

**Genesis 43: 18-34; "God has given you Treasure", Sermon # 106
in the series - "Beginnings", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on July 29th, 2007, in the Morning Worship Service.**

There are many lessons related to the gift of salvation which Christ by His Holy Spirit teaches unbelievers as He is leading them to the place where He reveals Himself personally to those whom God has chosen. A person who is thus being drawn to Christ may not understand the reasons for many unusual things that are happening to them but they will find the grace of Christ to be irresistible. This is the picture that is being given to us in the verses that I have just read to you. We have seen in past studies that Joseph was intending to save his brothers from their predicament of not having grain, but in the process of doing so, he would also teach them how much he loved them personally. His love, however, was sometimes hidden for awhile from them, and concealed behind a mask of suspicion and disapproval. "Strange way to show love," you say to me. Perhaps, but all of God's purposes in salvation must have their accomplishment. We have seen in past studies that Joseph so ordered his relationship with his brothers during this time period before he revealed himself to them, that he brought them to conviction over their former sins against him. He also led them to the place where they would have to lose their life so that they might find it. Both of these are essential lessons to learn as we are coming to Jesus Christ for salvation and as we are living the Christian life. This morning, there is another lesson that Joseph would teach his brothers.

It is often the case with unbelievers whom God is intending to save from their sins, that they do not understand the ways of God's gracious dealings with them. They are expecting favor to be shown to them based upon their own preparations and works, when in reality they will be shown mercy and grace simply because Jesus Christ would demonstrate his love and generosity to every sinner who comes to Him looking for salvation. So we are asking, "What are the spiritual misconceptions that these brothers had concerning Joseph's loving generosity, which are the same misconceptions that needy sinners often have today, in regard to our Lord Jesus Christ?" And as we look more carefully into the words of our text, I believe that we can see that they had 3 spiritual misconceptions, which perhaps you might have as well. When I relate them to you, I hope that it will convince you to draw near to Christ so that you may partake of the rich spiritual blessings which He has prepared for you.

1st of all- Joseph's brothers did not understand that his inviting them into his house was not for the purpose of making them slaves. (Verses 18-23)

"Then the man did as Joseph ordered, and man brought the men into Joseph's house," it says in verse 17. When we take Joseph to be a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we have been in these studies, how can we apply this invitation given by Joseph to his brothers to come to his house? We can apply it by thinking about what it means to be brought to church for the first time. I wonder if you remember the first time that you were brought into an evangelical, Bible-believing church? Or even more amazing; when you were brought into a Reformed church which holds to the doctrines of grace and a serious and reverent worship? Truly it is an experience to remember. Verse 18 says, "Now the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, 'It is because of the money which was returned into our sacks the first time, that we are brought in , so that he may make a case against us and seize us, to take us as slaves with our donkeys.'" Now, this was intended to be a special treat to them, a special gift given to them. Joseph was showing them his good intentions toward them. He was showing them that he had a real concern for their welfare. He was attempting to convince them particularly that he was intending great good for them. But they did not believe it at first. They came into Joseph's house because they knew that this was going to be the only way that they could obtain food for their stomachs. But God and Joseph intended something much more.

And this is often how it is when a person who knows themselves, in general, to be a sinner who needs salvation. They know that there are problems in their lives. They are afraid. They suspect that the Lord is making a case against them and is intending to seize them and take them to be his slaves, along with everything that own that is of any real value. This is often why they are so shy of coming to church. They are afraid of what might happen to them and what they might lose of their present life. When a person is first thinking about what coming to know the Lord might mean, these are the kind of thoughts that come to them. They do not see the good things that the Lord will do for them in bringing them into His house, the church. They fear that they are entering a sort of bondage from which they will not be able to escape. No man can convince them differently. They must be convinced by the Lord Himself that this is not true. They know that they have physical needs that must be met, and often the Lord will arrange their circumstances and work in their hearts, so that they will see that it would good and helpful to themselves if they went to church. They

see Jesus as the answer to receiving real and tangible help for themselves, but they do not, as of yet, realize the depth of the problem of sin in their hearts. They simply would like the Lord to help them. They are blind to who Jesus really is, as the Savior of the World, who will save them from all of their sins. They see Him as simply as the One who will help them through their present trial. The Lord Jesus is not the absolute and permanent Savior and teacher. But he is, to them, the only answer through their current predicament. Let me ask the question to you plainly.

Is this you? Are you afraid of becoming the Lord's slave? Are you afraid that He is making a case against you because of your past sins, or even a case against you based on things that you really have not done? You need to know that "Jesus did not come into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." He knows everything that has brought you to this point in your life. He really does know every sinner who comes to Him; why they are coming and what they need. Do not be afraid of coming into His house, the church. This is the place where often he shows His greatest kindnesses and reveals His saving love. You have nothing to be afraid of. You have everything to gain and nothing but sin and ignorance to lose. The help that Christ gives, the greatest help that He will bring to you will come through the preaching and teaching of His Word, and that takes place in His house, the church. He sends a helper to begin and to continue the good work of revealing Himself.

