

## Songs of Grace: The Psalms of the Sons of Korah

### *But the Sons of Korah Did Not Die*

Numbers 16; 26:11; 1 Chronicles 6:31–38; 2 Chronicles 20:19; Romans 5:1–11

**Intro:** Every family has a story. Every person has a story. And some chapters are harder to talk about than others.

There are things in your family history that make you grateful.

- You remember people who loved the Lord, prayed for you, and lived the Christian life with sincerity.
- You're glad your lives intertwined.
  - Those memories are gifts.
  - They remind you of God's goodness and of people whose love and faithfulness helped make you who you are.

But other memories bring a different response.

- A name comes up, and first,
  - your countenance changes and then,
  - the conversation changes.
- Someone asks a question, and you wonder how much to say.
- There are decisions that affected you; you wish someone had done differently,
- There are words you wish had never been spoken, and
- wounds that still affect the way you live.
- Sometimes those memories are painful because of what happened to us.
- Sometimes they're painful because of what we did.

Which brings us to the way you have lived your life -

- You know what you did or said.
- You know what you should've done or said.
- You can look back and identify a moment when one decision led to another, and you wonder how your life might have been different if you'd chosen differently.
- Maybe you damaged a relationship, wasted an opportunity, or wandered far from God.

You can't change what happened, and sometimes you wonder whether you'll ever escape its consequences.

Here's something we all know.

**IMP:** You can move away from the place where something happened without moving away from what happened there.

- You can grow older, build a career, raise a family, and establish a good life, yet still find that something from long ago influences how you live.
- An old memory can interrupt an otherwise ordinary day.
- A familiar situation can awaken feelings you thought you'd left behind.
- Our past has a way of traveling with us.

Sometimes that's wonderful. We carry memories of people who loved us, encouraged us, and helped shape our lives.

But sometimes we carry things we wish we could leave behind. And even when we've learned to live with those things, they may still influence our relationships, our decisions, and the way we understand ourselves.

**APP:** So what do we do with a past we cannot change?

And perhaps an even more important question is this: How much authority should our past have over our future?

That's what I want us to think about this morning.

Today we begin a new sermon series called *Songs of Grace: The Psalms of the Sons of Korah*.

Over the coming weeks, we'll study some remarkable psalms. They speak about

- longing for God,
- trusting Him in trouble,
- facing suffering,
- celebrating His greatness, and
- finding joy in His presence.

They also speak about those seasons when life is so painful that we struggle to understand what God is doing.

You probably know some of their words already.

- Psalm 42 begins, *"As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God."*
- Psalm 46 declares, *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."*
- And Psalm 84 celebrates God's presence with the words, *"How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts!"*

These are some of the most beautiful expressions of faith in all of Scripture. But here's what makes them especially interesting. They came from a family with a troubled history. Before we

listen to their songs, I want us to understand their story. And as we do, I want you to think about your own.

Because tucked away in a passage of Scripture that most of us probably read rather quickly without giving it the credence it deserves is a remarkable sentence.

Numbers 26:11 says, "*But the sons of Korah did not die.*"

Their father died under God's judgment. His rebellion became part of Israel's history. But his sons survived, and generations later, their descendants became known for leading God's people in worship. A family remembered for rebellion became a family remembered for worship.

The sons of Korah remind us that our past can have consequences, but it cannot prevent God's grace from accomplishing His purposes for us.

And that brings us to the thought I want you to take away with you this morning.

**Big Idea:** God's grace can give us a future our past may not promise, but also cannot hinder.

I want us to consider that truth in four movements.

- First, we all have a past we cannot change.
- Second, our past does not have to determine our future.
- Third, in Christ, God gives us a future filled with hope.
- And fourth, your identity is found in Christ

### **First: We All Have a Past We Cannot Change. Numbers 16**

- Korah was a descendant of Levi, the tribe God had set apart for service connected with the tabernacle.
- More specifically, he belonged to the family of Kohath, whose responsibilities included caring for the sacred furnishings of the sanctuary.
- He belonged to the people God had delivered from Egypt.
- He had witnessed the Lord's provision in the wilderness.
- His family had received a special place in the life of Israel. He had every reason to be grateful.

But Korah wanted more.

Numbers 16 tells us he joined Dathan and Abiram in a rebellion against Moses and Aaron. They gathered 250 prominent men of Israel, leaders who possessed influence among the people. Their complaint sounded reasonable enough.

