Sovereign Grace To Rejoice in God's Grand

## Salvation

## Grace from the Patriarchs

## By Steve Viars

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Over the course of my years here at Faith, I have seen the death of some very dear saints. Recently I think of Annetta W. who made it to 100+ years and just imagine the turmoil that the world has gone through that Annetta personally saw in 100 years. In my last meeting with her, she was still just cracking jokes and as joyful and as delightful as ever. I think of Kevit B. a faithful husband and father and a joyful servant of God. Kevit went through round after round of cancer treatment and at the end of his time, he was still ministering to the medical personnel serving him. Certainly, there are numerous others but when I think of them this is what I think: I want to be like that when I pass at the end of my life.

How do you go through life unbroken, undefeated in a world that is broken with unrelenting evil? How do we not go down the path of brokenness ourselves? This morning we are concluding our summer series on "Grace from the Patriarchs" which is part of our annual theme on "Finding Grace" and today we will finish Genesis 42 through 50. Yes, a lot of chapters that we're going to finish today. 42 through 50, get ready. We will read every chapter. I'm kidding. I'm kidding. I'm kidding. We're going to go through Genesis 42 onward and we're going to see God's sovereign grace to see and I thought of this yesterday, not see and rejoice but see and participate and rejoice in God's grand salvation. A beautiful story at the conclusion of our time together.

Turn in your Bibles to Genesis 42. That's page 33 in the Old Testament, the front section of the Bible in the chair in front of you. I'll be giving you the highlights of these chapters that we're just going to do quick verses here and I'll explain the story as I go. But before we start reading, let me review for you for just a moment where we are. God tells us that in a world ravaged by evil after the fall of man, God began to work his plan of bringing blessing to a cursed world. God started his redemptive plan with a man named Abraham and God promised, do you remember what God promised Abraham? 1. Go ahead and talk with me, Faith West, go ahead and talk. Land, seed and blessing that came through a relationship with God. However, along the path of fulfillment, God's plan seemed to be constantly threatened at every step because, frankly because as Pastor Viars would say, this family is a hot mess. It really is a hot mess. The threats were opportunities for God to show them and us his sovereign power to control amidst human powerlessness. His grace amidst our sin. Man's need for faith in an unstabilizing world and as a result ultimately to show our role as being blessings to the world. If you would like to see these narratives in a little bit more detail, there is a link in your bulletins of Bible studies that I have written for Westside faith groups.

Today's portion of Scripture details even more threats to the family of promise. The family, go figure, that God plans to use to bless the world is on the verge of extinction and the family that God plans to use to bless the world also is on the verge of assimilation into the Canaanite culture through intermarriage. The question here is: how will they ever survive to ultimately produce the one ultimate seed, Christ? The surprising answer is that God uses the family's own evil to bring a grand salvation. The family's own evil was unleashed on one of their own who went through great suffering but God exalted that servant and that servant's name is Joseph. And the part of Scripture that we'll be seeing today, it will be the conclusion of the story where Joseph was hated by his brothers because of his father's partiality to him where his brothers sold him into slavery into Egypt and then last week Pastor Viars showed us how God exalted Joseph out of prison to make him second in command in order to provide relief from a famine that was coming shortly.

Now, there are really 2 issues here with the end of the Joseph story. Number 1 is this: we want to see how God uses the suffering servant Joseph to bring a grand salvation. That's number 1. We'll highlight the story and then we'll end up at number 2: how is Joseph able to, well frankly, respond the way he did to his brothers that tried to kill him. Imagine had your brothers tried to kill you. We pick up the story not with Joseph but with his family in the midst of a famine who is about to starve.

Look at verse 1, Genesis 42. "Now Jacob," that's Joseph's father, "saw that there was grain in Egypt," where Joseph was. "And Jacob said to 10 of his sons," because he's holding one son back, Benjamin, and he thinks Joseph is dead. He says, "Why are you guys sitting around staring at one another?" That's a nice way to say, "Get off your backside and go and do something." And he said, "Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt," because ultimately Joseph is down there. "Go down there and buy some food from that place so that we may live and not die," the family of promise may not die. "Then ten brothers of Joseph went down to buy grain from Egypt. But Jacob did not send brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, 'I am afraid that harm may befall this one.'" Well, what about all the others, you know? "So the sons of Israel came to buy grain among those who were coming, for the famine was severe in the land of Canaan as well. Now Joseph," as we know, "was the ruler in Egypt and he was the one," amazingly, "that sold the food to people."

