

SERMON-BASED STUDY: MERCY

Genesis 43:8-34, ESV – ⁸ And Judah said to Israel his father, “Send the boy with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones. ⁹ I will be a pledge of his safety. From my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. ¹⁰ If we had not delayed, we would now have returned twice.”

¹¹ Then their father Israel said to them, “If it must be so, then do this: take some of the choice fruits of the land in your bags, and carry a present down to the man, a little balm and a little honey, gum, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds. ¹² Take double the money with you. Carry back with you the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks. Perhaps it was an oversight. ¹³ Take also your brother, and arise, go again to the man. ¹⁴ May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man, and may he send back your other brother and Benjamin. And as for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.”

¹⁵ So the men took this present, and they took double the money with them, and Benjamin. They arose and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph.

¹⁶ When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, “Bring the men into the house, and slaughter an animal and make ready, for the men are to dine with me at noon.” ¹⁷ The man did as Joseph told him and brought the men to Joseph’s house. ¹⁸ And the men were afraid because they were brought to Joseph’s house, and they said, “It is because of the money, which was replaced in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may assault us and fall upon us to make us servants and seize our donkeys.” ¹⁹ So they went up to the steward of Joseph’s house and spoke with him at the door of the house, ²⁰ and said, “Oh, my lord, we came down the first time to buy food. ²¹ And when we came to the lodging place we opened our sacks, and there was each man’s money in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight. So we have brought it again with us, ²² and we have brought other money down with us to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks.” ²³ He replied, “Peace to you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has put treasure in your sacks for you. I received your money.” Then he brought Simeon out to them. ²⁴ And when the man had brought the men into Joseph’s house and given them water, and they had washed their feet, and when he had given their donkeys fodder, ²⁵ they prepared the present for Joseph’s coming at noon, for they heard that they should eat bread there.

²⁶ When Joseph came home, they brought into the house to him the present that they had with them and bowed down to him to the ground. ²⁷ And he inquired about their welfare and said, “Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?” ²⁸ They said, “Your servant our father is well; he is still alive.” And they bowed their heads and prostrated themselves. ²⁹ And he lifted up his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother’s son, and said, “Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me? God be gracious to you, my son!” ³⁰ Then Joseph hurried out, for his compassion grew warm for his brother, and he sought a place to weep. And he entered his chamber and wept there. ³¹ Then he washed his face and came out. And controlling himself he said, “Serve the food.” ³² They served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians could not eat with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians. ³³ And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth. And the men looked at one another in amazement. ³⁴ Portions were taken to them from Joseph’s table, but Benjamin’s portion was five times as much as any of theirs. And they drank and were merry with him.

Notes:

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- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

ENGAGE WITH THE MESSAGE

- 1 How does fear influence the brothers' behavior and decisions in this part of the story?
- 2 What is the significance of the steward's words in verse 23?
- 3 How is God's hand evident in the events of this part of the story? What can we learn about mercy from this passage?

DIGGING DEEPER

A ***Ephesians 2:1-10, ESV** – And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

- 4 What is the significance of the phrase "But God" in verse 4?"
- 5 What does it mean for God to be "rich in mercy?" What does this have to do with salvation?
- 6 How has God shown you mercy and grace? How does this shape your response to God?

B **Luke 6:32-36, ESV** – ³² “If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. ³⁵ But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. ³⁶ Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

7 What does it mean to “love your enemies?” Does this differ from loving those who love you back? Explain.

8 What are the potential benefits of loving our enemies, both for ourselves and for others?

9 How can we overcome the natural human tendency to retaliate or avoid those who have wronged us?

TAKING IT HOME

This week, we were reminded that God is merciful and He wants us to be merciful, too. We should not doubt God’s mercy, but be in awe of it and extend it to those that God puts in our lives. How are you doing at showing mercy to others? What changes do you need to make to be more merciful to others?

PRAISES AND PRAYER REQUEST

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FOR FURTHER STUDY

Psalm 103:8
Matthew 5:7
James 1:5-8