



Grace for the Guilty

Community Group Study Guide: Genesis 43 – Week of July 2, 2023

God calls His children home and grows them through:

1. Severe Mercy

The background of the men in this passage is important to remember. The brothers as a group have done much to give themselves a guilty conscience. From fornication, violence, and the selling of Joseph, they have much to answer for before God. But as we saw in the last chapter, and continue to see in this one, God is refining these men through the challenges of their circumstances. God is seamlessly taking the actions of the brothers, and using them to bring about their growth and the salvation of the people of the land. All this hardship and growth is a type of mercy that the Lord gives to His people, in that He allows us to undertake suffering in order that we might be pressed into greater obedience. In other words, it is God's mercy, who like a good father allows discipline to come upon His children. Not a discipline that crushes, but one that leads to repentance and growth. God is calling us home by exposing us to severe situations. This mercy of God is how he draws and refines us. He uses not just what we have done, but what has happened to us, to bring about His will and purpose.

2. Common Mercy

During the important and pivotal sermon on the mount, Jesus instructs us to love our enemies (Matt 5). This action of loving our enemies is a reflection that we are sons of our heavenly Father. Jesus reminds us that God gives good things to those who are not good, and likewise we should imitate God's behavior. God gives mercy to all, through little things like sun, rain, and even justice. He does all of this, not because we are deserving of such mercy, but because it is His character to give generously.

3. Tender Mercy

Ultimately God uses mercy to bring us back into His tender

DISCUSSION GOALS

Head

God works through our circumstances and relationships to refine our character. This process of allowing us to undergo hardship is a mercy that God gives to us, as it is designed to grow us in ways we would not choose for ourselves.

Heart

When undergoing challenges and trials, we need to remember that the Lord provides these circumstances for our good. It is profitable to rejoice in the face of these hardships, rather than embracing the sorrow that they can produce.

Hands

Remember the mercy and grace of God. Remind our hearts that God has placed us in this moment to refine us, not to harm us.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Parent Commissioning Class
July 16th @ 1 pm
Membership 101
July 23rd @ 1 pm

embrace. God has grown us and shaped us through His mercy so that we would rightfully turn to Him. Storms and trials are designed to harness our attention. They are designed to draw us to a state where we confess our sin and need for repentance. God tenderly pours out mercy through the atoning work of Jesus Christ. He uses our actions, circumstances, and His mercy to lead us to where He ordained us to be. The severe and common mercy of God works to show us our need for repentance, and to help usher us to God's tender mercy.

Read Genesis 43

1. What is meant by *severe mercy*? In what ways do we see this mercy within the passage?
2. What is the goal of this mercy in our lives?
3. Pastor Andy had mentioned that the goal of enduring hardships was not simply to learn to cope, or to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps, but to learn to appreciate the mercy of God. What does that mean? How has that played out in your own life?
4. How can we wrongly respond to the severe mercy of God? What scripture should we bring to bear on our hearts in order to counteract our wrongful response?
5. Consider people in your life who are difficult for you to love and understand. How are you presently interacting with them? How should you be interacting with them? How is God using this challenging relationship as a mercy?
6. What trying events in your life has God used to show His mercy? What lessons has He taught you through those events?
7. How does Joseph and his relationship with his brothers reflect Christ? Why is it right for us to see Jesus as a brother (see Hebrews 2:10-18)?