in treatment. Benjamin stayed home that first trip, and he probably said some things such as, What were you so worried about?

That ruler didn't seem like you described him at all. I'm still digesting all that food. He might have taken a doggy bag or two with him for the trip too. Maybe a camel bag in that case, I don't know. Little did they know that Joseph was dreaming up another test for them, and he was trying to disarm their fears for that final exam. So let's read all of chapter 44.

[3 : 59] Starting in verse 1, it says, 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? 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.

[5 : 21] 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. 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.

[6 : 23] 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, O 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 a 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. 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.

[7 : 37] 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 me, and I said, Surely he has been torn to pieces, and I have never seen him since. If you take this one also from me, and harm happens to him, you will bring down my gray hairs in evil to Sheol.

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 he sees that the boy is not with us, he will die.

And your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant, our father, with sorrow to Sheol. 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?

[8 : 49] I fear to see the evil that would find my father. Chapter 44 has three main sections. Joseph receives definitive proof of whether his older brothers have truly repented.

That first section comes in verses 1 through 9, and that's where we see the test. So, the test is the first section in your lesson.

Verses 1 through 5 are where Joseph sets up that test. Looking at those verses again, they say, Then he 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? You have done evil in doing this. So remember the scene again.

[10:13] The brothers have spent a comfortable night. They're well fed. They're well rested. They're full. They're happy. They're excited to see their families again. They can hardly wait to tell the story of how the Lord has been so good to them in Egypt, and how they found favor with the gruff Egyptian ruler.

Also remember, though, that the brothers have not packed their saddlebags themselves. They have no idea of what's lying inside of one of them.

The entire group is heading for home without looking back. Soon they're going to receive the shock of their lives, and that final exam will show us the brothers' true nature now.

Joseph tells the steward to say that Joseph uses the stolen cup to practice divination. Divination is the practice of foreseeing the future for discovering hidden knowledge.

The art of interpreting the liquids in a cup or bowl was widely practiced in the ancient Near East. The common methods were interpreting the patterns of moving liquids or the patterns of floating objects in that liquid.

[11:20] The practice is outlawed in Israel. There are a couple places in the Pentateuch that mentions that it's illegal to do divination in Israel. And there's no instance of practice of this in the Joseph narrative.

It's best understood to be an elaborate ploy by Joseph. God has given Joseph great wisdom and accurate visions of the future through the dreams that he has sent to Joseph.

Joseph has the real thing. He doesn't need satanic substitutes. Think about what's been happening, though. The brothers have already noticed Joseph's uncanny ability to discern things about them.

Remember that he placed them at the dinner table so that they were seated according by age. And by referring to divination, the steward is going to toss the brothers another curve.

If they're getting suspicious, it'll throw them completely off track. They'll have less reason to suspect that Joseph has anything but Egyptian blood flowing through his veins. After all, he must employ divination just like any other advisor to Pharaoh.

[12:27] The steward does as Joseph requested, and he sets off to catch the brothers. And that sets the stages for verses 6 through 9. So those verses say, You can see how shocked the brothers are from your Lord's house.

Whichever of your servants is found with it shall die, and we also will be my Lord's servants. You can see how shocked the brothers are at the accusation.

They point out how they return the money from the first trip. Then someone, or maybe a group of people of them, gets even bolder. They say that if one of the brothers is found with the cup, that brother will be killed, and the others will become servants to Joseph.

Think about what would happen if the steward held them to those words. These words have the potential of costing the family everything. Remember that these are middle-aged men with families that depend on them.

These are shepherds with flocks to be tended, husbands with wives and children waiting for them to return. And they have the food that those family members need. And this brings us to the second section of the lesson.

[13:54] We've seen the test. In verses 10 through 17, we see the arrest. So the arrest comes in verses 10 through 17. We'll go through these verses a little at a time.

Let's look at just verse 10. 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. The steward says it's going to be like the brothers say, but then he completely changes the terms.

He says that only the person found with the cup will become a servant. The others will go free. This is a big part of the test. None of the brothers knows it, but the older 10 will be tested on whether they will abandon their father's new favorite son, Benjamin.

Repentance is only complete when someone knows that if he were placed in the same position, he would act differently than he had acted before. Listen to that quote again.

Repentance is only complete when someone knows that if he were placed in the same position, he would act differently than he had acted before. And the brothers are about to find out whether they would act differently.

[15:08] Verse 11 gives more indication of how certain the brothers are that no cup will be found. The brothers willingly allow the steward to search their cargo. Verse 12 tells us that the steward conducts the search in age order again.

Picture the scene there. As each successive brother is found to be innocent, their apprehension diminished. They probably said, I told you you weren't going to find anything. Why would we take that?