In our story, Joseph's steward is a good picture of the Holy Spirit. He is acting on Joseph's express orders. In verse 19, it says, "When they drew near to the steward of Joseph's house, they talked with Him at the door of the house, and said, 'O sir, we indeed came down the first time to buy food; but it happened, when we came to the encampment, that we opened our sacks, and there, each man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it back in our hand.'" "And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food." "We do not know who put our money in our sacks." These words do indeed show us what the major concern is, in the hearts of sinners as they come to Christ for help. It is, in their minds, the idea that they are sincerely trying to do the right thing, that they are sincerely trying to transact with Him salvation based upon their works and their being responsible for themselves and trying to righteously pay for the things that they need and the things that they want in this life. Christ, by means of His Spirit, must convince them that salvation is not by their works, but He does this without destroying the sincerity of the sinner to want to do whatever he or she can to help themselves and to be responsible. This is truly a legitimate concern in

righteousness, for it is wrong not to pay for the things that we need to sustain our lives, the things that we come to obtain from, or through, other men. But you must understand this morning that the things that God gives in relation to eternal life, the things that He gives us, that will lead us to be responsible and prosperous in His sight; they all come to us freely by His grace. This is a truth that the Holy Spirit has to convince every person of, who comes to Jesus Christ looking for salvation. It is a truth which affects everything we do in coming through the door of salvation and in living the Christian life.

In verse 23 it says that Joseph's steward said, "Peace be with you, do not be afraid." "Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money." "Then he brought Simeon out to them." Christ's steward, the Holy Spirit sees all of our intentions. If you are coming to Jesus Christ for help and salvation, you must come to understand that it is the very real work of the Holy Spirit to speak comfort and peace to you when you are doing the right thing. "Peace be with you." "Do not be afraid." The Holy Spirit is the porter, or the steward, at the door of Christ's house. He is the One who lets people in and through the door of Christ's house. You will find that the Lord Jesus Himself speaks of Him in this Divinely appointed office of His in John Chapter 10, verses 1-6. "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." "But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep." (Jesus is speaking of the difference between true and false teachers and especially relating it in the context of Himself being true.) He says in verse 3, "To him," that is the true teacher, "the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and calls his own sheep by name and leads them out." "And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice." "Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." "Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them." "Then Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.' Verse 9, "If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture." You see, Christ is the door, and the Holy Spirit is the doorkeeper to your entering into all the blessings of salvation and entering in the house of the Lord. Favor will be shown to you to enter Christ's house, and into the blessings of salvation, not on the basis of your best works, not on the basis of your best intentions, but because of Christ's grace. He has your money, but He gives it back to you, and you cannot

understand why. But salvation is all of grace. You see how truly gracious, and loving, and generous He is.

2ndly- Joseph's brothers did not understand that his gracious inquiries about their father were not a reason why they should have a craven fear of him. (Verses 24-30)

"So the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys feed." "Then they made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there." "And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed down before him to the earth." This present, we saw last week, was the present of their sincere desire to show Joseph their good intentions; the fact that they were not only "honest men", but also that they had the desire to bring something to him which would show him their heart to please him, in giving to him things that would please and delight and refresh him. Then he would know for sure that they were true men; so they thought. And indeed it was a good thing for them to do. It says in verse 26, "And when Joseph came home they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed down before him to the earth." It is always a good thing when you come into the house of the Lord, that you come with the intention of giving Him the gift of your sincere attention, to see if perhaps you might find mercy from Him during the preaching of His word. It is often in His house where the greatness of Christ's mercy and grace are grasped.

But when we come to church we should realize that as He is speaking to us through His Words, that He is also inquiring about our welfare and the welfare of the people who are closest to us as well. He is especially concerned, and He is asking for the thoughts of our hearts, the thoughts of our minds; what our impression is of the welfare of the Christians who have brought us to the place where we have come to church. Do you think about your sainted father and his welfare? Do you think about your loving mother and all the prayers that both she and your father have prayed for you, that you might come to this place and receive the blessings of salvation by listening to the Word of Christ? Are their hopes for your salvation and eternal blessing being realized? Verse 27 says, "Then he asked them about their well-being, and said, 'Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke?' "Is he still alive?" "And they answered, 'Your servant our father is in good health; he is still alive.'" "And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves." "And Joseph lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, 'Is this your younger brother of

whom you spoke to me?" "And he said, 'God be gracious to you my son.'" "Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought somewhere to weep." "And he went into his chamber and wept there." Jesus Christ remembers the Christian father or mother who prays and hopes for the salvation of their children. Jesus Christ is the man who wept over Jerusalem and the hardness of the hearts of those who did not recognize the time of His visitation to them with the words of grace. I wonder if we truly understand the heart of our Lord Jesus and how as a man He truly must weep in secret over many of us. Joseph's heart yearned over His brother Benjamin. And so too, the heart of our Lord Jesus yearns for each and every sinner who has been "given to Him by His father", to come to him and to learn of Him. He truly cares for you more deeply than any man can.

