

## Joseph, Sermon #14

Genesis 44

When we started our series on the Life of Joseph, the ten brothers demonstrated two character traits—one was hatred and the other was envy.

- Joseph has just given the test of envy to his brothers by blessing Benjamin with five times as much food.
- The ten brothers showed no signs of jealousy.

But, there is another test coming.

I've entitled today's message "Over-Matched"—we cannot sin and win!

Genesis 44:1

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word.

Genesis 44:1-13

Let us pray.

You may be seated.

## Over-Matched

Proverbs 28:13, *“He that covereth [hides, conceals, secrecy] his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”*—this is what God desires.

These ten brothers have concealed a great sin:

- They sold Joseph into slavery and lied to their father—leading him to believe that Joseph was dead.
- For over twenty years, the ten brothers have not told the truth.
- They weren’t afraid of being exposed because the only person who could witness against them was Joseph, and they were sure he was dead (Gen. 44:20).

But the truth had to come out.

Chapter 44 is going to give us an assortment of attitudes, beginning with cheerfulness.

### I. First, they were overjoyed.

From 43:18, 23e, 24, and 34e, this was a time of transition as the brothers moved from fear to peace.

- They hadn’t been arrested for stealing the grain money,
- Simeon had been released,
- Benjamin was safe.

So Joseph’s brothers ate and drank as if there were no famine in the land, and they rejoiced at the generosity of the ruler at the head table.

They had been honored guests at a wonderful feast, and the generous ruler had sent them on their way with their sacks full of grain.

It was indeed a happy day.

But their joy was only a mirage.

Theirs was a false and transient joy, because the brothers had not yet dealt with their sins.

It had become a way of life—married couples, teenagers . . .

I've seen pastors carrying on adulterous relationships.

It is one thing to be relieved and quite something else to be forgiven and reconciled.

- They needed to ask Joseph's forgiveness for the way they had abused him—they can't do that
- They needed to ask God's forgiveness for what they had done, Genesis 42:21
- And, they owed their father an apology for deceiving him and grieving his heart all these years—they had opportunity to do that.

Genesis 44:16—we can fool people, but we cannot fool God; we are over-matched.

Authentic joy and peace can never be based on lies; they must be founded on truth.

- No real joy in adultery—sweet to the taste; gravel in your stomach in the end.
- No real joy in sin—sin is only pleasurable for a season.

To build a life—teenager, a marriage—on lies (sin) is to build on sinking sand and invite the chastening of God.

Apart from righteousness, there can be no real peace, but only a fragile truce that eventually erupts into war—internally and externally.

Sow to the flesh, reap a whirlwind.

**Galatians 6:7-8**, *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”*

To experience false joy and peace is a perilous thing, and to think that we're right with God because life is easier and problems less threatening is to court disaster.

As it was in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah—religious people indifferent to their own sins.

Anything short of humble repentance and confession will not bring about reconciliation with God or with one another.

For the ten brothers, everything was going well; bags were full of corn—another successful trip.

They are happy.

*“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” Proverbs 14:12.*

So, the eleven brothers are overjoyed on their way home.

But, Joseph has something else up his sleeve.

First, they were overjoyed and now,

## **II. They are overtaken**

### **Vs. 3-6**

The brothers must have been surprised when they saw Joseph’s steward and his guard following them, not realizing that their sins were about to catch up with them.

- Their false confidence is going to be destroyed.

★Folks, we can never outrun, hide, or outmaneuver our sins—they will eventually catch us.★

Don’t think, I sinned and nothing happened—this sin was over twenty years ago.

The brothers were certainly stunned when the steward accused them of rewarding evil for good.

But the biggest shock came when he announced that one of the brothers was a thief who had stolen his master’s special silver cup.

There is nothing much worse than being falsely accused.

Wanda/lance machine/got caught

First, it had been the money in the sack that had bothered their conscience

Second, it is the silver cup.

**Vs. 5**—the silver cup was used for divining or getting information.

The Egyptians had this practice of putting liquid into a cup and then looking at the way it moved in the cup or the pattern it made on the top of the liquid.

- The Egyptians used such cups, for the purpose of predicting
- They believed that the spirits, who knew future events, would act on the cup's contents in such a way as to form these messages.
- This is all part of the occult arts of Egypt.

The Bible warns against the practice of any form of divination as found in Deuteronomy 18:9-12.

- It reveals the sad spiritual condition of people today when they turn to that sort of thing.

Genesis 44—Joseph had a well-deserved reputation for prophetic insight (seven good, seven bad), and the brothers themselves were amazed how Joseph had been able to have them seated at the table in order of their respective ages.

So, did Joseph use such a cup? No, Joseph told Pharaoh that the interpretation of his dreams came from God.

It is more likely that he is staying incognito as an Egyptian ruler.

They were overjoyed, overtaken, and

### **III. Overconfident**

We wouldn't do something like this!

**Vs. 7**

So sure were the brothers of their innocence that they defended themselves passionately.

- They weren't the kind of men who went around stealing things.
- Vs. 8—hadn't they proved their honesty by telling the steward about the money they found in their grain sacks?

In their defense, however, they went too far (overconfident); for they offered to have the guilty party slain and themselves put into slavery – **vs. 9**.

But the steward rejected that offer and made another proposal.

Just the thief would become his slave, and the rest of the men could go home.

**Vs. 11**

Once again, each man's money was found in his sack, but nothing special is said about this in the text.

While the steward was looking for the silver cup, the presence of their money in the sacks must have frightened the men.

When the steward searched the sacks, he heightened the tension by working his way from the oldest brother to the youngest

**Vs. 12**

In the very last sack, that of Benjamin, there was the missing cup!—of all the brothers.

**IV. Their over-confidence turns to being overwhelmed (vs. 13).**

The brothers showed genuine grief and distress by tearing their garments as if someone had died. They were horrified!

Joseph's brothers were being severely tested to see what their reaction would be toward Benjamin when it was discovered that the silver cup was in his sack.

- Would they sacrifice him for their own safety?
- Would they leave him in Egypt and go home?

The steward said just the man with the cup, so the brothers could have just left Benjamin.

Will they be willing to let Benjamin go into slavery to save themselves?

They had let their father grieve before—will they do it again?

They are tested once again regarding their hatred for father and brother.

The Bible says, they all “rent their clothes” in grief, and immediately turned around and went back to Joseph’s city.

To a man, they were willing to stand by Benjamin no matter what!

Vs. 14

Come back next week to see what happens.

Let us stand for closing invitation.

King David hid his sin.

Living with guilt of sin—only Christ can remove this burden/weight.

Give glory to the Lord God and make confession unto Him.

Achan hid his sin.

There is a payday some day—sin will catch up with us.

*I Samuel 15:2-3, "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.*

*3 Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass."*

I find people who will confess to God but have yet to make it right with man.

Christ