

Sermon Questions for Life Groups
Mercy There Was Great: Gen. 43
Pastor John Mahaffey
Sunday, April 17, 2016

*These questions are generated by several authors for Life Group discussions
or family or personal devotions*

1. What have you learned about how far will God go to bring people to himself?
2. From the study in Genesis 43, Pastor John spoke about God's 'Common Grace'. Can you provide a definition of what this term refers to as opposed to God's 'Saving Grace'? What were examples of God's common grace in Chapter 43? Read also Hebrews 1: 2-3, John 1: 1-4, Matthew 5:45, Romans 1:13, and Romans 2: 14-15; In what other ways does God's common grace manifest itself in the world? What personal examples can you give about God's common grace in your own life?
3. What brought Jacob to the place where he changed his mind to send his sons back to Egypt to buy grain and allow Benjamin to go with them? Have you been in a place where you had to just 'let go and let God'?
4. Note Judah's part in this narrative. Do you see any evidence of change in him compared to his past actions? (see Genesis 37:18- 28 especially vv.26-27, and Genesis 38).
5. Jacob's prayer "And may God Almighty grant you mercy before the man" (vs. 14) is the key to understanding what happens in this chapter. What evidences are there that God answers his prayer and extends mercy to his sons? Look for other statements about God in this chapter (vv. 14, 23, 29) – how do they reveal that mercy is being extended to Jacob's sons? How do they respond to the mercy extended?
6. Refer to vvs 19ff. God used a pagan agent to extend mercy in the lives of Joseph. Has something like this ever happened to you?

7. Consider the meal that Joseph laid out for his brothers, and compare it to the meal laid out for the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32).
8. Why did Joseph make sure that Benjamin received portions of food five times more than the other brothers? Why was he showing favouritism and what was he hoping to see in his brothers by showing favour to Benjamin above them?
9. Reflect on your life before and after you came to Christ. How did God reveal his mercy to you to bring you to repentance? Can you trace a string of events that ultimately led to you responding in faith and repentance?
10. In conclusion, Pastor John gave us four 'mercy take-aways'. Discuss each of these, with emphasis on how they might apply to you and others at West Highland.
 - a) This account gives us pictures of God's grace (see Rom 2:4ff)
 - b) God can change even the hardest of hearts / crudest people
 - c) Food in this account is a picture of the need of God's salvation (see John 6:22ff)
 - d) We are in great debt to God, but our debts are fully paid and we are clear to enter his presence
11. Read Job 1:1-12 and discuss the following:
 - a. Satan asks God if Job fears or respects God for nothing and states that Job has no reason to do any less than praise God because he has been given everything and does not have any hardships. He then asks to test Job to see if he would still be as faithful if all of this was taken away.
 - b. How does this relate to what John spoke of regarding common vs. saving grace and our attitude towards God during the good and bad times in life?
 - c. How has Joseph passed a similar test to Job's with flying colours in this story?
 - d. Have you ever been guilty of failing to acknowledge God during the good times while accusing Him during the bad times? Why do you think we do this?
12. Consider Joseph's actions toward his brothers throughout that narrative so far. Why do you think he has been able to extend forgiveness? Do you have the same qualities in your life to be able to do the same?