The brothers "bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves to Joseph" twice in this conversation. I believe that they were still afraid of what Joseph's intentions were toward them. They wanted to make sure that he knew that they were straightforward and sincere in all their intentions. But Joseph only wanted them to know how much he loved them and how much he wanted God's blessing for them. "God be gracious to you, my son," he says to Benjamin and then cannot hold back his tears. He must leave the room. So too, I am sure, that the Lord Jesus has great and mighty affections in His heart for the salvation of sinners, and for the loving obedience of His saints, that no one knows but Himself. Do you realize this today, as I speak to you, that Christ is seated on the throne of grace, and although His eyes are a flame of fire, as it says in one place; that it is also just as true that He is the God-man who is filled with compassion, pity, love, and feeling for all those who come to Him for grace. Oh, that I could convey to the depths of this love of Jesus Christ. How ready and eager He is to save you and help you. How I long to convince you to, by faith, apply to Him for grace. How He yearns over His Elect people's salvation. How open and generous He is with His grace to all who will come to Him. There is no reason for a craven fear. Every knee will indeed bow and every tongue confess Him, even those who go away to eternal destruction, but there is no need for craven fear now. Come unto Jesus and find every blessing.

And then 3rdly and finally- Joseph's brothers did not understand why Benjamin should have 5 times as much as the rest of them at the meal that was served. (Verses 31-34)

"Then Joseph washed his face and came out; and he restrained himself, and said, 'Serve the bread.'" "So they set him a place by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because

the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians." "And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in astonishment at one another." "Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs." "So they drank and were merry with him." Now what does all this mean for us? I think that we can apply in this way. Christ Jesus is now in a "place by Himself" in regard to dining with His people and the people of the world. He is seated at the right hand of the majesty on high. He watches over the affairs of all men, and He notices everything. All power and all authority in heaven and earth have been given to Him. Worldly people may come to church, and they may partake of the same sermon, the same meal of the gospel and yet they are not brought into the same kind of communion as those who are coming. This is because of their own prejudices, and not because of a lack of good-will on the part of the Master of the House. It says concerning the Egyptians, that eating food with the Hebrews was "an abomination" to them. Both the Egyptians and the Hebrews ate at this meal, but not together. So the person who would hold on to the World and their own ideas of salvation cannot eat with the Hebrews, those people who chosen of God for salvation. This is not Christ's fault, for He desires that all would partake and be saved. He knows that all will not, but still this is His holy desire.

Among those who are to become Christians, some receive greater measures of grace than others, and we who are Christians do not understand this. We tend to think that all grace should be equally dispensed. But grace and truth are distributed by Christ according to the measure of His gift. In Romans chapter 12 it says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." "For I say to you, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith." "For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another." And Ephesians 4: 7 says the same thing. "But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift." "Therefore He says: 'When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.'" Why did Joseph give 5 times as

much to Benjamin as he did to the rest of the brothers? Well, for one thing, I am sure that he wanted to test the brothers to see if their eye would be envious as it had been toward him 20 years before. His father had favored him and they hated him as a result. He had had dreams of their bowing down to him and his father said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed?" "Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" And then it says, "And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind." Whenever you see a brother or a sister who seems to have been given more grace and gifts than have been given to you, what do you do? Do you envy them? Do you say, "I sure wish that I could be favored like that!" Or do you consider the matter and say, "Surely God has given them this for His own good reasons. I should be glad for them, but I will not envy it, for God's purposes for them, having been given so much, is that much shall be required of them. It says in verse 34, "Then Joseph took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's was five times as much as any of theirs." It was Joseph that took them their servings. And it says then, "So they drank and were merry with him." That is with Benjamin. They rejoiced even though they did not know the reason for this. So too, we ought to rejoice over those who have been given what appears to us to be much greater grace and gifts than we have. We ought to be merry over them and to thank God for this unequal distribution which fulfills His good purposes and His good pleasure.

The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15: 10 - "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." "Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed." The truth is, that none of us deserve the gift of salvation, and when Christ is serving at the table, it may appear that others are receiving more than you receive. But He knows what measure of grace is right for you; what it will take to save you, and what it will take to sustain your soul, your body, and faith in the days after you come to Him for salvation. Come and receive grace from Christ in the way spoken of by Joseph's steward in Genesis 43: 23. "Peace be with you, do not be afraid." "Your God and God of your father has given you treasure in you're your sacks." For that is what God's grace is, treasure in the hearts of all those whom God chooses to show mercy to.