In v 3, they said, "*You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?*"

There was truth in what they said about Israel's special relationship with God. But they used that truth to justify resisting the responsibilities God had assigned to Moses and Aaron and claiming them for themselves. And Moses recognized what was happening.

In vs 9–10, Moses reminded Korah, “*is it too small a thing for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do service in the tabernacle of the LORD and to stand before the congregation to minister to them,*<sup>10</sup> *and that he has brought you near him, and all your brothers the sons of Levi with you? And would you seek the priesthood also?*”

**IMP:** Now, there's an important lesson here about how sin develops in our lives.

- Sin doesn't always begin with some spectacular act of disobedience.
- Sometimes it begins quietly, with an attitude we allow to grow.
- We become dissatisfied with what we have.
- We compare ourselves with someone else.
- We convince ourselves that we deserve something more.
- Gradually, gratitude gives way to resentment, and resentment shapes our decisions.

Think about how often that happens.

- A marriage begins with love and gratitude, but over time, disappointments accumulate. Instead of dealing with them honestly, someone can think only about grievances.
- A friendship suffers because someone feels disregarded.
- A person becomes so consumed with what life hasn't given her/him he loses sight of everything God has given.
- Eventually, attitudes shape decisions, and those decisions produce consequences.

That's what happened with Korah. And the consequences were terrible.

32-35 - *And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the people who belonged to Korah and all their goods. 33 So they and all that belonged to them went down alive into Sheol, and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly. 34 And all Israel who were around them fled at their cry, for they said, “Lest the earth swallow us up!” 35 And fire came out from the Lord and consumed the 250 men offering the incense.*

It's a sobering account, and we shouldn't move past it too quickly.

- God's holiness is real.
- His judgment is righteous.
- Our decisions matter, our attitudes matter, and the direction of our lives matters.
- We cannot treat sin as though it has no consequences.

**APP:** But here's something else we need to remember. Our decisions rarely affect only ourselves. They touch other people, sometimes in ways we never intended and sometimes for generations.

- A father's anger can shape a home's atmosphere.
- A mother's bitterness can influence how her children understand relationships.
- A parent's addiction can create wounds that remain long after childhood ends.
- A teacher's harsh words can leave a student questioning their abilities for years.
- A spouse's or friend's betrayal can make it difficult to trust others.
- A humiliating experience can leave someone struggling with shame long after everyone else has forgotten what happened.

Sometimes the consequences of these experiences carry into another generation.

**IMP:** That's one of the painful realities of living in a fallen world. We inherit more than physical characteristics from our families. We often inherit patterns of thinking, ways of responding, attitudes toward others, and assumptions about life. Some of those things are wonderful. Others can be destructive.

- You may have grown up in a home where people rarely expressed affection. Now, years later, you find it difficult to tell the people you love how much they mean to you.
- You may have grown up around anger, and although you hated it as a child, you sometimes hear that same anger in your own voice.
- You may have experienced rejection, and now you constantly look for reassurance that someone won't leave you.
- Or maybe you grew up with a parent whose choices brought embarrassment or pain into your family. You didn't make those choices, but you lived with them. And you may still live with some of their consequences.

That's why we need to distinguish between

- the sins we've committed and
- the wounds we've received.

We're responsible for our own decisions, but we're not guilty simply because someone else sinned against us. Both realities belong to the human story, and both need to be brought before God.

Let me ask you to think about something. What part of your past still influences your life today?

- Maybe it's something you did.
- Maybe it's something someone did to you.
- Maybe it's a family pattern you've spent years trying to overcome.

You don't have to tell anyone what it is, but I want you to acknowledge it honestly before God.

One of the most important steps in our spiritual growth is learning to tell the truth about our lives.

- We don't have to pretend the past was better than it was.
- We don't have to excuse sin or minimize suffering.
- We can acknowledge what happened, even when it hurts.

But once we've acknowledged the past, what then?

- Are we destined to repeat it?
- Must the mistakes of our parents become our mistakes?
- Must the failures of our youth determine the rest of our lives?
- Must the worst thing ever done to us or that we've ever done become the defining thing about us?

That's where the story takes an unexpected turn.

### **Second: Our Past Does Not Have to Determine Our Future. Numbers 26**

Years have passed since Korah's rebellion. Israel is preparing for a new chapter in its history, and God commands another census of the people. The chapter contains one name after another, one family after another. It's the kind of passage we sometimes read rather quickly because we're eager to get to the next story. But buried among those names is a sentence that deserves our attention.