As the story continues, Joseph is shocked to see his brothers after 20 years. He recognizes them but they don't recognize him. Remember, Joseph was 17 when they threw him into a pit and sold him into slavery. Now he's a 37-year-old married man in Egyptian clothing and they don't recognize him at all. Joseph is overwhelmed with joy in seeing his brothers but before Joseph reveals who he is, Joseph devises a test to see if his brothers have changed their brother-killing ways after 20 years. What's the best way to test for repentance here? Well, let's look at verses 14 and 15, after Joseph interrogates these "foreigners" and asked them about their family, he says this, "It is as I said to you, you are spies; by this you will be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go from this place unless your youngest brother," Benjamin, "comes here!" What is the best way to test the brothers' repentance? Well, think with me for just a second. Twenty years ago the brothers had put Joseph, the father's favorite son, into harm's way. What would happen now if Joseph set up circumstances to see if they would repeat this great evil? So that's what he does. Joseph sets up the circumstances that would theoretically but then ultimately put Benjamin in harm's way to see what his brothers will do. Benjamin is Joseph's technical blood brother from the same father and mother and as far as the family is concerned, Benjamin is the only living son of their father's favorite wife, Rachel. You know, he's kind of the endangered species of the family since we're talking about lions and all that in Africa these days. Benjamin is the one in whom his father's affections have now rested since Joseph is presumed dead.

So the brothers go back to home and convince their father to let the endangered species, Benjamin, come back to Egypt with them and get some more food so that they might survive. When they get to Egypt, Joseph throws a huge banquet for them and they are going, "What? Here's this Pharaoh guy throwing a banquet for us?" Then to top that off, Joseph arranges them from youngest to oldest with Benjamin sitting in the place of honor and getting a double portion of the food. A nice little touch there, Joseph. The brothers can't figure out how Joseph knows their ages and all of that. Joseph amazingly so cannot hardly stand to withhold his identity. He loves them so much.

Eventually however, Joseph takes Benjamin captive on a trumped up charge of stealing to the brothers' utter horror. Here's what they think, "Father is going to kill us when we get home. We lost one son, Joseph, and now we're going to lose another son here in Egypt." What will they do? Turn now to Genesis 44:18, "Then Judah approach the Egyptian Lord," that would be Joseph who he doesn't know is Joseph, his brother that he threw into a pit. And Judah, oh, you've got to remember this, Faith, do you remember who Judah was 20 years ago? He was the one who when his brother said, "Let's kill Joseph," Judah said, "Let's not kill him. After all, we need to make something off of our brother. He is our brother, after all. Let's sell him." That's what Judah was doing. Now here's Judah's opportunity. I wonder what Judah is going to do with another favorite son who got the double portion of steak that night with what is he going to do now? At this point, Judah gives the longest speech recorded in Genesis and makes an impassioned plea on behalf of Benjamin. He doesn't sell him. He doesn't throw him into a pit. Here's what he says at the end, look at verse 33, "Now, therefore, please let your servant," Judah, me, "remain instead of the lad a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me - for fear that I see the evil that would overtake my father?” Folks, there it is. There it is. He says, "I will give my life for the sake of Benjamin." That's repentance. That's not what he did 20 years ago. It's not what he did at all. He put his brother's life into danger. Now he gives his life for the sake of another. That's repentance. God has orchestrated all of that over these years. Folks, there is the definition of repentance as well. I don't know what your definition is but the biblical definition is a turning. The sin that you once did, now you do the opposite. That's what the definition of repentance is. I hope that is in your heart and your mind when you think about repent, doing the opposite of the sin that I once did. That's what Judah does.

Now, turn to Genesis 45. The moment Joseph sees this, verse 1, "Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried," he didn't get angry, he didn't say, "Off with their heads," he cried, "'Have everyone go out from me.' So there was no man with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. He wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard of it. Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?' But his brothers," standing there with their jaws open. "Who is this? Is he going to kill us in his next breath?" They were amazed. "Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Come close. Not for me to kill you.' And they came closer and he said, 'I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. Don't be grieved. Don't be angry.'" Are you kidding me? That's his response? And they came closer and he says this, "because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. The famine has been in the land for 2 years and there are still 5 years in which there will neither be plowing nor harvesting. God sent me to preserve you." He's got an amazing attitude that Joseph has.

