

A STORY OF GRACE/ WEEK 7 NOTES
Victorious Grace/ Genesis 39-50

Introduction. Throughout the life of Jacob, we have seen God's sovereign and sustaining grace. God has been faithful to Jacob in every change, crisis, and sinful season. God has blessed Jacob abundantly. These last chapters are filled with God's amazing and victorious grace. While it is impossible to read every verse in class, I trust you will read them on your own. As you read, ask the Lord to open your spiritual eyes to see the goodness and grace of God continuing in Jacob's life and the life of his family. Ask God to make you keenly aware of His grace in your own life. The first part of today's lesson will only be snapshots of Jacob's life, highlighting God's grace toward Jacob and his family.

Snapshots of Grace.

Chapter 39-40. Joseph has been sold into slavery in Egypt. He prospers in Potiphar's house. He is unjustly thrown in jail and must wait for years to be released. He is eventually called upon to interpret Pharaoh's dream. God blesses Joseph and he is elevated to a high position in Egypt. This position will allow Joseph to eventually preserve his entire family. God is at work. His sovereign plan cannot be thwarted by the sins of man (Joseph's brothers, Potiphar's wife) Five times in Chapter 39, Scripture reminds us, "the Lord is with Joseph" (Genesis 39: 2, 3, 5, 21, 23). Grace blesses and sustains Joseph. Notice in chapter 40, God blesses Joseph with two sons. Their names reflect no bitterness in Joseph for what has been done to him by his brothers. Joseph is well aware that God's sovereign grace is at work.

Chapter 42-44. While these chapters seem to be a "cat and mouse" game between Joseph and his brothers. God is at work in the details. God is convicting the brothers (42:21-22), carrying out His sovereign plans, and mending a family. Grace! *Genesis 43* begins to set Judah apart as the leader of his brothers. God is at work in Judah...the one who left home, lived with Canaanites, had a child through Tamar. Read 43:2, 8-10. The brothers take Benjamin with them as they go to Egypt for the second time. (It is a 600-mile trip). They meet with Joseph again, but again do not recognize him. The brothers are afraid of the "man". Joseph sees his younger full brother Benjamin for the first time in 22 years. Joseph is overcome with emotion and leaves the room to weep. Joseph's heart is tender towards his family even after all these years. Grace! (6 times in these last chapters, Joseph weeps). The brothers are thankful that Joseph is showing favor towards them, but they are not yet repentant (verses 43:26-34). Chapter 44, the brothers must return home, but Joseph devises a plan to keep Benjamin in Egypt and also to test the attitude of his brothers toward Benjamin. Judah steps up and makes an impassioned plea for Benjamin to go home with them (44:14-34). In his speech, Judah admits/repents of their sin. (Verse 33:16) The conviction of sin in chapter 42 becomes the repentance of sin in Chapter 44. Grace is at work. Furthermore, Judah mentions his father 13 times in his speech, each time with compassion and concern. Judah even offers to stay in Benjamin's place, as a substitute. God is giving us a glimpse of Christ in Judah. Grace!

Chapter 45. Joseph sees the change in his brothers. He clears the room and reveals himself to his brothers. Shock sets in. *Read for yourselves the moving words of Joseph and his actions towards his brothers. (45:1-8).* Amazing grace is at work. Sustaining, softening, redeeming, forgiving. Joseph tells them to go home and bring back not only their father Jacob but also the entire family to live and be cared for in Egypt. (Remember there is a terrible famine at the time. Egypt has grain because God provided through Joseph). Jacob receives the news with great joy, but also hesitation. He is very old and Egypt is very far away.

Chapter 46. In the hesitation, God meets Jacob again. Grace never stops. God reminds Jacob of the promises and presence and provision of The Lord. God tells Jacob to go to Egypt. Joseph provides wagons and supplies for their transport. Verse 28, Judah leads. Read 46:28-29. Jacob and Joseph see each other for the first time in 22 years. The emotion is palpable. Grace!