*Numbers 26:11 - "The sons of Eliab: Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. These are the Dathan and Abiram, chosen from the congregation, who contended against Moses and Aaron in the company of Korah, when they contended against the LORD <sup>10</sup> and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, when the fire devoured 250 men, and they became a warning. <sup>11</sup> But the sons of Korah did not die."*

Don't move past that sentence too quickly.

- Korah and the family members of his generation died with him.
- His rebellion brought terrible judgment on hundreds of others.
- His name became associated with one of the most sobering events in Israel's wilderness history.
- But his sons survived.

We aren't told precisely how they survived. Scripture doesn't explain where they stood during their father's rebellion or what they said about it. We shouldn't fill those gaps with details God hasn't given us. What Scripture tells us is remarkable enough. Their father died, but they lived. The family survived. And the story continued.

Now, I want you to think about that in terms of your own life.

- You cannot choose your parents.
- You cannot choose the family into which you're born.
- You cannot go back and rewrite the circumstances of your childhood.
- You cannot undo what someone else did to you.
- You can't change the decisions you've made.
- And you cannot go back and change the life you've already lived.

But none of those things means your future must repeat your past.

That's what makes this brief sentence so powerful. The sons of Korah carried their father's name, but they didn't have to carry his rebellion into the future. His story didn't have to become their story.

And here's where the account becomes even more remarkable. As Israel's history continues, the descendants of Korah appear again. But this time, they're associated with something very different.

- In 1 Chronicles 9:19, we find Korahites serving as gatekeepers.
- In 1 Chronicles 6, we read they were appointed to lead worship music.
- And in 2 Chronicles 20, when King Jehoshaphat and Judah face an overwhelming enemy coalition, the Bible says,

*Vs 3–4: Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. <sup>4</sup> And Judah assembled to seek help from the LORD; from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.*

*V 19: And the Levites, of the Kohothites and the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice.*

Think about that.

Generations earlier, Korah had raised his voice in rebellion. Now his descendants were raising their voices in praise. The same family name that once appeared in the account of judgment now appears in the account of worship.

And then we come to the Psalms. Eleven psalms bear the name of the sons of Korah. We won't cover all of them, but we will see –

- Psalm 44: Suffering - We can trust God when we don't understand life (Oct 25<sup>th</sup>)
- Psalm 45: Beauty - We can find hope and joy in the glory and majesty of the King (Nov 1<sup>st</sup>)
- Psalm 46: Refuge - We can find security in God amid life's uncertainties (Nov 8<sup>th</sup>)
- Psalm 47: Sovereignty - God reigns over all the earth, including us and others (Nov 15<sup>th</sup>)
- Psalm 88: Darkness - We can cry out to God when darkness doesn't lift (Nov 22<sup>nd</sup>)
- Psalm 49: Mortality - We can face death with confidence in God (Nov 29<sup>th</sup>)

- Psalm 84: Longing - We can find our deepest satisfaction in God's presence (Dec 6<sup>th</sup>)

Think about the significance of that. A family whose history included rebellion and judgment eventually became associated with songs that have helped God's people worship, pray, grieve, and trust Him for thousands of years. That's extraordinary.

**APP:** Their story didn't end where we might have expected it to end. And neither must yours.

- Some of you grew up in circumstances you didn't choose.
- You know what it means to carry the consequences of someone else's decisions.
- Maybe you've spent years trying to avoid becoming like a parent whose behavior wounded you.
- Maybe you look at your own children and wonder whether you're passing along some of the same things that hurt you.
- Maybe there are habits you've struggled with for years, and you've begun to believe that you'll never change.
- Maybe a friend or spouse betrayed you, and you can't get over it.
- Or maybe your past involves something you're deeply ashamed of.
  - You know you sinned.
  - You've confessed it.
  - You've asked for forgiveness.
  - But you still struggle to believe that God can do anything meaningful with the life you have left.

Listen carefully –

**IMP:** Your past is part of your story, but it doesn't have sovereign authority over your future. Jesus does.

That doesn't mean the past is unimportant.

- Some decisions have consequences that last a lifetime.
- Some relationships cannot be restored to what they once were.
- Some wounds require years of patient healing.
- And sometimes, even after we've forgiven someone, wisdom requires us to maintain appropriate boundaries.

