

BEYOND THE FLANNELGRAPH
JOSEPH
PART 5

SKELETONS IN THE CLOSET?

Genesis 42

- **The past can leave us paralyzed with fear, or paralyzed with guilt.**

Genesis 42:1-4, Romans 2:14-15, 2 Timothy 1:7, Joshua 1:8-9, 1 John 4:18, Romans 8:15

- **Not dealing with the past, robs us of our future.**

John 3:19-21, Proverbs 28:13, Proverbs 11:21

We end up...
burying it,
blaming others,
blaming ourselves.

CLEANING OUT THE CLOSET:

1 John 1:9, 1 John 2:1-2, Luke 19:10, Hebrews 7:24-25, 1 Peter 2:24, Revelation 12:10,
1 Peter 5:8, John 10:10, Romans 7:24-25, Romans 8:1-2, 1 Timothy 2:5-6

- **You will have to go back to Egypt.**

Genesis 42:2

- **You will have to face the truth.**

Genesis 42:21, 44:16

- **You will have to trust God.**

Genesis 43:14

- **You won't have to earn grace.**

Genesis 45:4-7, 50:15-20

Growth Group Homework

For the week of November 27, 2005

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at this week's sermon about "Skeletons in the Closet" was there anything that surprised you, confused you, or particularly caught your attention?

MY STORY

1. What was your response to Chris' statement that there's a difference between "freedom" and "forgiveness" from our past?

2. Which of the four steps to "cleaning out the closet" comes easiest to you? ... is the biggest challenge?

3. This week we saw three ways to deal with our past that can rob us of our future. Is there one that could become more of a trap for you than the others?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Taking the journey back can be no easy road as we saw with Joseph and his family. Jesus' earthly father, Joseph, and Saul found themselves in situations that could have paralyzed them from moving toward the future God had for them. As you read their stories, identify how they could have become paralyzed by guilt or injustice?

Joseph (Jesus' earthly father) Matthew 1:18-24

Matthew 1:18-24

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. [19] Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

[20] But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. [21] She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

[22] All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: [23] "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us." [24] When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. [NIV]

Saul Acts 9:1-22

Acts 9:1-22

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest [2] and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. [3] As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. [4] He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

[5] "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. [6] "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

[7] The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. [8] Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. [9] For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

[10] In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered.

[11] The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. [12] In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

[13] "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. [14] And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

[15] But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. [16] I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

[17] Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord--Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here--has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." [18] Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, [19] and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. [20] At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. [21] All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?" [22] Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ. [NIV]

2. How do the following verses help us look at our past and move toward the future in a way that is healthy and productive?

Psalm 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
[24] See if there is any offensive way in me,

and lead me in the way everlasting. [NIV]

2 Corinthians 13:5

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you--unless, of course, you fail the test? [NIV]

2 Corinthians 5:16, 20

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.

[20] We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. [NIV]

3. Joseph's grace shown to his brothers is an incredible example of the grace God offers all who commit their lives to Him.

Write down as many examples you can find of God's grace being displayed in Ephesians 2:4-10.

Ephesians 2:4-10

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, [5] made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. [6] And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, [7] in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. [8] For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- [9] not by works, so that no one can boast. [10] For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. [NIV]

Now circle the one or two that stand out to you most. Can you think of ways you could choose to also show this kind of grace?

TAKING IT HOME

1. Looking back at the four steps of “cleaning out the closet,” are there any you would like to more effectively put into action?

2. As a result of this week’s study is there any issue from your past you want to take a closer look at or an attitude of grace you want to choose to display to those you encounter?