



WEEK 6

HIS MERCY IS PERFECT

As the famine worsens, the need for the brothers to return to Egypt—and so take Benjamin with them—becomes even more urgent. With Judah's guarantee, Jacob's sons finally move to journey back to Egypt, where they once again face "the man," the now-exalted Joseph. He invites them into his home for a feast, but curious details begin to emerge: not only has the previous visit's food supply been paid for completely, but also at the home of Pharaoh's second-in-command, Benjamin's portion of food is five times larger than that of any other brother. Clearly, the peculiar mercy of God is upon this family!

THE SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 43:1-34

¹ Now the famine was severe in the land. ² And when they had eaten the grain that they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, "Go again, buy us a little food." ³ But Judah said to him, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.' ⁴ If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. ⁵ But if you will not send him, we will not go down, for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face, unless your brother is with you.' " ⁶ Israel said, "Why did you treat me so badly as to tell the man that you had another brother?" ⁷ They replied, "The man questioned us carefully about ourselves and our kindred, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother?' What we told him was in answer to these questions. Could we in any way know that he would say, 'Bring your brother down?'" 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 money⁶ 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."

⁶ **double the money** – To buy grain and curry favor in Egypt, the ten brothers brought twice the required money, resulting in twenty units. This amount is a striking parallel to the twenty pieces of silver they were paid for Joseph (Genesis 37:28), as the words 'silver' and 'money' are, in the Hebrew, the exact same word.

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.

⁷ Given that Benjamin was a young boy when Joseph, at 17, was sold into slavery, approximately 30 years have passed. Seeing his brother, the son of their shared mother Rachel, after so long overwhelms Joseph.

⁸ Interestingly, some 430 years from this story, it will be the Israelites whose diet will prevent dining withing mixed cultural circles.

LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS: WEEK 6

Your summary of this week's passage in one memorable sentence:

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. If you could spend time with someone from any point in your life, who comes to mind, and what makes that person significant to you?
2. Using a visual illustration, how would you teach the concept of mercy to a child?

DIVING DEEPER

3. Like the chapter previous, Genesis 43 opens on a scene in Canaan with Jacob and his remaining sons struggling in famine. As the recognition sinks in that a return trip to Egypt must be made, Jacob is still anxious about Benjamin going. What is Judah's response? How does that response demonstrate a change has happened in Judah (cf. Genesis 37:26)?
4. Still concerned about the issue of money, Jacob's sons are alarmed at the invitation to Joseph's house. What is the steward's response when the brothers offer to pay double this time? What do you think actually happened?
5. In light of the brothers explanation in verse 21, why did they not return sooner to give back the money?

6. Once more, in verses 26–28 of Genesis 43, the brothers unwittingly fulfill the prophecies about Joseph through their actions. What does this show about God’s comprehensive, long-term strategy? Is there any area in your life currently where you need to reconsider this truth?
7. Verse 30 describes Joseph’s intense compassion for Benjamin, leading him to weep in private. Why do you think the text specifically uses the word ‘compassion’?
8. Can you describe in your own words what’s happening in Genesis 43:33?
9. How do you see the mercy of God on display in this chapter...

...in Joseph’s life?	
...in Benjamin’s life?	
...in the remaining brothers’ lives?	

10. As you examine your own life, can you recall a specific act of mercy by God in the midst of your own struggle? How do you know it was the Lord who did this?

11. How do you see evidence of God's mercy in your life right now? What kinds of things can you do to better your perspective, even if you are currently in a place of suffering?

12. Read Hebrews 4:14-16. What insights does this passage offer about mercy, particularly how it is found and received? How does this apply to your life in this moment?