**Grace doesn't ask us to deny reality. But grace gives us hope within reality.**

And sometimes God does something even more beautiful. He takes the very experiences we wish had never happened and, without making the evil itself good, brings good out of what was painful.

- A person who grew up without encouragement becomes someone who encourages others.
- A man who once lived selfishly learns to love his wife and children sacrificially.

- A woman who has experienced deep sorrow becomes especially sensitive to the suffering of others.
- Someone who wandered far from God becomes an encouragement to people who wonder whether they can ever find their way home.

**God can redeem what we cannot rewrite.**

**IMP:** I want you to consider one more thing about the sons of Korah. We don't know how much time passed before the family's name became associated with those beautiful songs. Generations came and went. Their descendants lived ordinary lives, served the Lord, and eventually contributed to Israel's worship. What began with the survival of a few sons became a legacy that continues to bless us today.

And that reminds us that we don't always see the full significance of what God is doing in our lives. We may not live long enough to see every consequence of our faithfulness. We may never know how a decision to repent, forgive, persevere, or trust God will influence someone who comes after us.

- A father who begins treating his children differently may change the atmosphere in which his grandchildren grow up.
- A woman who learns to forgive may help break a pattern of bitterness that has marked her family for generations.
- A spouse who escaped abuse may teach her children and grandchildren what true love looks like.
- Someone who comes to Christ late in life may leave behind a testimony of grace that influences people long after they are gone.

We cannot know everything God intends to accomplish through our lives. But we can trust Him with the years He gives us.

And that brings me to some questions I want you to thoughtfully contemplate.

- How much of your present and future is being determined by your past?
- Are you still allowing an old failure to define you?
- Are you still measuring your worth by something someone did or said years ago?
- Are you still assuming that because you've always struggled with something, you always will?

What would it mean to see your future through **the promises and power of God** rather than the failures and disappointments of your past?

Think about that.

- The sons of Korah didn't die.
- Their family had a future.
- And eventually, their descendants had a song.

But that raises another important question.

- How can we be confident that God's grace can give us a different future?
- The survival of Korah's sons demonstrates that a family history doesn't have to end in judgment.
- But it doesn't, by itself, explain how God reconciles sinners to Himself.
- For that, we need to move forward in the story of Scripture until we meet Jesus.

### **Third: In Christ, God Gives Us a Hopeful Future. Romans 5:18-21 & 2 & 11**

The story of the sons of Korah is remarkable because their father's rebellion did not determine their future. Their family history included judgment, loss, and shame, yet generations later, their descendants were standing in the house of God, leading His people in worship. Their past did not define their future.

But their story also points us toward something far greater. Because the truth is, our deepest problem goes beyond our parents' mistakes, our childhood wounds, or even personal regrets. We belong to a human family whose history reaches all the way back to Adam.

This is how Paul says it in **Romans 5:18–19** - *“So then, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.”*

Paul places two men before us: Adam and Jesus. And he tells us that what each man did has consequences far beyond himself.

- When Adam disobeyed God, sin entered the human story.
- His rebellion brought condemnation and death to all of us.
- We were born into a world already broken by sin, and every one of us has added our own sins to that story.
- We cannot blame Adam for the choices we've made, but we cannot escape the consequences of belonging to a fallen humanity either.

Then Jesus Christ entered our world.

- Where Adam disobeyed, Jesus obeyed.
- Where Adam brought condemnation, Jesus brings justification.
- Where Adam's sin brought death, Christ's righteousness brings life.
- And through His death and resurrection, Jesus has opened a future that none of us could ever have secured for ourselves.

Do you see how much greater this is than the story of the sons of Korah? They were spared from the judgment that fell upon their father, and their descendants eventually became worshipers in the house of God.

But in Jesus Christ, God does something greater still. He takes people who are themselves guilty of sin, justifies them through faith in His Son, and welcomes them into His family.

And then, Paul makes one of the most wonderful statements in all of Scripture. In v 20, he writes, ***“where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.”***

Think about what that means for you.

- There may be chapters of your life you wish you could erase.
- There may be things you said, decisions you made, people you hurt, or opportunities you squandered.
- You may still carry the consequences of someone else's sin against you.
- You may wonder whether anything good can come from a story with so much pain.

**IMP:** Paul tells us that sin does not have the final word. God's grace is greater.

- That doesn't mean the past suddenly disappears.
- The consequences of sin can be painful and lasting.
- Some relationships may never be restored in this life.
- Some wounds take years to heal.
- Some losses remain with us until we see Jesus face to face. (Ray Clayton)

But none of those things has the authority to determine what God can do with the rest of your life.

