The Haunt of Guilt

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 04 May 2025

Preacher: Dr. Daniel Heeringa

[0:00] What a blessing. If you have your Bibles, I want you to turn to Genesis chapter 42.! Genesis chapter 42. We have been studying Joseph in the book of Genesis,! at the end of Genesis, and we took some time off for Easter, and I want us to revisit this interesting and refreshing account in Genesis this morning.

As a reminder, Joseph was a favorite child of Jacob. Jacob did not work him as hard as he did his brothers.
Jacob let him stay at home when he sent his other boys out to the fields. And he also gave him that coat of many colors that the original language tells us was a long-sleeved cuffed coat.
In other words, it wasn't a working coat. It was a take-it-easy coat at the house with Mama. And that clothing made him stand out. And there's signs that he was proud of that.
It's kind of like wearing Nike Airs when everybody else was wearing Walmart specials, you know. He was standing out from everybody else. And when that coat of many colors was ripped off of him, and he was thrown into a dry well, his brothers thought that was the end of it.
[1:19] They took that coat, ripped it up, put animal blood on it, called it a freak, wild animal act, and thought they'd got a life a lot better without their bratty, bothersome, boisterous brother.

And then in a combo of a bond of brothers as well as the greed of brothers, instead, they sold him. They sold their own brother for the price of a common slave and sent him into the enemy camp, which were the Egyptians. Now they go back home to ease the father a few days and move on with life.
It would seem their memory of Joseph lasted no longer than the silver that they received for him. But the reality is that's not so. And today, we see their encounter with Joseph many years later. Little did they know of his journey, for after they sold him into slavery, he excelled in the household that he was placed in until he was falsely accused and sent to prison.
[2:40] While in prison, again, he excelled to the top of what a prisoner could ever serve in prison. And he also won an audience through his dream interpretation.

And that audience ended up being the Pharaoh of Egypt. And in that interpretation of Pharaoh's dream, he explained that there was a famine that was coming.
And he explained how that needed to be managed in order to handle the coming famine. And the famine came just like he said.
And Pharaoh, when he heard the management plan, he took him out of prison and put him into the job of the governor of Egypt.
He was the acting executive figure in all the land. And when the famine came, just like he said it would, Egypt managed it well because of his leadership.
[3:40] And they became the breadbasket for all the known world. That famine also hit Joseph's dad and his brothers. And they began to starve.

And so his dad, Jacob, sent 10 of them to Egypt to get grain. He held back one. He had another favorite, by the way. But he held back one in case something happened to him.
And we pick up the account when they arrive in front of Joseph. It's in verse 6 of Genesis chapter 42. And it says this. Now Joseph was the governor over the land.
He was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground. Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them.
But he treated them like strangers and spoke roughly to them. Where did you come from? He said. And they said. And they said. From the land of Canaan. To buy food.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-13 15:56:02

[4:42] And Joseph recognized his brothers. But they didn't recognize him. And Joseph remembered the dreams that he had dreamed of them. And he said to them. You're spies. You've come to see the nakedness of the land.

And they said to him. No, my lord. Your servant have come to buy food. We are all sons of one man. We are honest men. Your servants have never been slaves.
So now Joseph is accusing them of being slaves. And for three days. He held them. He threatened them. He messed with them. Just like older brothers deserve.
As one who have two older ones. Now I want you to remember something. He looked like an Egyptian. They came in looking like Duck Dynasty. But he looked like an Egyptian.
Which means that he probably had a shaved head. And he wore makeup. And he had on all their garb. And because he was royalty. He had on a bunch of garb. They didn't have a clue who he was.
And then this happens in verse 18.
[5:46] On the third day. Joseph said to them. Do this and you'll live. For I fear God. If you are honest men. Let one of your brothers remain confined. Where you are in custody.

And let the rest go. And carry grain. For the famine. Of your households. And bring your youngest brother to me. So your words will be verified.
And you shall not die. And they did so. Then they said to one another. In truth we are guilty. Concerning our brother. In that we saw the distress of his soul.
When he begged us. And we didn't listen. And that is why. This distress has come upon us. And Reuben answered them. Did I not tell you.
Did I not tell you. You not to sin against the boy. But you didn't listen. Now. There comes a reckoning. Of his blood. They didn't know that Joseph understood him.
[6:48] For there was an interpreter. Between them. And then Joseph turned away from them. And wept. And he returned to them. And spoke to them. And he took Simeon from them.