Then all of a sudden, when they open Benjamin's sack, the steward pulls out the cup and they see the glint of silver in the sunshine. Their blood probably turned cold whenever they saw that.

Let's read verses 11 through 13. It says, Each man quickly lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack. That's the setup that we talked about just a minute ago.

But then in verse 12 it says, And he searched, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest. 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.

[16:18] The words of verse 13 are restrained and understated. In their minds, this had to be the end of their lives, the end of their clan. They must have thought this was the end of God's promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Also picture the scene, in a very real sense, they're taking an emotional walk in Joseph's shoes, the same path that Joseph took on the day that he was going back to Egypt to become a slave.

In their case, although they don't know it yet, it's only temporary. Considering the circumstances, the brothers' decision to stay is even more surprising.

We talked about this a little already, but the men have left starving families behind in Canaan. The grain they carry is the only hope for their father, their wives, and their children.

Remaining as Egyptian slaves only will ensure the suffering and death of their loved ones back home. There's also Benjamin's family to think about. He'll be concerned about his own children.

[17:21] He won't mind if the brothers take off while they have the chance. In fact, they could easily justify leaving Benjamin behind by saying, we're doing that to help Benjamin. We're going to make sure his family survives.

So really, leaving Benjamin behind would be the only logical thing to do in that case. The brothers defy logic, though, and pass the initial part of the final exam.

Given the opportunity to abandon Benjamin and free themselves, all ten of the older brothers head back to the Egyptian ruler's house. We see no indication that they hesitated at all.

They just loaded up their donkeys and went back. So this time, the older brothers support the new favorite son. The final exam is far from over, though.

After having some time to think about the situation, the brothers will get another chance to abandon Benjamin when they see the Egyptian ruler again. Look at verses 14 and 15.

[18:19] When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, he was still there. 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?

If Benjamin were thinking this through at this point, he might have concluded his powers of divination obviously have some limitation to them because I know I didn't steal the cup. So he might think, he might know that somebody took the cup, but he has no way of knowing where the cup really is because he's gotten that completely wrong.

But Joseph is using his supposed powers of divination to hold his brothers in a place where their hearts will continue to be tested. Check out verse 16 now. It says, 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 who also in whose hand the cup has been found.

Judah steps forward here, showing some of the character that we saw him developing in the previous chapter. This time he avoids excuses.

[19:34] He says that the brothers have no way to clear themselves. Benjamin has been caught red-handed with the stolen cup. Of the eleven brothers who were headed back to Canaan, only Benjamin really knows that Benjamin is innocent.

The other ten obviously are guiltless relative to stealing the cup, but Judah still says, God has found out the guilt of your servants. Plural. Judah could have placed the blame solely on Benjamin, but

Judah includes himself and the others.

Judah's words have a haunting, residual guilt tracing back all the way to what the older brothers did with Joseph. Judah felt no guilt at the time he sold Joseph into slavery, but now, 22 years later, he's overwhelmed with the guilt over the heinous crime that he committed against a brother.

There was a divinely intended holy bond between Jacob's sons as heirs of the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Judah had violated that bond, but the new Judah was not about to violate it again with another brother when he had a second chance.

For Judah, this mistaken charge against them is payback for the crime about which they never repented. In Judah's mind, God had used this false charge to punish him and the nine other older brothers for their real crime.

[20 : 57] The irony, as we mentioned, is that Benjamin is the only one of the eleven who truly is innocent. However, Benjamin is facing what he thinks is an undeserved lifetime of slavery because he's been framed.

Look at verse 17 now. Joseph responds to Judah. Joseph says, Joseph gives the ten older brothers another chance to abandon Benjamin and escape with their freedom.

Joseph even has provided what seems to be a valid reason for Benjamin's absence if the others return home without Benjamin. The ten older brothers could simply say, things were going so well, Dad, but Benjamin got caught trying to steal the ruler's cup.

We can hardly believe it ourselves, but the cup was in his sack. As far as the other brothers knew, Benjamin really had tried to steal the cup. There was no other plausible explanation to them at that point.

Consider why Joseph would put his younger brother that he loved so much through so much stress. Actually, I think Joseph is trying to protect Benjamin. If the older brothers were willing to abandon Benjamin and face Jacob without him, the older brothers will have shown again that their character is unchanged from the evil brothers that Joseph knew.

[22 : 26] Benjamin, in that case, would be safer with Joseph in Egypt than he would be with the older brothers, even if that meant that Benjamin would have to at least be temporarily separated from his own family.

So we have seen the test, we've seen the arrest, the last section of the lesson covers half of the chapter and that section has the protest.

The protest is your third section. Think about what we know considering the brothers. Reuben, the oldest, tried to lead twice during the earlier chapters, both times to no avail.

Nobody paid any attention to him. Simeon and Levi, the second and third born, respectively, have stepped up in the past to defend their sister, Dinah, and of course that was the most notorious episode, perhaps, in the family history.

