

# The Price of Peace | Ben Knowlman | Genesis 44

## Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2025

### Introduction

We are looking at Genesis 44, specifically the story of Judah, and him being an offering. But just before we do, I want to take you back through Genesis chapters 37-43 to give you a bit of context behind this story.

### Context

So, in Genesis 37, what we see is Joseph being sold by Judah into slavery. Further on, Joseph is then made ruler of Egypt, a second in charge to Pharaoh himself. And then there's a famine. Through dreams and prophecies, Joseph predicts this famine, which hits Egypt. And then his brothers appear later on in Genesis 43 to Joseph. And they don't actually recognise him at first because there's such a famine in the land that they have come to Egypt. And this is where we pick up our story of Judah re-meeting his brother, Joseph, in Genesis 44.

And to give you some more context within this passage, Joseph has tested his brothers by planting a silver cup in his brother Benjamin's sack. The cup is discovered and the brothers return to Joseph not knowing his true identity. Joseph announces that Benjamin must stay as a slave and Judah steps forward and pleads with Joseph on his knees to take his life instead of Benjamin's.

*"Your servant guaranteed the boy's safety to my father. I said, 'If I do not bring him back to you, I will bear the blame before you, my father, all my life. Now then, please let your servant remain here as my lord's slave in place of the boy and let the boy return to his brothers. How can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? No, do not let me see the misery that that would come to my father.'"*  
(Genesis 44:32-33)

## Offering Ourselves

Here we see a story of two brothers, one Judah, one Joseph. And at the beginning of that story we see this brother Judah sacrifice his brother into slavery. And a few passages later we see the reverse opposite of Joseph standing there and Judah kneeling and him sacrificing himself for his brother. And it makes me ask the question...

*"What motivates people to offer themselves?"*

In the Bible we see this thread numerous times come up of people offering themselves as a sacrifice for something. In this story we see that it was Judah's sacrifice of himself for his brother Benjamin.

But what motivated him to sacrifice? I would suggest that it was these three things -

- 1) his love for his brother
- 2) his repentant heart
- 3) his sense of duty

We also see this idea of offering in different characters. We see it with Moses and the Israelites. I would suggest that Moses offered himself through the love of God and the love of his people, through his knowledge of pastoral care and his sacrificial intercession.

We see this in the story of Esther. Esther offered herself and eventually her life, I would suggest, out of a place of bravery, through love, love through identity with her people, and a sense of divine calling.

We see this with Paul and the Israelites. Paul offered himself from his divine calling from birth, for his burden for souls, and sacrificial love.

And we see this time and time and time again with people that God uses in the Scriptures.

## **Jesus - The Greatest Offering**

However, there is one moment that redefined the course of human history. And it was one man who sacrificed it all so we could have it all. And that was Jesus' sacrifice for all of humanity. I might suggest that Jesus offered himself out of unmatched love, divine justice, and his redemptive purpose.

In John 10:17-18, we see this wonderful verse that is spoken by Jesus.

*"For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay down of my own accord. I have the authority to lay it down, and I have the authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."*

*John 10:17-18*

We also see this idea of offering and love from Jesus in Matthew 27:15-26. What we see here is a story of three people. We see a man named Jesus, we see a man named Pontius Pilate, and we see a man named Barabbas. And in this story we see this sacrificial nature of Jesus. Because this day was a holy day, and the people facing these three people were the Jewish people. And Pilate stands on this stage knowing that on this holy day he can release one of these two prisoners. And so here we have a man who's committed no sin, has healed blind eyes, has healed the lame and the leper. And then we have a man who's murdered people, he leads an insurrection, he's a murderer, he's a thug, and he's a crook.

And Pilate stands on this stage and asks these people, "Who do you want? Do you want Barabbas, or do you want Jesus?" And the people shouted out, "We want Barabbas!" And so, Barabbas goes down to his thug mates and he says, "Yeah! All I know is that people love me." But there's no recollection in the Bible of him turning around to Jesus and going, "Jesus, I owe you everything now." No, no, no. Jesus stood here because he knew the will of the Father. And he stood there silently so Barabbas could go free. And this story is (alongside the death of the cross) a beautiful symbol of offering and sacrifice of Jesus.

The Barabbas in this story, I might suggest, is us. The people that sin, the people that do things wrong. And then we have a Jesus and a Father who stands there silently because he knew the will of the Father. It's the ultimate sacrifice. There's a biblical narrative that echoes through the Bible, and that's one of sacrifice and offering. It's one that we see with Judah and Joseph.

And something happens to our hearts when we offer and when we sacrifice. I might suggest that some of the things that happen is we go from grasping to releasing. When we offer, we go from fear to trusting. We go from selfishness to loving. From what you give up to who you become. It can hurt, but it can also heal. It can empty, but it can also fill. It costs, but it can transform. And my suggestion is a true offering comes from a true place of love.

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, and whoever shall believe in him shall not perish, but have eternal life."*

*(John 3:16)*

## About Ben

So, when I was in school, I completely flunked all my GCSEs. Then I went to college, and I redid some of my GCSEs. And then I went to university, studied business management and finance for four years, to eventually get to a point where I'm about to get a degree, go out into the world, and make millions of pounds. And then God, in his infinite wisdom (and annoyance for my part) says, "No, no, no, no, no. Now it's time for you to go into ministry." I'm like, "Great. That's just wonderful." And I accepted it, and it was challenging, but I realised that I had to sacrifice my calling that I'd given myself for the calling that God had given upon me. And so, four years ago was the birth of Incoming Ministries (which is what I'm going to be going on to do after I finish here).