And we need to understand something else.

**IMP:** Paul isn't teaching that everyone automatically receives eternal life simply because Christ has come. He's describing what Christ has accomplished and what becomes ours through faith in Him.

- Adam's disobedience explains our condemnation
- Christ's obedience is the basis of our justification.

The future God promises is received by trusting the Savior who secured it.

Paul concludes in v 21 by explaining God's purpose: ***“so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”***

Notice that word *reign*. Sin has exercised a terrible power over the human story. We see its effects in our families, our relationships, our communities, and our own hearts. But through Jesus Christ, grace reigns.

And grace leads somewhere. It leads to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**APP:** So when we say that our past does not have to determine our future, we're talking about something far greater than overcoming a difficult childhood or making better decisions tomorrow. We're talking about the saving work of Jesus Christ, who can forgive our sins, reconcile us to God, transform our lives, and give us an eternal future with Him.

That's why Paul could say earlier in **Romans 5:2, "we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."**

And that's why he could write in v 11, **"we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."**

We can rejoice because our hope rests on what Jesus Christ has accomplished.

The sons of Korah inherited a name associated with rebellion, but God gave their family a future filled with worship. If you belong to Jesus Christ, the same gracious God holds your story.

**IMP:** And because Jesus reigns, God's grace can give us a future our past may not promise but also cannot hinder.

#### **Fourth: Your Identity Is Found in Christ**

- Some wounds affect us for the rest of our lives.  
Some losses change the circumstances in which we live.
- And some wounds will find their complete healing only when we stand in the presence of Jesus.

We should acknowledge those realities honestly. God's grace gives us hope within the life we actually have.

But listen again to **Romans 5:20: "where sin increased, grace abounded all the more."** Then v 21 tells us that grace reigns **"through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."**

Grace reigns. That means the wrong done to you – and the person who wronged you - doesn't possess ultimate authority over who you are or who you can become.

If you belong to Jesus Christ,

- your identity rests in your relationship with Him.
- As you grow, His values increasingly shape your decisions.
- His character increasingly shapes your responses.
- His promises increasingly shape the way you understand your life.

Something painful may explain why you struggle. It doesn't have to govern how you live.

- A man may have hurt you, but that doesn't mean every man is untrustworthy.
- A friend may have betrayed you, but faithful friendship is still possible.

- Someone may have abused their authority, but you can learn to recognize leadership marked by humility and care.
- A church may have wounded you, but God can still give you healing relationships among His people.

And think about the patterns you may have learned.

- You may have grown up without affection, but you can become someone who expresses love.
- Anger may have filled your childhood home, but gentleness can increasingly shape the home you're building.
- Someone may have made you feel worthless, but that person's words don't determine your worth before God.

We need wisdom as we grow. Trust may take time. Some relationships require firm boundaries. Forgiveness doesn't require you to place yourself back within someone's reach so they can harm you again. But wise boundaries can protect your life while you learn to receive the good God still provides.

**IMP:** Now, there's another possibility we need to consider honestly. Sometimes we become attached to the wrong done to us.

- We discover that our story brings sympathy.
- It explains our behavior.
- It gives us a reason to withdraw, remain angry, or avoid a responsibility we don't want to face.
- Eventually, being the person who was wronged becomes central to how we understand ourselves.

And we can begin to cherish that position.

- We may say we want freedom while resisting the changes freedom would require.
- We keep returning to the grievance because we've built so much of our identity around it that we wonder who we would be without it.

I'm talking here about something different from grieving, seeking help, or telling the truth about abuse. Those things matter. I'm asking whether you and I have begun protecting a grievance that God is calling us to surrender.

**APP:** \* Am I bringing this wound to God for healing, or am I holding on to it because of what it gives me?  
 \* Have I allowed another person's sin to become an excuse for my own?  
 \* Have I become more certain about what happened to me than about what Christ can do in me, for me or through me?

Your past can influence your life in several ways.

- It can discourage you until you stop expecting anything good.
- It can become your governing identity, so that every relationship and decision passes through the wrong you suffered.
- Or you can bring it under the authority of Jesus Christ and learn to live from the grace He has given you.

