



THE BEGINNINGS!

The Book of Genesis

Faith and Mercy!

Genesis 43:1-34

Message #44 of 50 – S950

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Sunday Morning Service

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Faith and Mercy!

Genesis 43:1-34

Opening Comments

- Good morning – we will be in **Genesis 43**
- Today we continue our journey through **Genesis: THE BEGINNINGS!**
- There are a couple of words we use commonly in the church – grace and mercy
- Both of those things are glaringly absent from much of the rhetoric we hear from our culture today – especially from proponents of Critical Theory
- The oversimplified definitions of those two terms are
- Grace: getting what we don't deserve!
- Mercy: not getting what we do deserve!
- The account we have been looking at of Joseph's life is a lesson on mercy
- As a general rule, most people would rather talk about grace
- It includes the idea of getting something good that we don't deserve and can't get on our own
- Salvation is an expression of the grace of God **Ephesians 2:8-9**

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

- Mercy is equally important in the life of a believer **1 Peter 2:9-10**

But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

- Our problem with mercy is that we have to admit that we deserve to stay in the darkness and can't get to the light on our own
- God has every right, and He has the power to punish us for our sins
- The fact that He doesn't, but rather forgives us because of the finished work of Jesus is an expression of God's mercy
- Let's get into this interesting text
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Faith and Mercy!**

- This chapter opens in Canaan with Jacob and his family

- **Genesis 53:1**

- The drought has been going on for two years
- Jacob sent ten of his sons down to Egypt to buy food
- While there they came before Joseph who was responsible for distributing food in Egypt
- They didn't recognize them, but Joseph recognized his brothers
- 22 years earlier they sold him into slavery because they were jealous of Jacob's favoritism toward Joseph
- They then lied to their father and made him believe that Joseph had been killed by wild animals
- As they stand before Joseph, he has the power to punish them for what they did
- But for 22 years God had been preparing Joseph's heart for this very moment
- Rather than punish them, Joseph shows them mercy but prepares a test to determine if they were worthy of his mercy
- He sends all but Simeon back with food and tells them to bring their youngest brother back with them – Simeon is thrown in prison to wait for his brothers to return

- **Genesis 43:2-10**

- Judah offers to guarantee the safety of Benjamin
- Even though Judah is fourth in the birth order, from here on we see him taking a leadership role in the family
- That will carry through to the Exodus as the tribe of Judah plays a prominent role and then ultimately the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Jesus is born through the line of King David
- At the end of chapter 42, the brothers wanted to go right back with Benjamin to get Simeon out of prison
- Jacob said, he will never let Benjamin go to Egypt
- But then the food runs out – they are desperate
- It is about a three-week trip from where they are in Canaan to where Joseph is in Egypt

- That means at least six weeks have passed since they got back
 - Some translations suggest it may have been three months
 - All that time Simeon is waiting in the prison in Egypt
 - Jacob finally realizes he doesn't have a choice
 - **Genesis 43:11-14**
 - Even though Jacob had four wives – his heart always belonged to Rachel
 - Rachel was Joseph's mother – she died giving birth to Benjamin
 - Jacob thought Joseph was dead and so Benjamin was all that he had left of his beloved Rachel
 - He had been grieving for Joseph for 22 years
 - And the thought of losing Benjamin was almost more than he could bear
 - Verse 14 is an illustration of Jacob's faith
 - He is praying for God's mercy 'before the man' – Joseph
 - But he also sounds resolved to his fate – losing Benjamin and Simeon
 - The Hebrew word that is translated mercy here includes the idea of compassion
 - In fact, that is how it will be translated in verse 30
- Compassion: sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others.**
- Compassion is a necessary component of mercy
 - It views others based on their needs, not on their merits **Matthew 9:36-38**
- But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. ³⁷ Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. ³⁸ Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."**
- Mercy happens when compassion fills our heart
 - Jacob is praying that God moves on the heart of the man (Joseph)
 - Little does he know that his prayer had already been answered
 - **Genesis 43:15-18**
 - When the brothers found the money in their sacks, they were convinced that God was setting them up to punish for what they had done to Joseph
 - Now they are being taken to this Egyptian ruler's home

- In their minds no good could come from that
- **Genesis 43:19-23**
- To the brothers credit they are taking responsibility, but they are expecting the worst
- How shocked they must have been when they heard ‘Peace be with you’
- ‘Peace be to you...’ – ‘shalom lakem’ – the traditional Hebrew greeting for welcoming guests.
- They were expecting to be taken as slaves
- Instead, they are welcomed as guests
- The steward attributes the money in their sacks as a miraculous work of God
- It wasn’t and the steward knows that – he put the money in their sacks
- And while God does miracles, this was not a miracle.
- Rather than working miracles, God regularly works through human agents to bless His people.
- **Genesis 43:24-26**
- This is just like Joseph’s dream from 22 years earlier
- **Genesis 43:27**
- This is a legitimate question – Jacob was over 100 when Joseph was sold into slavery
- **Genesis 43:28-29**
- The last time Joseph saw Benjamin he was just a baby
- Now he is in his early twenties
- **Genesis 43:30**
- Joseph is overwhelmed by the emotion of this scene, while his brothers stand clueless
- **Genesis 43:31-32**
- There is irony in this meal – 22 years earlier the brothers callously sat down to a meal while Joseph was pleading with them for his life. Now here they are casually eating a meal with Joseph sitting apart from them with the power to take their lives.
- **Genesis 43:33**
- Joseph has the eleven brothers seated in their order of birth

- They are astonished – how does he know that – preparing for next chapter
- Joseph is testing his brothers to see if they have changed
- And so, he does something that he hopes will reveal their character
- **Genesis 43:34**
- Joseph is testing his brothers to see if they were the same men who sold him into slavery.
- They were jealous of Jacob's favoritism toward Joseph.
- Joseph shows favoritism toward Benjamin (five times as much) to see how his brothers respond.
- They don't seem to care – they pass this part of the test.
- Next comes the final exam. That is for next time.
- Jacob needed mercy so that he could get his sons Benjamin and Simeon back
- Joseph's brothers needed mercy – they knew they were guilty of betraying Joseph and expected God to punish them
- They suspected it would happen because of the money in their sacks
- They need mercy from Joseph, and they will get it, but not quite yet
- Mercy is something everyone needs
- Mercy is a spiritual transaction – of giving and receiving
- Jesus spoke about that in the Sermon on the Mount **Matthew 5:7**
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
- Notice the order – giving mercy precedes receiving mercy
- God is under no obligation to be merciful with the merciless
- God is under no obligation to man at all, except where He has obligated Himself
- God expects his people to be merciful **Micah 6:8**
He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?
- Another way to understand mercy is to do good to others when you have reason to do them harm and the power to accomplish it
- Joseph had good reason to punish his brothers for what they had done to him, and he had the power to do them harm
- The apostle Paul tells what God's motivation for mercy is **Ephesians 2:4-6**

God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...

- God loved you so much that even though you were spiritually dead in your sins and deserved to stay that way forever, he chose to save you by grace through faith in Christ Jesus
- If you are saved here this morning, it is because God loved you and showed you mercy even though you didn't deserve it – great mercy
- How should you respond? – be merciful to every undeserving person you meet – That's what Jesus would do
- If you are not a believer – God wants to be merciful to you
- But there is only one way to access God's mercy – through faith in Jesus – open your heart to Him right now
- **Prayer! Happy Father's Day!**