We looked at that in chapter 34. However, here Simeon and Levi remain silent. The stage from this moment on belongs to Judah. Judah initiates the longest speech in Genesis.

[23 : 34] He pleads for Benjamin's life by explaining how the imprisonment of Benjamin would result in the old man's death. Then Judah will add a dramatic conclusion that shows how much he has changed.

When Judah made this speech, he had no idea how much of it would register with the gruff-talking Egyptian ruler. As far as Judah knew, the Egyptian ruler was unable to understand Hebrew.

The success of Judah's protest in his mind would come down to how well the interpreter translated Judah's appeal. Let's look at Judah's speech a few verses at a time, starting with verse 18.

Verse 18 says, Then Judah went up to him and said, O 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.

Judah is deferential here, almost to the point of groveling. With good reason, Judah shows himself to be somebody who sees Joseph as like Pharaoh himself.

[24 : 43] After all, Joseph did have power over them equal to what Pharaoh had, and Judah employs proper decorum by referring to himself in the third person when he seeks permission to speak.

When Judah is implicitly granted permission to speak, Judah first reminds this ruler of their conversation during the brother's first visit. We see that in verses 19 through 23.

Judah says, My Lord asked his servants, saying, Have you a father or a 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. 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.

[25 : 51] How accurately did Judah represent that first meeting there? But what he says, he says pretty accurately, but he represents their first meeting as mildly as possible.

He carefully omits any reference to the three accusations that they were spies. Remember how many times Joseph said that they were spies. He also omits any references to the three days that all of them spent in prison, and he doesn't mention Simeon's lengthy imprisonment while Simeon was waiting for them to come back for him.

Instead, his emphasis is on Jacob's grief and how precious Benjamin is to his father as the only remaining son of the only wife that Jacob truly loved.

Notice how Judah overemphasizes Benjamin's youth. He calls Benjamin a young brother and a child in verse 20. In verse 21, Judah calls Benjamin the boy.

In verse 22, Judah emphasizes to Joseph how the brothers previously said that their father will die if something happens to Benjamin. By this time, we've talked about before how Benjamin really isn't a boy.

[27 : 09] He's likely in his mid-30s. He has to be at least in his late-20s, but more likely he's in his mid-30s. Judah, though, is pulling on the heartstrings for all he's worth, but he's sincere here too.

Verses 24-29 provide Joseph with some new information, and we'll look at those verses now because those verses summarize what happened between the older brothers' trips to Egypt.

Starting in verse 24, Judah continues, 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 me and I said, surely he has been torn to pieces and I have never seen him since. Of course, he's talking about Joseph here. Then, verse 29 continues Judah's speech.

[28 : 21] If you take this one also from me and harm happens to him, you will bring down my gray hairs in evil to Sheol. And of course, in verse 29 there, Judah is quoting what his father had said to him.

Judah recognizes that Rachel, not Leah, was the wife whom his father really loved. Rachel gave Jacob two sons who were his obvious favorites. Judah supplies the background that defines the dilemma that he's in now.

Jacob's painful loss of Joseph was an event from which Jacob never truly recovered. Now that same deep love has been transferred to Benjamin and they're in this dilemma because now they risk going back to Canaan without their son that their father truly loves.

This had to be difficult for the brothers because they knew they weren't loved by their father. But here you see Judah wanting to make sure his father does not suffer another grief.

Judah explains that Benjamin is the surviving favorite sons and he explains that situation without any hint of envy. So we see a big difference here between the Judah standing before Joseph now and the Judah of chapter 37 who advocated selling Joseph into slavery.

[29 : 40] Consider what must have been going through Joseph's mind at this point. Joseph is sitting there listening to this and he's recalling his father's care for him as a boy.

He must have been moved by the speech's content and the fact that Judah was the one actually saying it. The very brother who had sold Joseph into slavery without a thought about what it would mean to their father.

Joseph also had to see the burden of pain that he'd felt necessary to lay on his brothers to get them to this point. But we see a transformed Judah speaking. Something had happened to the man's heart that was bringing him ever nearer and nearer to repentance.

Judah concludes his appeal in verses 30 through 34 with an amazing ending. He says, 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 he sees that the boy is not with us, he will die, and your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant our father with sorrow to Sheol.

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.

[30 : 59] 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. Once again, we see here that Judah's concern now is for his father.

He makes no appeal for his brothers in general, or even Benjamin in particular. His appeal is specifically focused on his father. Judah is doing what he's doing for Benjamin because of his father and the pledge that Judah had made to Jacob.

He's wanting to prevent Jacob from dying in grief over the loss of Benjamin. Judah's made that pledge to his father and he intends to keep it, even at great cost to himself, his own family, his home, and his freedom.