And bound him. Before. Their eyes. And Joseph gave orders. To fill their bags with grain. And to replace every man's money.
In his sack. And to give him provisions for the journey. This was done. For them. So they pay the money. And as they give the sacks away.
To get the grain put back in. They put the money. Back in their bag. As well as. Additional. To take care of them. On the way home. And they get down the road a bit.
And one of them looks in his bag. And goes. Uh oh. We had a mess. We left without paying. In verse. 28. They wonder.
[7:46] They said. What is this. That God has done to us. They had no clue. What was happening. And then he goes on. To say this. And they emptied their sacks.

Behold. Every man's bundle of money. Was in his sack. And when they and their father. Saw their bundles of money. They were afraid. And Jacob. Their father said to them.
You have bereaved me. Of my children. Joseph is no more. Now Simeon is no more. And now you would take Benjamin. All this has come. Against me. Then Reuben said to his father.
Kill my two sons. If I don't bring them back to you. Put him in my hands. And I'll bring him back to you. Paul Jacob said.
My son shall not go down with you. For his brother is dead. And he's the only one left. If harm should happen to him. On the journey that you're to make. You would bring down my gray hairs.
[8:44] With sorrow. To Sheo. Horrible. The plot thickens my friend. The reality is.

When we willingly. Sin against a holy God. We underestimate. The consequences of our sin. It is a common stance.
We underestimate. The consequences of our sin. The weight of the guilt. The memory of the mistake. The haunting presence. Of the memory. It was also true.
For these brothers. And I believe. That God gives us. This account in scripture. For us to learn from their mistakes. So that when we see.
What their mistakes were. We don't make the same. Mistakes. And the key is this. Sin comes. At a great cost.
[9:44] And this morning. I want to take just a few moments. To look at the personal. And the interpersonal consequences. Of the guilt. Of sin. Sin guilt.

Sears. Your conscience. In verse 21. It says this. Then they said to one another. In truth. We're guilty concerning our brother. In that we saw the distress of his soul.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-13 15:56:02

When he begged us. And we didn't listen. That's why this distress. Has come upon us. Now when I say that it sears your conscience.
Sear means to mark. To emblazon with fire. To leave a lasting mark. And the. The conscience of these brothers. Were seared by the guilt. Of their act.
They are now middle-aged fathers. With families of their own. And they probably have never mentioned the violence. That they committed against their brother. To each other. They did their best to forget it.
[10:42] To banish it from their mind. But the reality is. They could not. And it comes rushing up. Before them. It reminds me of King David. After his catastrophe of sin.

If you remember the story. King David. Slept with another man's wife. And then put his. Put her husband. At the front of the battle scene. In order to cover up his own sin.
And when he got caught. Or at least confronted. By the prophet Nathan. He says in Psalm verse 51. It's his great confession to God. He says. For I know my transgressions.
And my sin is ever. Before me. It don't go away. It's like somebody face guarding you in basketball. It's just.
That's all you see. They're just right up in your face. And even when God forgives and forgets. We often have a hard time. Forgiving. Ourselves. We often have a hard time.
[11:40] Forgetting. It marks us. But how worse it is. When we never confess. When we never receive. Forgiveness. In the Edgar Allan Poe classic.

The Telltale Heart. It tells the story of a murderer. Who buried the body of the person that he murdered. Under the floorboards of his house.
And when he went to bed that night. He began hearing the heart of the dead. He began to hear it beat. The next day the authorities came to his house.
To investigate. And while they were walking among his house. He could hear that dead man's heart beating. It grew louder. And louder. He tried to make noise.
And muffle it out. But it just grew louder. The police acted as if they knew nothing. That they heard nothing. And even turned to leave.
[12:37] He thought they have to hear that. It's got to be a setup. So instead in a state of panic. He confessed. And he showed them where the body was. He never realized.