In shock, the brothers return home. They tell Jacob their father and they all come back in a large parade and in Genesis 47, please turn to Genesis 47:11 and 12. The family comes in, "Joseph settled his father and his brothers and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt," in Gary, Indiana, "in the best of the land." The best part of the land of Egypt, not in Gary. If you and I were doing this, we would have probably given them Gary if we had given them anything at all, right? He gave them the best part of the land. "Joseph provided his father and his brothers and all his father's household and their little ones." Little ones? "Yeah, you provided me the little one and threw me into a pit, I'll throw your little ones into a pit," right? It's not what we have here with Joseph. Not a hint of bitterness, only benevolence. No resentment, only relief. No punishment, only provision. No vengeance, only salvation. Victory.

Now look at Genesis 47:27. "Now Israel," whose name is also Jacob, "lived in the land of Egypt, in Goshen," the best part of the land, "and they acquired property there and they were fruitful and became numerous," as opposed to being extinct. God has preserved his family that would ultimately result in the Messiah, the one that would bless the world. Do we understand what we have just seen? Twenty years of history, although the family didn't know it, God was working with great salvation. Each of the family members could not see what God was up to. Each one may have thought God had forgotten them. Each one may have thought God was silent but do you know when you think God seems to be the most silent, think about your circumstances right now and the hardships you're going through, that's when he was working, is working, the most.

We'll only be able to see the full scope of God's salvation in the end when God is finished but let me remind you of what Joseph has seen and his family has seen. Joseph, the innocent, suffering servant, okay, and his sinful brethren beheld God's grand salvation which included this: 1. The preservation of the family of blessing in place of death. 2. The protection of the family of blessing in place of corruption. 3. The repentance of the family of blessing in place of sin. 4. The reconciliation of the family of blessing in place of division. 5. The restoration of the family of blessing in place of loss. 6. The enrichment of the family of blessing in place of destitution. 7. The multiplication of the family of blessing instead of decline. This was all through God using the evil against Joseph. Say "the evil." And we struggle with the evil in our lives but do you know that God used the evil to bring about a grand salvation? This was all through God using the evil perpetuated against the suffering servant who seemed to have been lost and dead but then was raised to life to bring about a great salvation. Does that sound familiar to anybody? It certainly does, thank you. I hope it does here. We can say the Sunday school answer: Jesus Christ, it sounds exactly like that. It sounds exactly like that.

Now, listen to the final passage we'll read today, Genesis 50:14 through 23. Turn to the last chapter, the last page of the first book of the Bible, Genesis 50:14 through 23. "After Joseph had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers, and all who had gone up with him to bury his father. When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, 'What if Joseph is our enemy and after all these years he bears a grudge?'" That's what the word "grudge" means. "An enemy hostile and now we're going to really get it now. Now is the time where Joseph, second in command, lops off our head for the way that we treated him."

Verse 16, "So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, 'Your father charged before he died, saying, "Thus you shall say to Joseph, 'Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, for they did you wrong.'" And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.' And Joseph wept," that's the third time that we've seen that. "Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said, 'Behold, we are your servants.' But Joseph said to them," 1. "Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place?" 2. "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result," of a grand salvation. 3. "So do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones," and it won't be bread and water and it won't be Gary, Indiana.

In the time we have left, folks, let's discuss how Joseph could utter these amazing words at the end of his life, at the end of this story, where he is bitter, shriveled up, broken. He's amazing in the way that he responds here. We have 3 ways God's servants, 1. Jesus but 2. all of us who are in Christ Jesus, 3 ways that we can see and rejoice and participate if you're taking notes, and participate in God's work without becoming bitter amidst great evil in this world. By the way, I have benefited from listening to Pastor Tim Keller of Redeemed Presbyterian Church in preparation for this message today. He does a great job in the Old Testament and I love the Old Testament and I listen to him occasionally as well and I have structured these last 3 remaining points in a way similar to what he has done so if you're listening, Tim, and you hear something that Brent said, remember, he said it first, okay?

