

A TABLE OF GRACE

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As we begin this segment of Joseph's story, Simeon is still being held hostage in Egypt and Jacob's other sons are returning to that land with their youngest brother Benjamin. They are returning to show their good faith, to prove that they are not spies, to ransom Simeon and to buy more food. They are also bringing back the original money that had been returned to their sacks on their first visit; plus double that amount, along with other gifts. Finally they arrive, full of questions and concerns. "Will the Egyptian leader release Simeon? Will he look with favor on them for returning the money? Will they be imprisoned like their brother?" These men were scared. They were afraid. They didn't know what to expect.

When they arrived back in Egypt, they were ordered to Joseph's house. "Now what?" Their guilt magnifies their anxiety.

Guilt does that. Guilt needs to be dealt with. If not, it will cause you to have some sleepless nights. It will cause you to say and do some strange things.

They think that they are about to be killed or else made into slaves just as Joseph had been. They still didn't know who Joseph was. The thought never entered their mind that the return of their money was an act of grace. Why? Because guilt had blinded them. It always does.

Joseph invites them to have dinner with him. They can't believe it. He feeds them like they have never been fed. The Bible says that "they ate and drank and were merry with him."

Isn't it amazing, how Joseph's acts of grace freed up everyone around the table? Their anxiety began to ebb away. Their fear starts to subside. In a short time, they found themselves treated kindly, sitting around a banquet table loaded with food, eating and drinking in the presence of royalty. What a relief! No, what grace!

They were recipients of favor that they hadn't earned and kindness they didn't deserve and they were overloaded with an abundance that they would never be able to repay. Why? One reason. Joseph! Joseph chose to forgive their mistreatment of him and instead, demonstrate grace to them.

Joseph's life offers us a magnificent portrayal of the grace of God. Instead of being blamed, we are forgiven. Instead of being bound, we are set free. Instead of receiving judgment, we are invited to set in His presence, at a table of grace and served more than we will ever be able to take in.