He never realized. It was not the victim's heart that he heard. It was his own heartbeat. That he heard. Beating within his own chest. A seared conscience.
The haunt of guilt. And I'm telling you it's hard to leave. But not only that. Sin guilt also leads to the blame game.
In verse 22 it says. And Reuben answered them. Did I not tell you not to sin against the boy? But you didn't listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood.
I think Reuben was probably the most noble of them. But who are we comparing him to? I mean his brother sold him into slavery. He spoke on Joseph's behalf.
[13:35] And he had him sold instead of killed. But really nothing else. And now they're like a car full of bank robbers. Looking for a plea bargain. I mean they're pointing fingers at each other. And trying to make sure somebody else takes the blame.

I mean I might be guilty. But I ain't as guilty as he is. Well the problem folks. Is not the guilt level of someone else.
The problem when it comes to sin. Is not that you and I may be guilty. The problem is that you and I are guilty.
And it does not help to point at someone else. For our guilt. It never does. Don't blame your sin on somebody else.
We've been doing it since the first of humanity. I mean in the garden. Adam pointed at Eve. And Eve sinned. And she pointed at the snake. And we've been doing it ever since.
[14:43] We live in a world that relieves itself by pointing a finger at someone else. And the reality is it's not popular. I get that. But let's call it what it is.

It's sin. I mean you might be addicted to it. But it's sin. We may have a dependence upon it. But it's sin. We might have a hard time not doing it.
But it's sin. And Satan has a strong hold on us. When we try to come up with excuses to continue in the same pattern that's an ungodly pattern in our lives.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-13 15:56:02

When we willfully disobey God or participate with others who are disobeying God. We sin against an almighty God. And I want to be clear this morning.
I'm not saying that other people's mistakes or other people's persuasions did not play a part in our action. Of course it did.
[15:42] But I'm saying that each one of us have to face a holy God and realize that what we've done wrong is sin against God. And in our sin guilt we need to go to God.

We need to point our attention to the Father. And we need to point at ourselves in his counsel. Instead of pointing at everybody else. Because our tendency is always to blame others.
That's what sin guilt does. I mean I might have done it but it wasn't really my fault. You know. Blames others.
Not only that but sin guilt also it strains relationships. In verse 36 it says this. And Jacob said to them. You bereave me of my children. Joseph is no more.
Simeon is no more. He's the one that stayed behind. And now you would take Benjamin. Because Joseph demanded to see Benjamin. All this has come against me.
[16:44] So not only was there a strained relationship among the participants who were pointing fingers at each other. But now there's a strained relationship with one of the victims.

Which is Joseph's father. Jacob. Now. In verse 36. The truth in Jacob's heart comes spilling out. He had lost his trust in his boys.
But I'm going to tell you something. The reason why I didn't spend several weeks on Jacob and studying his life. Is because he's a mess. He's a mess.
I didn't know how I was going to clean it up every Sunday before we got done. I mean he's a mess. When you look at how he raised those sons. They were influenced.
No doubt. He was a passive father. And the passivity that Jacob had as a father. Continued to haunt him. If you'll look back in chapter 34 of Genesis.
[17:44] His daughter Dinah is raped. And he does nothing about it. His sons overreact. I'm a little with them on this by the way.

But anyway. And they kill every man in the city that the guy came from. They're all guilty of it. That's a little overreaction. And then in Genesis 35. It says.
It says. That. After having 12 sons. With four different women. One of his sons. Slept with. A half brother's.
Mother. That's the definition of dysfunction. And his passivity. In raising them. Was he loved the son.
That was the easiest. To raise. And that was Joseph. Now get me. Their sin was not Jacob's fault. But being a passive father.
[18:41] Didn't help anything. And now a father's sin. And listen. And a parent who hands off their children. That's sin.

Okay. A passive father. Who don't do his job. That's sin. And now a father's sin. Sets the stage for his son's will for sin.
Against Joseph. So many years later. And all of that comes rushing back. When they come back from Egypt. Absent of Simeon. Jacob's sin.
Combined with his son's sins. Have weighed upon their life. Until now it is erupting. Do you remember what I told you when I began? We always underestimate the cost of sin.
Sin's always bigger. And affects more than we ever thought it would. It strains relationships. But not only that. Sin guilt also brings continual grief.
[19:43] I want you to listen to the pain of a panicked father. In verse 38 he said, My son shall not go down with you.