That third response doesn't make the past disappear. It gives you a different foundation for the future. As Paul says in

*Romans 8:37 - "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."*

Notice that Paul says "*in all these things*." He has been speaking about tribulation, distress, persecution, and danger. Christ's victory holds His people even within suffering. And Paul goes on to assure us that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- If you've been victimized, the wrong done to you is real.
- But being a victim need not become your governing identity.
- You belong to Christ.
- His victory over sin and death secures your future, and His Spirit is at work in you now.

I'm thinking here of – *2 Corinthians 2:14 - But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession,*

- You didn't win that victory.
- Jesus did.
- And yet all its benefits are yours in Christ.

And living from that relationship changes how you grow. When the past becomes the final explanation for every response, we can stop examining attitudes that need repentance and habits that need change. We can settle into saying, "*This is just who I am.*"

But in Christ, we can begin asking a better question: "*Lord, who am I becoming?*"

- The sons of Korah carried a family name associated with rebellion.
- Generations later, that same name appeared among people who led Israel in worship. Their history remained part of their story, but God gave them more than a history to carry.
- He gave them a future in which to serve Him.

And He can do that in your life too.

**IMP:** Your past is part of your story, but it doesn't have sovereign authority over your present or your future. Jesus does.

## **Conclusion: Bring Your Past into the Light of God's Grace**

Now, I want us to do something a little different as we conclude.

We've talked about Korah and his sons. We've talked about their history, and the remarkable future God gave their descendants. But I don't want us to leave this morning having thought only about someone else's story. I want us to think about our own, and I want to give you a few moments to do that before the Lord.

First, think about your past. What in your history do you still struggle to accept?

- Maybe it's something you did.
- Maybe it's something someone else did.
- Maybe it's a damaged relationship, a lost dream, or a time of life you wish had unfolded differently.

Whatever it is, I want you to acknowledge it before God. You don't need to pretend it didn't happen. You don't need to excuse it. And you don't need to carry it alone.

Now, think about how that past may still influence your present.

- Are there negative attitudes you've carried for years?
- Do overwhelming fears still shape your decisions?
- Are there harmful habits or patterns you know need to change?
- Is there someone you need to forgive?
- Is there someone from whom you need to seek forgiveness?
- Are you avoiding a step of repentance or obedience because you've convinced yourself change is impossible?

Ask the Lord to help you see those things clearly.

And now I want you to think about your future.

- What would it look like to entrust that future to Jesus Christ?
- What if you began to believe that God's grace is greater than the failures you regret?
- What if you stopped allowing someone else's sin to determine how you understand your worth?
- What if you began to see the years ahead as years in which God can still work, still change you, still use you, and still bring glory to Himself through your life?

**You cannot change yesterday.  
But you can trust the God who holds tomorrow.**

And now I want to bring us back to Romans 5. Paul tells us that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. He tells us that through Jesus Christ, we have peace with God. He tells us that God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. And then, in v 11, he says

that *"we rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have received reconciliation."*

Think about that. We rejoice in God.

After everything he's said about sin, suffering, reconciliation, and hope, Paul brings us to rejoicing. And that's where I want us to finish this morning.

- Some of you may have come here carrying burdens from your past that no one else knows about.
- Some of you may have spent years believing the most important things in your life have already happened, and that the future can only continue what has gone before.

But listen to the Bible when it says, *"But the sons of Korah did not die."*

Their story continued. And generations later, their descendants stood among God's people and sang His praises.

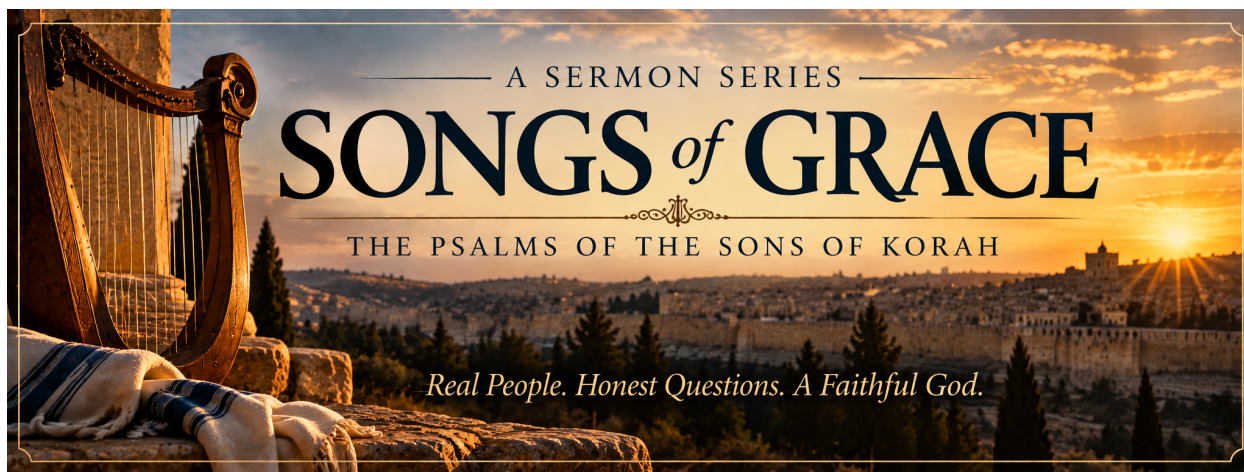
What a remarkable testimony to the grace of God.