Chapters 47-50. Jacob returns as a major part of the storyline alongside Joseph. Jacob is not the same man he used to be. He is characterized by blessing and worship(45:8-10) Jacob is 130 years old. Yes, he has some regrets about his life but he is not bitter nor is he self-seeking. He is a humble servant of God, living in God's promises. Gen. 47:28-31 solidifies Joseph as Jacob's choice to be the first-born of the family. The first-born had the responsibility of making funeral arrangements. Joseph has been sworn to the task. 47:31 Jacob worships. *Chapter 48* is very interesting and gives us insight about our relationship with God through Christ. Jacob adopts Joseph's two sons. He is not taking Joseph's sons away from Joseph, he is giving Joseph a double portion of blessing (remember the first born inherits a double portion of the father's wealth). Jacob also puts his right hand on Ephraim the younger, signifying the younger will be greater than the older (Manasseh is still very blessed). We too are recipients of the blessings of adoption. Ephesians 1:5 tells us ,as believers in Christ, we have the position of an adult adopted son. We cannot be disowned and we are blessed to the fullest...through Christ by grace. When the nation of Israel leaves Egypt over 400 years later, God gives them the Promised Land and divides between the tribes (sons) of Jacob. God essentially gives Joseph a double portion of land. Both Ephraim and Manasseh receive land. Ephraim becomes one of the largest tribes and eventually the entire Northern Kingdom of Israel is sometimes referred to as Ephraim. Joseph's two sons replace Simeon and Levi who have been disqualified from their inheritance of land because of their sins at Shechem. Although Levi will become the priestly line, the Levites never inherit land. They are dispersed throughout the land in 45 different cities. Simeon's tribe is given land initially,, but they are later absorbed by the tribe of Judah. Later lists of the twelve tribes do not include the tribe of Simeon. Levi and Simeon do not lose their blessing of living in the Promise Land, but they do lose the blessing of "owning" land. Grace is at work even in the consequences of sin.

Chapter 49 Jacob gives a prophetic blessing over his sons. The words are appropriate for each son. These words reach far into the future, playing out throughout the Old Testament history of the nation of Israel. We looked briefly at 5 of these prophetic words. Gen 49:3-4 are to Rueben. He is formally stripped of the rights of the firstborn because he slept with Bilhah, his father's concubine/slave wife. Gen 49:5-7 combine Simeon and Levi, cursing both for their sin and cruelty. These are the only two to receive such a rebuke. *Genesis 49:1-13 is for Judah. Read carefully.* He is the leader, the chosen to carry on the lineage of Christ. Kings will come from his line until the one comes to whom it all belongs. (Shiloh=Messiah) Grace! Genesis 49:22-26 is for Joseph, the longest blessing given (still the favorite and now the first born)

Chapter 50. Jacob dies. He is 147 years old. Joseph weeps and Egypt mourns for 70 days. His body is embalmed and taken 600 miles back to Hebron in Canaan. He is buried in the cave of Machpelah with Abraham, Sarah, Issac, Rebekah, and Leah. Jacob's life has been a journey both literally and spiritually. He began in Hebron as a deceiver and is buried there as a worshipper. Grace has been there every step of the way and God's grace changed everything.

So how do we respond to this magnificent grace that has been offered to us?

1. **Live by Faith.** Hebrews 11;...without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith is trusting God enough to obey him. We have hope—confidence that God is who He says He is and He will do what He says He will do. Our hope is firm; therefore, we trust and obey, we exercise faith. Faith is believing **and** doing. Obedience is not robotic. It is a response to God's goodness and faithfulness. Obedience is the greatest place of freedom. Romans 6:11-14 and 16-23 are key verses in understanding the freedom that comes with obedience. Living in obedience is a daily choice. We die daily to ourselves. (Luke 9:23, Galatians 2:20). Peace is one of the results of obedience (Philippians 4:9)

2. **Live in the Blessings.** We like, Ephraim and Manasseh, have been given the position of adoption... richly blessed. Jacob was not obligated to adopt Joseph's sons. He did it because he delighted in Joseph and therefore delighted in his sons. God delights in His son Jesus therefore He delights in us as

well, joint heirs with Christ...His children. *Delight means "to see and enjoy what is seen."* God does not delight in us because of anything we have done. He delights in us because of who we are. We cannot earn His delight. Remember who you are! God delights in you! Read Zephaniah 3:17 and Jeremiah 32:40-41. As New Testament believers, we do not inherit a land. We inherit a life. We are free to live in the blessings of our life in Christ. Live fully in His blessing (Ephesian1-3). Like children splashing joyfully in the rain...live joyfully and fully in all that God has done for us and all we have been given in Christ. Faith is the key. "Trust and Obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey"

3. **Leave a Legacy.** We all have a few ragged chapters in our stories. However, grace can cover those chapters and they do not have to be our legacy. Jacob had Shechem but Shechem did not define Jacob. Grace defines him. His final years are filled with worship, blessing, forgiveness, redemption and GRACE. This is his ultimate legacy...a Story of Grace. Grace is our legacy as well, regardless of the rough patches along the way. If we know Christ, our journey , like Jacob's will end in victory. Grace wins.

I have learned to love Jacob. I see myself in his failures, his stubborn, willful choices, and his unwillingness to surrender. But most of all, I see God's sovereign and sustaining grace at work in Jacob's life... and I see His sovereign, sustaining grace in your life and mine too. Grace is amazing.