



Viewfield Baptist Church

To enable people to become fully devoted
followers of Jesus Christ

Joseph Study Leaflet

Sunday 1st September

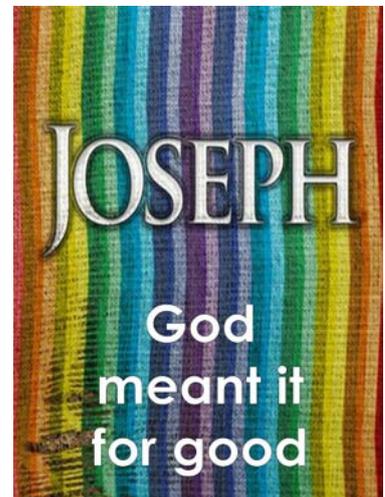
Sermon 17
“Amazing Grace”
Genesis 45v16-28

This study guide will be used in our Small Groups, but can also be used by individuals.

You can download or listen to a recording of the sermon at this link:

<http://www.viewfield.org.uk/media/podcasts>

Leaflets about our small groups are available on the teabar. If you would like to join a small group, please speak to our Pastor, Rae, or to Pete Hutchison.



Viewfield Baptist Church

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Sermon 17 “Amazing Grace”

Many people have sought to define the word Grace. Writers, artists, poets and lyricists have all tried to explore this beautiful concept. Bono, of the band U2, penned the song “Grace”, seeking to communicate its beauty, impact and transformative power.

Grace, she takes the blame, she covers the shame, Removes the Stain, it could be her name. It's a name for a girl, it's a thought that has changed the world. Grace simply means unmerited favour.

In recent years, audiences worldwide have watched a drama of forgiveness played out onstage in the musical version of *Les Misérables*. In this story, we see a powerful illustration about grace, mercy and forgiveness. The musical follows Victor Hugo's sprawling novel, in telling the story of Valjean, a French prisoner hounded, and ultimately transformed by forgiveness.

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Here in this story great story in Genesis we see Joseph show amazing grace to his brothers. He shows unmerited favour on those who had left him for dead and sold him as a slave. He is now convinced of their heart change and is reconciled to his brothers **v14-15**. We have a picture here of a new family, a new community of the forgiven and the reconciled. It is a picture of what the church should be, a place where fallen and sinful people find themselves accepted and included again. A gracious community. As Abigail Van Buren once said: *“The church is a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints.”*

Joseph had been willing to forgive, God's hand was in it and they discussed what had happened in the intervening years. However, things were not yet complete. The desire of Joseph's heart was to see his Father and get all his family to move to Egypt so he could provide for them without reservation and without limitation. We pick up the story where the news of all these happenings have reached the ears of Pharaoh. Let's see what we learn from verses **16-28**.

1/ An offer too good to refuse v16-24

Joseph had already stated to his brothers his generous invitation that they and all their families, their flocks and herds would come and live in the land of Goshen. This was some of the most fertile land in Egypt. This gracious offer appeared too good to be true. With the brothers now reconciled, there is an invitation from the king to all the children of Israel to come and enjoy the best of all Egypt. This invitation given to a people near the end of hope and to brothers burdened with guilt, can hardly fail to remind Christians of God's gracious invitation to us.

We were told in **verse 2** that Joseph wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him and Pharaoh's household heard it. Clearly, the news of what was happening spread like wildfire. We are told in **verse 16** that: *“When the news reached Pharaoh's palace that Joseph's brothers had come, Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased.”*

Pharaoh is in agreement with Joseph and confirms this generous and gracious offer that was too good to refuse. **V17-20**

Pharaoh then continued: *“You are also directed to tell them.” V19*. In the King James translation, it says: *“Now thou art commanded, this do ye.”* In other words, all that Joseph requested the Pharaoh made legal. This reminds us of the perfect unity in the Godhead. For there is no disagreement between the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is also part of the Godhead. The Godhead three in one is a community of perfect harmonious loving relationships. Jesus was dedicated to pleasing his Father. At

the age of twelve, he said: ***"I must be about my Father's business."*** Luke 2v49. I wonder do we have such a desire to be pleasing our Father in heaven?

