

## *Awakened by Grace*

*Genesis 42:1-38*

*“Once we discover the wonder of God’s grace, the law can no longer lock us in. We can approach life freely because we love God and won’t want to do anything to harm the loving relationship we have with Him. When we know the joy of fellowship with God, we won’t want any barriers or any blocks to come between us.*

*In fact, the more we experience God’s love, the more He Himself becomes the primary desire and focus of our life. The coercive aspects of the law become unnecessary. We find ourselves longing to please God simply because we love Him.*

*And that is the greatest joy in life; to experience a genuine love relationship with God. To know that He is for us, that He loves us, is the greatest source of security any person will ever know. Discovering the glorious grace of God was one of the most important events in my whole spiritual experience. I learned to relate to God on an entirely new basis—not on the basis of my works or of my righteousness, but on the basis of God’s love for me through Jesus Christ.*

*Grace transforms desolate and bleak plains into rich, green pastures. It changes grit-your-teeth duty into loving, enthusiastic service. It exchanges the tears and guilt of our own failed efforts for the eternal thrill and laughter of freely offered pleasures at the right hand of God. Grace changes everything!” Chuck Smith*

- I. The patriarchs, fathers of the tribes of Israel, desperately needed a work of God’s grace in their hearts to prepare them for the fulfillment of His covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The power of grace was the means God used to bring their sin hardened consciences to an awareness of their need for repentance and forgiveness before Him. If these men were to be used by God as the ones whose descendants would make up the Jewish nation, then God needed to do a ***mighty work of grace in their hearts*** to get them God centered in their thinking. God’s grace can take on many forms. It is what our salvation is based on. It is freely given because of faith, not works. It is underserved, always offered, never earned. It is what works in the most undeserving, apathetic, godless, thankless, hardened hearts to bring sinners to repentance. It is poured into our hearts in increasing measure because it flows from the heart of God for our good.

**Eph. 2:8-9** *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

**Rom. 6:23** *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

- II. We know that we are saved by grace. We also know that we are to, like God, be grace givers. It's our responsibility as those entrusted with the gospel of grace to express His grace in a fallen world. What we'll see in the closing chapters of the book of Genesis is God giving grace to men who didn't in anyway deserve it. Joseph had every reason to harshly judge his brothers for what they did to him. The reason He didn't, was because he understood God's grace and what it had meant for him over the years. Being a grace giver is especially hard to understand for those who have been conditioned by legalism. When someone feels there has been a violation of their rules, perspective, or outlook on life, especially when their mindset has not in any way been conditioned by the grace of the Scriptures that sees God's grace coming through time and time again, they lack grace in how they respond to whatever it is that doesn't meet their approval. His grace compels us to live well for him by bearing the fruit of righteousness in how we treat others with grace and with the understanding that we are all sinners saved by grace. Grace brings peace to fractured relationships, difficult work environments, sick churches, bad attitudes, anxious living, and the unending stressors we all deal with day by day. Grace doesn't accept sin in ourselves or in others. It instead offers the freedom that only true repentance can bring. Grace allows godly sorrow to take root in a heart that has yet to see its need for repentance. It takes a stand on what is moral, just, and right in God's eyes without compromise to the ways of the world. It is expressed through true believers saved by grace as salt and light in a world in desperate need of the gospel of grace.

Gen. 42:1-7

Eph. 2:8-9

**Eph. 4:7** *But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.*

**2 Cor. 7:10** *Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.*

- III. God will use whatever means of grace necessary (e.g., the seven-year trib.) to move sinners in need of a Savior to a true heartfelt repentance before Him. Behind repentance is conviction of sin and the need for salvation from its guilt and shame before an almighty God. Therefore, a recognition of sin, and the need for forgiveness through repentance, is an important part of believing the gospel. Otherwise, there would be no need for a Savior. In the case of Joseph's brothers, God used a famine and Joseph's harshness toward them to move them to acknowledge their guilt. He moved them to the point of shame and desperation to humble them and make them face their sin, that's grace. What transpired after that brought reconciliation, joy and forgiveness as God healed a fractured family for the sake fulfilling His incredible promises to them. *"Grace changes everything."*

Gen. 42:8-38

Col. 1:15-22

Gen. 28:13-15

**2 Peter 3:9** *The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.*

*"Conviction of sin is one of the rarest things that ever strikes a man. It is the threshold of an understanding of God. Jesus Christ said that when the Holy Spirit came He would convict of sin, and when the Holy Spirit rouses the conscience and brings him into the presence of God, it is not his relationship with men that bothers him, but his relationship with God." Oswald Chambers*