He's going to do whatever it takes to keep that pledge. Judah offers to remain a slave in Benjamin's place. This is the first instance of one person offering himself as a penal substitute for another in the Bible.

[32 : 10] Judah has such a deep love and affection for his father that he's willing to sacrifice himself for a brother more loved than he is. His father's favoritism is no longer a stumbling block for Judah.

Out of love, the favoritism has become the ground of Judah's self-sacrifice. As Judah offers himself as a ransom for his brother, his transformation is complete.

He's gone from the leading voice that led to Joseph's exile to being the voice surrendering himself and his freedom to return Benjamin to his father. The portrait we see here of Judah is a spiritual transformation.

Judah has been changed. The Lord has done the work in the Son of Promise. So Judah typifies the main idea for this chapter. Followers of God show evidence of genuine repentance from their sins. We've discussed throughout the Joseph studies that the story is not about Joseph, meaning that Joseph is not the main point. The main point of the book of Genesis, including Genesis 37-50, is to show the progression of redemptive history or how God will redeem his people from the curse of sin.

[33 : 26] Throughout Genesis, God shows that he's faithful to preserve the line of the seed who will redeem God's people. Judah's ascension here confirms our assertion that the Joseph narrative ultimately is not about Joseph.

As the famine materializes and we see its impact on Israel and his family, it becomes clearer why Joseph went to Egypt. However, as Judah emerges as the leader of the family, we see more clearly God's redemptive purpose, specifically his promise to bring forth a promised seed of the woman to conquer the serpent, all the way back in Genesis 3-15.

The redemption of this family is significant primarily because of their place in the broader redemptive history. God redeems this family to preserve the promised seed and bring forth the ultimate redeemer, and of course, that ultimate redeemer is Jesus.

We've known since chapter 38 that the line of Jesus would pass through Judah. Now we finally have seen Judah beginning to live up to that honor. Judah, like all true believers, is a new creation. Think about 2 Corinthians 5-17. 2 Corinthians 5-17 says, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away.

[34 : 50] Behold, the new has come. In addition to the main idea that true believers show evidence of genuine repentance, we can take a few other things from this chapter.

The first one is that if God can redeem Joseph's brothers, he can redeem anyone. If God can redeem Joseph's brothers, God can redeem anyone.

Judah's transformation stands out for good and obvious reasons. However, the other brothers showed signs of genuine repentance, too. They could have left Benjamin behind, but they all went back to Egypt to meet with Joseph.

The dysfunctional band of brothers is tainted by murder, incest, deceit, and kidnapping. That's about as bad as you can get. Yet, after all that they've done, God has redeemed them. This is good news on two fronts. Who among us has a track record worse than Reuben, Simeon, Levi, or Judah? Then Judah offering himself as a ransom for Benjamin is a reminder to us of God's amazing grace.

[35 : 59] The one that looked like he was hopeless now has hope not only for his family, but also for all of us. The second thing we can take away is that God guarantees the salvation of his chosen people.

God guarantees the salvation of his chosen people. God has not left the salvation of his people to chance, nor has he left it to us. God saves sinners because they cannot save themselves. Remember Philippians 2.13, It is God who works in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Then finally, we can also take away that Judah's offer to be a substitute foreshadows the then-future sacrifice of his greatest descendant, Jesus.

We talked about how chapter 44 has the first instance of one person offering himself as a penal substitute for another. But it's obviously not the last.

Another in the line of Judah will one day become the great penal substitute for fallen humanity. And of course, we're on the other side of that now. In the agonizing experience of Christ's death on the cross, there was a period more awful than the rest.

[37 : 17] That time was when Jesus was totally separated from the Father. That time was when Jesus was being made sin for us, bearing the punishment for our iniquities.

Jesus was separated temporarily from the presence of God. Christ offered himself for us. Think about that for just a minute. Christ offered himself for us.

Studying the changes that we saw in Judah tonight, we have seen Judah's love for his father. Looking at what Christ later did for us, we see the love that both Jesus and God have for true believers.

believers. In John 15, 13, Jesus reminds us, greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

We know that anyone who genuinely repents of sin and turns to God for salvation will be saved. 1 John 4, 10 reminds us, and this is love, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation or the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

[38 : 29] Benjamin had Judah to give him a temporary reprieve. We have Jesus to give us an eternal reprieve, and that's why we can say, in this is love, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you not only for the evidence of how you transform people, people that truly don't deserve your salvation, but whom you graciously saved anyway.

We see that in Judah and his brothers, but we also see that in ourselves, if we're honest, and we thank you for that as well. We also thank you for the picture that we've seen tonight of Judah offering himself for somebody else, and we thank you that somebody greater than Judah, offered himself for us.

As we head to Thanksgiving, let us truly be thankful for that. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.