If you and I are going to see and participate and rejoice in God's work without becoming bitter and broken, 1. You've got to avoid God's role as judge. Throughout the Joseph story, what comes out of Joseph's mouth is insightful. When tempted with Potiphar's wife, he says, "How can I do this great evil and sin against God?" showing his commitment to God. When in prison speaking to prisoners he says, "Why are your faces so sad today?" We're in prison but Joseph still has compassion for them. Now when given the chance to exact revenge and he has the power, he has the authority, he has the means to do so, everything is in his favor in order to do what he could do to exact revenge, he says, "Am I in God's place?" What is God's place? He understood this, he understood Romans 8:19-21, never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God for it is written, "Vengeance is mine." Where does vengeance belong? You say, with God. It's not with Brent. It's not with Dustin. Not with Tricia. Not with any of you. Vengeance is God's. God says, "My role is for justice."

Joseph does not take God's role over his life and therefore he is able to see clearly God's work over 20+ years. But let's not talk about Joseph right now, let's talk about you and me. What is the primary evidence that you are assuming God's role as judge? I think the text gives it. When the brothers come up and say, "Maybe he will hold a grudge against us." When you hold a grudge against somebody, what kinds of things are you thinking? If you're like me, it's like this: I spend time imagining how and sometimes taking delight in how they might get their payback. Don't shake your heads in self-righteousness like you never do that as well. We spend time rehearsing our eloquent speeches about how they are going to be put in their place. We spend time plotting how we will make them understand the hurt they have caused us and we spend our time in these endeavors maybe when we're on our beds at night and rehearsing them in our minds. Folks, that's taking God's role. You will end up bitter. You will.

We are not equipped for that role, Faith folks. Why? Why are we not equipped for that role? 1. It's not in your notes but we're not equipped for that role because, 1. I've got to read my notes here, we're not omniscient. We say, "I know what you deserve." We don't know. We don't know what they have been through. Maybe you know them a little bit but there is only one person that knows all things in their life and it's not you. You do not know what they deserve.

2. Even if you did, you as a creature, you as a created being, you and I, cannot judge without becoming ultimately tainted by evil ourselves. As we rehearse what people deserve, here's what happens: we become corrupt as we plot how they are going to get there's and we don't know what ultimate judgment, ultimate steps toward repentance for them looks like and we become corrupt and evil as well. Therefore God has not left us the role of judge. He has not. Say, "He has not." He simply hasn't. He is the role of judge. He has not left that for us. God knows exactly what it takes to bring justice and redemption to that spouse, that child, that employee, that friend, that stranger, that boss, that government official, who has wronged you. You simply do not and as you go down that path, it's like the ring of evil in the Lord of the Rings. If you take that ring to defeat the evil power, what happens to you? You grow corrupt as well. That is the plot motif of the Lord of the Rings. Folks, we'll never see, participate in and rejoice in God's grand salvation, his amazing work, if we assume his role against evil.

Also folks, we'll never behold his great salvation if we don't take God's view as sovereign. 2. "As for you, you meant it evil against me but God meant it for good in order to bring about this great salvation." In the same way we are not equipped to assume God's role as judge, we do not have God's vision. We don't inherently have God's view of looking at this world. God transcends time. He sees the past, the present. He has orchestrated all of it. He sees the future. He is working in all of it at the same time. God knew that he was sending Joseph down to Egypt to save the family 20 years earlier. Joseph did not know that. Joseph lived in the day to day moments and you and I do too, where injustices seemingly occur without resolution. We see in these little moments of our lives, we see what is in front of us. We don't see the future and all of us, we hardly remember the past very much, do we? And in our moments, we see the hurtful words of the people in our families, in our church, in our community. We experience the harmful actions of people and you and I, like Joseph, we do know evil in our lives. Joseph did not, he was not the eternal optimist and glibly saying things like, "There is no evil." He said, "You meant it for evil." There was evil there and you and I know that that's here in this world too.

But that was something that transcends that. Take your hand like this and do this for just a moment. Faith West, you guys do it too. Now, make it really tight so that only your finger can fit in there. Hold it up. I want to see everyone holding it up. See how funny you guys look doing this. Hold it to one of your eyes and look through it, okay? Now, close the other eye. Now jump up and down. I'm kidding. I'm kidding. I'm kidding. You can only see just a little bit, can you not? And I can only see right down here like Dustin and Tricia. I cannot see the grand scope of things. Open it up a little bit more, a little bit more, you begin to see a grand perspective. By faith, as we view God's perspective of 20+ years, from the beginning of creation to the end, we see God is working for good through the evil. By faith our minute perspective can become broader and it's only then that we will not grow bitter over time. We will not. What expands our vision? Only God's vision. How do I gain God's vision? By faith, believing and trusting; faith in a good God who is in control. In these moments, those moments become days, those days become months, those months become years, those years accumulate and God works through them for your good and his glory.