For his brother is dead. He's talking about Joseph. And he is the only one left. If harm should happen. Talking about the one he left at home.
If harm should happen to him on the journey that you are to make. You would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol. Man I can't take anymore. He is in a state of panic.
And he feared something else would happen. And not knowing the truth about Joseph. He now feared for his other sons.
And the point is this. They didn't think about their daddy when they sold Joseph. They thought about themselves. They didn't think about the difference that it would make in their daddy's life.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-13 15:56:02

[20:41] And Jacob never realized the significance of neglecting his children when he was raising them. And sin will make you blind like that folks.

Sin will close your mind to the vast nature of the consequences of your sin. And the guilt not only haunts the guilty. But the grief of a loved one's sin will haunt the grieving loved ones as well.
And the haunt of guilt is horrible. And this is the good news today. It does not have to be. It does not have to be.
I spoke of David earlier. About his sin with Bathsheba. And the prophet Nathan confronts him. And David repents. And his prayer is preserved for us in scripture.
It's in Psalm 51. I want to read a portion of that. In verse 7 he says. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. I mean he knew that only God could take away his sin.
[21:49] He knew that only God could wash away his sin. Reminds me of the old hymn. And what can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. It's the only hope we got. The only hope we have is through a God forgiving us and removing us of our sins.

Removing our sins. Scripture says that he will remove them as far as the east is from the west. In verse 8 he says. Let me hear joy and gladness.
Let the bones that you have broken rejoice. The only way healing is going to come my friend. The only way the hurting inside will stop is if the joy of the Lord will return to a forgiven soul.
He continues. Hide your face from my sins and blot out my iniquities. Iniquities. I mean the only way God can see your sins, cannot see your sins is if they no longer exist.
And the only way that your sins no longer exist is if he removes them. Then in verse 10 he says. Create in me a clean heart, O God. And renew a right spirit within me.
[22:53] He is speaking of a cleansing and restoring that only God can do. He says. Cast me not away from your presence. And take not your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation. And uphold me with a willing spirit. David knew how to worship. And he knew that in sin, that sin in his life would hinder the movement of the Spirit of God in his life.
If you have a hard time hearing the Holy Spirit in your life, it's probably because you've tried to nullify him. Try to quiet him. When the Spirit of God does not move in this place when we come together.
It's because there's unconfessed sin that needs to be dealt with. That hinders the work of God. Every one of us can hinder the work of God.
And when there's unconfessed sin in your life. And when sin, guilt is hanging on you like a cheap suit. You need to rest in 1 John chapter 1 verse 9.
[24:09] When it says if we confess our sins. That means that we agree with God on our sins. It don't mean that we pray, Lord, if I've done anything wrong. That's a Greek word for that. Baloney. We have done something wrong.

If we confess, if we agree with God on the weight of our sin. I encourage folks when they pray and ask God for forgiveness. Name your sin.
Name it before the Lord. He knows what it is. And we need to recognize it.
And we need to face up to it. And deal with it. We need to agree with Him on the weight of that sin. Scripture says that if we'll do that, He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins. This is the cool thing. That if He could do it but wouldn't do it, we'd be messed up.
[25:11] And if He would do it but couldn't do it, we'd be messed up. But Scripture says that He can do it and He will do it. And because of that, my friend, if we confess our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us of our sins.

And I love this last part. My favorite part. And cleanse us from all unrighteousness. You know what that means? That means that if you get really honest with God today and you confess your sins before God and you name them before God.
I mean you even write them down on a sheet of paper. And take time to think about it. What you've done against God. When you get to the bottom of that list after thoroughly going through it. I got news for you.
Me, you, all of us. We're not going to name all our sins. Even in our best efforts. We're so good at it, it's come natural. That's the sin nature in us.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-13 15:56:02

And the reality is that Scripture says that if we're honest before God, we agree with Him on the weight of our sin. We ask Him to forgive us and to cleanse us. That He'll remove all of our unrighteousness.
[26:08] He'll wipe the slate clean. So if you're getting worn out in a pattern of sin, agree with God on the matter.