So Pharaoh urges Joseph to shower his family with all they need and more. **READ v17-20**

They are given the means of transport for the journey (carts) and all they will need for the journey. We are told in v21 that Joseph ***"gave them provisions for their journey."*** And so, on our journey of faith our God provides for all our needs. **Philippians 4v19** says: ***"And my God shall supply all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."***

To each of them he gave new clothing. **V22**. There is a touch of irony in this, for the trouble between him and his brothers had started with his Father giving him the coat of many colours. That had caused hostility. Now Joseph gives his brothers new outfits, but this time they symbolise reconciliation.

It was the standing and accomplishments of Joseph that make the king show favour to these people. There is a lesson here for all of us. There is nothing in us that deserves the generosity of God towards us. It is because of the righteousness and the work of another, namely our representative Jesus who, like Joseph, was humbled before being exalted, that we are treated with great favour by God.

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2/ Have I got news for you v25-28

We are told in verse 25 that they travelled to their father, Jacob in Canaan. Can you imagine what they were thinking? How on earth are we going to tell him this news? Will we tell him the full story?

It is striking how these brothers tell the Father the news considering their previous preoccupation with wealth and material things. They are not preoccupied with how rich they are now because of Joseph but rather they focus on the relational aspect of it. They told their father: ***"Joseph is still alive. In fact, he is the ruler of all Egypt."*** They are concerned to talk about their brother and not their riches. They are rejoicing that he is ruler of all Egypt. Rather than being envious, they are proud of him.

The grace of God through the generosity of their brother Joseph had touched their hearts. The amazing grace that had been lavished upon them was changing them. I wonder is the grace of God changing us? Will we be agents of his grace?

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Jacob was not prepared for what his sons were telling him. We are told in **verse 26** that he was stunned. Some translations say: ***"his heart fainted."*** The Hebrew text literally says: ***"His heart grew numb."*** He was in utter shock. No wonder. In his heart and mind he had Joseph buried a long time ago. He had given up any hope of seeing him again. Now he is told that Joseph is alive and Prime Minister of Egypt. We are told in **verse 26** that he did not believe them. He didn't believe them because he didn't trust them. There had been so much dishonesty in the family over the years. We learn here the damage that telling lies causes. It damages your reputation and your testimony. **Proverbs 12v22:** ***"The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful."***

Jacob becomes convinced his sons are telling the truth. Joseph was alive. With that realisation, Jacob was revived in the sense of all his hopes and dreams came alive again.

Jacob's response to the Carts reminds us of the response of the disciples when the women come with their news from the empty tomb, saying that JESUS IS ALIVE. Like the disciples, Jacob is stunned and sceptical of such improbable news. Then he is won over by improbable proofs, just as the disciples were. **READ Acts 1v3.**

The word Gospel means good news. Have I got news for you today? Jesus is alive.

He truly is the Son of God, sent into the world. He really did die on the cross at Golgotha, Jerusalem. On the third day, he did rise from the dead and he ascended to heaven as the saviour of the world where he reigns and one day he is coming back. Through faith in Christ, we can be forgiven and reconciled to God.

We don't deserve his favour. But he graciously reaches out to us. This is an offer that sounds too good to be true. But it is oh so good and oh so true. But it's too good to refuse. It is wonderful news. JESUS IS ALIVE.

His grace is enough. May his grace change our lives.

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Bible study questions

Icebreaker: "Describe an occasion when someone has shown you amazing grace?"

1. Define Grace? Why is grace so amazing?
2. In what ways should the church be a hospital for sinners rather than a museum for saints?
3. What did Joseph offer the brothers? Why was this too good an offer to refuse?
4. Joseph provided for the needs of his brothers. In what ways does God provide for our needs? Please give examples.
5. Pharaoh makes Joseph's offer legal. He does so because of the respect he has for Joseph. He was the brother's representative. Describe the significance of Jesus being our representative before the Father.
6. What do we learn about the change in the brother's hearts from verses 25-28?
7. How is the grace of God changing our hearts?
8. What convinced Jacob that his sons were telling the truth?
9. Why is speaking the truth so essential?
10. The Gospel is good news for all people. In what ways are we sharing this message with others?

Application: "Share your faith with someone this week."