Joseph's suffering did not turn him into a bitter old man. His suffering was put into perspective by taking God's view as sovereign. How broad of a prospective do you have right now in the midst of your struggles? Does your view of God have a place for a good God who is over time? Who can work even the most atrocious evil for your good and his glory? Right now this is an opportune moment to consider these things, even amidst America's hearty approval of same-sex marriage. Even amidst the lack of outrage over Planned Parenthood. Even amidst right now the turmoil with Iran, ISIS, global financial irresponsibility. But God is in control of all of those things. If your God is not powerful enough to turn evil into good, then there is nothing preventing you from being defeated, broken and you will die bitter and angry and you will be bitter and angry right now and nothing will motivate you to accomplish anything for Christ this fall to help this community.

Without avoiding God's role as judge and without taking God's view as sovereign, you certainly will not be in a position to reflect God's love. I mean, the amazing thing about this story: Joseph responds without bitterness and he says, "You meant it for evil but don't worry, God meant it for good and I'm going to give you the best part of the land and I'm going to take care of you." Do you see that Joseph, the innocent suffering servant of God, intentionally avoided God's role as judge? He intentionally took God's sovereign perspective and that left him with the bandwidth to simply love. It left him with the boldness to love mightily. It left him with the freedom to do just one thing: reflect God's grace. If you avoid God's role as judge, if you take God's view as sovereign, you too will have the bandwidth and the passion to reflect God's love as an instrument of salvation just like our Savior was and just like Joseph was. You can do that as well but not without the first 2.

Look at this passage, 1 Peter 2:21 through 25. This is talking about Christ, that you are called to this exact same example. "You have been called for this purpose since Christ also suffered for you leaving an example for which you are to follow." An example, say "example." Example, now I lost my place. "Example for you to follow in his steps who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth and while being reviled," that means treated evilly, "he did not revile in return. While suffering, he uttered no threats but he kept entrusting himself to God who judges righteously." Christ avoided his Father's chair and he took God's perspective. The verse goes on to say "so that you might be healed," and are left with the bandwidth to simply love and that's why you're saved if you are today.

Many of you are familiar with the life of Louis Zamperini, his amazing life story as described in the book and the movie called "Unbroken." Have you seen that? Raise your hand if you have seen that, read that. Louis was not broken by the 47 days that he was adrift at sea in World War II where he underwent near starvation, the death of 10 friends, sharks circling him for 2 days. I mean, my goodness. Louis was not broken by the years he spent in a Japanese prisoner of war camp where he underwent torture. Where he went through near starvation. Experimental testing. The limits of human endurance to try to break his spirit and some of the cruelest treatment short of death at the hands of his captor that he calls The Bird. However, after he returned, Louis was broken and consumed by bitterness and the desire for revenge after that experience. Now, he's not using the terminology I'm using but in some way he took the role of God as judge. He did not take the view of God as sovereign and therefore he was struggling to love his family as he should have and those around him. Unbroken Louis was broken by bitterness. Think: Lord of the Rings, evil power there. Until he met someone who had the greatest evil perpetuated against him but that individual's suffering was used for the greater salvation for the world and for Louis.

Watch carefully this video, about 4 minutes, and what Scripture does Louis quote at the end?

Louis Zamperini: So the war is over and I'm alive but now it's a whole new life.

Reporter: The American hero was busy being the celebrity but found the time to fall in love with Cynthia Applewhite. He proposed 10 days after meeting her but couldn't shake his demons.

Louis: Now I got married and I have a little girl and I'm still suffering nightmares, waking up screaming, strangling The Bird. One night I actually strangled my wife in my dreams and she got scared.

Reporter: Doing some drinking too?

Louis: Well, that's all I did. I just figured the more I drank the better I'd sleep at night so I was out every night drunk. My wife refused to go with me and she decided on a divorce and had every right for a divorce. Then somebody had talked her into going to hear a new evangelist, a young evangelist called Billy Graham.

Billy Graham: I ask you tonight, are you prepared to meet God? Are you prepared to meet God the moment you die?