Confess it and walk away from it. May their experience be a warning for us. Because I believe that's why it's there.
In 1984, Ivanka Airlines, a Colombian airline that still flies today, had a jet that crashed into the side of a mountain.
And they couldn't figure out why. They looked frantically for the black box to give them indication that recorded the last things that happened to figure out what went wrong.
And when they found the black box, they discovered that in the last several minutes of the flight, that the pilot had received a warning to pull up. That the warning was constantly being given to him.
[27:21] Pull up. Pull up. And it was being given to him in English because the majority of international flights still have a warning system that speaks in English.

And instead of listening to the advice and the warning, the last voice they heard on the black box was a recording of the Spanish pilot saying, Shut up, Grinco.
Shut up, Grinco. And he reached over and flipped the switch to silence the warning. Minutes later, a 747 full of people crashed into the side of a mountain, killing everyone on board instantly.
I tell that story because there's a perfect example of what we often do when the Holy Spirit is trying to guide us to safety from the temptations that we face.
And in our actions, if not in our actions, if not in our words, we tell him to shut up. And we cut the warning off.
[28:35] And we face the consequences of our sin. That is much more than we could ever imagine.

The bad news is we're all guilty. The good news is we can find forgiveness and cleansing in the Lord Jesus.
And if you're here this morning and you've never surrendered your life to the Lord Jesus, you've never asked him to forgive you of your sins and to come into your life and to change you, you've never committed your life to follow him from this day forward and give up on being the pilot of your own life and give it over to him, then today's the day, my friend.
Scripture says today's the day of salvation. And I'm thankful that anyone and everyone that calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. That's what Romans 10, 13 tells me.
If you've never given your heart and life to the Lord Jesus, I encourage you to do it today. Maybe you've done that privately, but you've never acknowledged it publicly.
[29:55] And by Jesus' example and by his commission, he tells us to do it through baptism, just like we did a little while ago with these two. If you've never been baptized as a believer, I'm telling you, it can be a hindrance in your life.

It can be a stumbling block for you. It's a step of obedience that you need to follow. You come and I'll be happy to guide you in that. We're not going to do it this morning. Don't panic.
But we'll talk about it. Maybe you're here this morning and God's leading you to Pickens First Baptist Church. You've worshipped with us and you've seen that God's doing a work in our midst. And you feel like God's calling you to be a part of that. I'd love to guide you in that. Help you with that. Or maybe, like the vast majority of us here, you know you're a sinner.
And maybe for some that's here, there's a pattern, there's a stronghold in your life that you need to stop. You need to listen to the warning.
[31:00] And follow his lead and trust him. He loved you enough to die for you. He loves you enough to live for you. And you know what? He actually intercedes for you.

He actually sits at the right hand of the Father and prays for us. He loves you dearly and he knows you better than you know yourself. So don't you ever think that you're not enough?
We may not think you're enough, but I'll tell you one who does. The Lord Jesus Christ does. He loves you dearly and he'll change your life. Christian, he'll change your life if you'll just follow him.
So let's get our hearts right today. Let's learn from some brothers' stupid mistakes. And let's get our heart right today. And I realize that you can do that where you stand in just a moment when we sing.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-13 15:56:02

But if you've never given your heart and life to the Lord, please allow me the opportunity to share my faith with you. You come. As soon as we stand to sing, you just step right out. Don't hesitate. [32:03] If you've never acknowledged that publicly, you step right out. God's leading you to this church. You step right out. But I don't ever want you to do anything that God's not leading you to do.

I don't want you to do more than what he wants you to do. I don't want you to do less than what he wants you to do. I just want us all to be obedient and follow the Lord Jesus today. Heavenly Father, I love you.
I thank you, Lord, for Joseph's life and for his brothers and for the examples that you give us. God, help us to respond in obedience as you speak to us personally, Father.
In Jesus' precious name, amen. Please pray.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-13 15:56:02