

**Series - God's Grace**

**3. God's grace – for our families (1)**



As we continue our series on God's grace, we look at how God values and supports families with his unmerited gift of grace. It seems that he does this in various ways and through various people.

**Read Genesis 45: 1-15**

Let's look at who in our passage is receiving grace, and start with the family. Notice that God has 'organised' all the brothers to be together (despite most of them being now married with their own family – see chap. 46). They are shocked and terrified as they realise that the object of their foul earlier misdeeds, their brother, now has their own lives, and that of their families and dependents in his hands. What do you think should have happened next?

Through all his ups and downs, Joseph has remained trusting in God. God is working through Joseph in his response to his brothers and family. Which of God's characteristics does Joseph demonstrate?

And what of his father Jacob, broken-hearted for 20 years or more as a result of losing his son Joseph, who, with his wife Rachel, had raised Joseph to honour God; not only has his lost son been 'brought back to life', but he and his entire family clan have been saved from the disastrous famine about to overtake them. The family is truly united once more. Of what is this the result? Has anyone in the group had experience of 'a disaster' bringing a divided family back together?

**Read Acts 16: 25-34**

If only we knew more about the jailer and his family, both before and after his encounter with Paul, Silas and the Gospel! The jail is in Philippi, and it seems very likely that when Paul subsequently writes to the church in Philippi with such love, the jailer and family would have been members. Think about the first time the Gospel became real for you. Was it as a result of something you did, or did God do something? If so, what?

"Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house .... then immediately he and all his family were baptised .... he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God – he and his whole family". What a night that must have been for the family! In what ways does the Gospel unite families?

Having been stripped, beaten and severely flogged (verse 22-24) Paul and Silas lie on the floor shackled by the ankles "praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them". We all hope that we don't have to suffer as Paul and Silas did, but what is the equivalent today? What sort of things do we need to demonstrate in order to get people to listen to the Gospel? Would God's grace be involved in this?

**Prayer** Loving Father, you have loved me when I was unlovable. I am so amazingly grateful that I know you and I can experience your wonderful presence in my life. Give me this day your grace in how I live my life today. Give me wisdom and gentleness in how I interact with others. Amen