Reporter: His wife came to Christ at the crusade and had good news for Louis.

Louis: She said, "Because of my conversion, Louis, I’m not going to get a divorce." Boy, I was happy. Then she and her newly found Christian friends were all over me and I avoided them like a plague.

Reporter: But he was desperate to save his marriage so he reluctantly agreed to attend the next Billy Graham meeting.

Louis: He talked about one person only, the person of Jesus Christ, for 30 minutes and, you know, he read the Scripture, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and the ways of the sinner's death, "but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Well, I was a sinner and I didn't like the idea of someone else reminding me, you know. Well, if anyone had ever asked me if I believed that Christ was the Son of God, I would have said yes. All my life I believed it. But the heart, no. I knew somehow if I had believed it in my heart, my life would have been different for I knew I didn't possess the Savior but I still didn't want to do it and I think the best description of that is the Bible says that men prefer darkness rather than light and there I was preferring my rotten life to the light. Then I started having a flashback to the life raft and prison camp. All those thousands and thousands of prayers, "God, spare my life through the war and I'll seek you and serve you," and I kept thinking I came back from the war alive and I never even thought about those prayers, never even tried to keep one prayer.

Reporter: That night Louis gave his life to Jesus Christ.

Louis: I got off of my knees and somehow I knew I was through getting drunk. I knew it. I also knew that I forgave all of my guardians, including The Bird. I knew it and I think proof of that is I had nightmares every night about The Bird since the war and after the war and the night I made my decision for Christ, I haven't had a nightmare since. 1949 until now and that is some kind of a miracle.

Reporter: And the young boy who grew up always wanting to get even came full circle in 1950. Louis traveled back to Japan to forgive the prison guards that tortured him. He couldn't meet with The Bird but spoke with many of the former guards, some even accepted Christ as their Savior. And in 1998, Louis again returned to Japan to run with the Olympic torch before the winter games in Nagano.

Louis: I believe it with all my heart that all things work together for good for those who love the Lord, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Did you hear what he quoted at the end which is the Genesis 50:20, the Romans 8:28 of Genesis 50:20, "All things work together for good." Now, did Louis look like a dried up, bitter, broken, old man? Of course he did not. Of course he did not. Why? He did break and that was through him beginning to understand Jesus Christ and then he stops taking God's role as judge and then he took God's perspective as sovereign and then he was able to love his enemies. That's why. I believe he died last year. That's why he did not die a bitter, broken, old man.

Folks, as the new school season dawns upon us, Pastor Don has said that we're in the midst of all readiness and preparing. The last thing this evil world needs in response to its evil is anger, bitterness, defeated, broken, self-righteous Christians who are assuming self-righteously God's role as judge over the world. Who are only taking the horizontal momentary shortsighted view of the injustices around us and there are manifold and therefore as a result, they themselves have only room for derision and hate toward the souls of this world. What Faith has stood for, this community, what this community of believers over its years and what you are and what I am challenging you to continue to be is a community of believers who in the midst of unrelenting evil, you don't take God's role as judge but you do take his perspective as you've got a powerful God who can turn the most evil into the most good grand salvation and he demonstrated that once and finally for all in the greatest evil perpetrated against Christ and turned that into the greatest salvation ever so there is no greater evil and there is no greater salvation so your evils that you are facing are lesser than that and God will take care of that too.

With that view where I do not take God's role as judge, where I take his view as sovereign and then I'm in a position to love this world, folks, take out these things for just a moment. You've got fall Faith preview. We've talked to you about this but somebody who believes what the word of God just said will take these tools. These tools do nothing by themselves. They only are functional in the tools of a person who believes that he will avoid God's role, that he will take God's view and he is trying to love people. That's the only way that these things work so I challenge you to not just let these go by but this fall be a light in the midst of this darkness. So whatever this world has done against you or a neighbor has done against you, don't take God's role. Take God's perspective and then love that neighbor. Get this into the hands of somebody and, more than that, invite them here with you this fall. And if you don't know Jesus this day, will you meet the one who did not take God's role but took God's perspective and have the bandwidth to do the greatest salvation on the face of this earth to save you and me? Praise the Lord.

*Let's pray. Father, I thank you for your goodness to us. Thank you, Father, for this awesome passage of Scripture that we get to conclude today in which all of the rest of the Scripture is built. Help us to do what you have said by the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.*