APP: But you and I have an even greater testimony.

- Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again.
- Through Him, we can be forgiven, reconciled to God, and given a living hope.
- Our past may explain much about where we are today.
- It doesn't have the authority to determine everything about where we're going.
- God has that authority.
- And for those who belong to Jesus Christ, the future is ultimately secure in Him.
  
- One day, the joy of His presence will swallow up every painful memory.
- Every wound will be healed.
- Every trace of sin will be gone.
- And we will stand before Him, fully redeemed, rejoicing in God's glory.
  
- Until then, we keep trusting Him.
- We keep growing as we fear Him more than our past.
- And we keep rejoicing in the hope He has given us.

So when you think about your past, remember the sons of Korah. Their father's rebellion didn't have the final word over their family. And when you think about your future, remember Jesus Christ.

*Your past doesn't have authority over your present or your future.  
Jesus does.*



**Big Idea:** God's grace can give us a future that our past could never provide.

**Observation: What Does the Text Say?**

1. According to Numbers 16:1–3, who joined Korah in his rebellion, and what accusations did they make against Moses and Aaron?
2. In Numbers 16:8–10, what did Moses remind Korah about the responsibilities and privileges God had already given him?
3. What happened to Korah and those who joined his rebellion (Numbers 16:31–35), and what surprising detail does Numbers 26:11 add?
4. What do 1 Chronicles 9:19 and 2 Chronicles 20:19 tell us about the later descendants of Korah and their service to God?
5. In Romans 5:18–21, what contrasts does Paul draw between Adam's disobedience and Christ's obedience?

**Interpretation: What Does the Text Mean?**

6. How did Korah's dissatisfaction with what God had given him contribute to his rebellion? What does this teach us about the way sinful attitudes develop?
7. Why is the statement “But the sons of Korah did not die” so significant when we consider the history of their family?
8. What does the transformation of Korah's family from a name associated with rebellion to one associated with worship reveal about God's grace?
9. Why is it important to distinguish between sins we've committed and wounds we've received from the sins of others?
10. In Romans 5:20–21, Paul says that grace abounded where sin increased and that grace reigns through righteousness. What does this teach us about the power of Christ's saving work?

**Correlation: How Does Scripture Illuminate Scripture?**

11. Read Ezekiel 18:19–20. How does this passage help us understand the relationship between a parent's sin and a child's personal responsibility before God?

12. Read Genesis 50:19–21. How does Joseph's understanding of God's work through the evil he experienced help us think about painful chapters in our own lives?

13. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. How does becoming a new creation in Christ deepen our understanding of the future God offers us?

14. Read Philippians 3:12–14. What can we learn from Paul's determination to press forward rather than allow his past to control his pursuit of Christ?

15. Read Revelation 21:1–5. How does God's promise to make all things new strengthen the hope Paul describes in Romans 5?

### **Application: How Does God's Grace Change Us?**

16. The sermon reminded us that we can move away from the place where something happened without moving away from what happened there. What are some ways our past can continue to influence our attitudes, relationships, and decisions?

17. How can we recognize the difference between honestly acknowledging painful experiences and allowing those experiences to define who we are?

18. What attitudes or patterns might we have inherited or learned from our families that we need God's grace to help us change? What positive examples would we like to pass along to others?

19. The sermon emphasized that God's grace doesn't erase every consequence of the past. How can we trust God for a different future while accepting that some wounds, losses, or consequences may remain?

20. Think about the statement, "Your past is part of your story, but it doesn't have sovereign authority over your future. Jesus does." How would believing and living according to that truth change the way you approach the coming week?