And a year after that, I also started at the youth ministry here at All Saints Weston. And so, I had this call to go into ministry, but what was my motivation? What is my motivation for sacrifice? I would suggest that my three motivations for ministry and my sacrifice are this

- 1) a burning and longing desire for people to know Jesus
- 2) to build cross deep rooted cross denominational community
- 3) to love those that may just need that extra little bit of love

And speaking of people that may need a little bit of extra love - I'm going to suggest to you today that what is happening in this nation right now is nothing short of miraculous. There is a generation waking up to the love of Jesus in radical ways. And the statistics speak for themselves. If you have read the Quiet Revival Report, or statistics produced by Fusion UK (which is a student organization), what you'll read is something staggering. And they are both indicating that there is a generation waking up to the love of Jesus. And during my time here at All Saints Weston, we have been fortunate enough to see some of those statistics come to life. And this morning I would just like to share with you a couple of those stories.

## Introducing Callum

First off, though, I want to say this. Frodo would not have been the same without Samwise Gamgee, and Ben would not have been the same without Callum Houston. And I want to publicly thank Callum for his diligence and servant hearted nature in the youth ministry. I literally would not have been able to do the things I have done without his help. And so, it is a privilege to invite him to share a story with you about what he has seen God, what he has seen God do within the youth ministry at All Saints Weston.

## Callum's Stories

It's one thing to hear statistics, but it's nothing to actually be on the ground and see those transformations in our youth lives. And it's just been amazing watching all of them go from strength to strength. I mean, the amount of our youths who say that when they turn 16, they want to help us lead; the amount who want to find something to do when they turn 18 and stay on; it's just absolutely amazing. And some of our youths have even gone on to become their school's resident evangelists as well. Having gone from no faith to sharing the faith is absolutely amazing to see. We've got two people who didn't really have a faith when they came to us. And now they pray pretty much every day. One of them is always writing down prayers in a little book he's got. He's sort of making his own prayer book. It's amazing. And just some of the things he's prayed for and some of the answers to prayer he's had are absolutely amazing. And then you've got folks playing the organ. It's just absolutely gorgeous to see.

I just wanted to thank Ben and say that no one could do it with the same amount of love, care and fun. But most importantly, he doesn't take himself too seriously. But just as he doesn't take himself too seriously, he takes God very seriously. If any of you think that I'm a holy person or anything like that, well, Ben is 10 times holier. Honestly, he is one of the most wonderful Christians I've ever known.

And the last thing I wanted to say what we're doing next. Well, we're looking at 'Incoming Ministries', especially 'Incoming Glastonbury and Strait' (a real stronghold for Paganism). So, we're sort of trying to break that down, pray for those guys and to reclaim Glastonbury for the Lord.

(And my favourite thing is that in my notes, I did write that "Ben will be working with a few other Christian communities." But autocorrect has changed it to "he will be *winding up* a few other Christian communities". And I think that works just as well.)

But honestly, I never would have seen myself doing youth work before. I'm the youngest in my family. I didn't even know how to talk to kids. Working with Ben has taught me so much. He really has been encouraging and helped sort of empower me to do things I never thought I could. And I know that I am far from the only person that he's done that with. So thank you very much.

## **Ben's Stories**

I had a kid, I had a 19-year-old kid come up to my door the other day, our house, selling me some stuff. And I very promptly asked him, "So what do you do?" He said, "Well, I do this." And then he in return said "So what do you do?" And I said, "Well... ." And I started speaking to him about the Lord. And he was so open to the gospel, got to pray with him, got to give him a Bible. And he went on his way.

There are stories of youth and kids walking into churches all over the nation at the moment. And a few weeks ago, we had a wonderful youth just wandering off the streets at 7 p.m. on a Wednesday night, having no real information. And so it's happening here as well.

And it's not just happening with the youth, it's happening with the 18-30s community. My friend Dan, which I have briefly shared the story of in previous talks, had a radical encounter with Jesus in his dream. Very much like the road to Damascus, going from atheist to Christian. And then a couple of weeks ago, I flew out to Portugal and baptized him in the ocean.

And then there was a guy in the Hall and Woodhouse who was just off to university a week ago. I just went up to him and I said "can I pray for you?" He said, "Yes." I was like, "are you a Christian?" He said, "No." I was like, "can I pray for you anyway?" And he got filled with the Holy Spirit.

My friend Reuben, he recently started an Alpha on his university campus in second year. He started with six of his friends. That Alpha had grew to five locations with over 100 students represented there. And All Saints Youth in itself has grown about three times, praise the Lord, in its numbers. There are over 50 youth that now attend All Saints Weston. And it's down to the volunteer team who carry that mantle so beautifully. And I want to say thank you to all of you guys for being involved in the last three years, because it wouldn't be the same without you.

## **God is Moving!**

God is moving in a generation. And I would suggest that all these stories have something in common. I would suggest that these stories at some point or another required an individual to sacrifice. This may have also been a sacrifice made by multiple people for one individual person. And most likely from a people who understood the greatest call to offer. The Great Commission. Jesus said, "Go out and tell the world the good news." And that in itself is a call to offer, and a call to sacrifice.



And our biggest motivation to this call is the story and the blood of Jesus and the Gospels. Our biggest challenge isn't our discipline or our devotion. Our biggest challenge is believing the Gospel. For once we truly understand the Gospel and what Jesus did 2,000 years ago on the stage with Barabbas, we won't be able to stop offering. And when we truly understand, the church will offer and equip a generation whose hunger is great.

***And if we can equip that generation... if we can truly understand the Gospel, equip a generation and offer ourselves as the church to this generation, what we will see is the greatest single move of the Spirit this nation's ever seen.***