

May 1st

MERCY AND GRACE GIVEN AT DESPERATE TIMES

“You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. There I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come, so that you and your household, and all that you have, do not come to poverty.”

GENESIS 45:10-11

Desperate times call for desperate measures. Have you ever found yourselves in a place where you have been desperate, lonely, or discouraged while facing troubled times? You're not alone. In Genesis 45 the brothers are finally faced with reconciliation...except they don't know it yet. You can see this with how the brothers respond to Joseph after he reveals himself. In verse 3 Joseph says to his brothers: “I am Joseph, is my father still alive?” And you can see how emotional this event really is. Because in verse 2 he weeps aloud and it is so loud that the Egyptians here Joseph weeping. How do his brothers respond when Joseph reveals himself? It says in verse 3 his brothers could not answer him; they are spooked into silence. In the ESV it says they were dismayed at his presence. But what this really means in the Hebrew is that they were absolutely horrified! Joseph has to repeat who he is in verse 4 and he calls them to not be angry with themselves because sold him there.

We see how Joseph responds because he trusts in his God. What we're looking at for today's devotion is how God shows through Joseph mercy and grace. Notice what he says in verse 10: “You shall dwell in the land of Goshen; you shall be near me you and your children and your children's children your flocks their herds and all that you have. I will provide for you for there are yet five years of famine to come so that you and your household and all that you have do not come to poverty.” How do we see mercy and grace? We see it first with not putting the brothers in prison. All we have to do is remind ourselves of the first interaction between Joseph and his brothers. As he was testing them, he said that they were spies being sent out to spy out the land to discover how much food Egypt really had. There was a real danger of raiders coming to Egypt to get food; the famine brought extreme desperation. Joseph would have had every right to throw all his brothers in prison. But God. Joseph doesn't punish them, take their money or their food. Instead, Joseph shows them grace at their lowest point. It has been at least fifteen years since they ultimately betrayed their brother because of their envy. Think about it...he was in the pit crying out to them for mercy and they sat down to eat a meal! He meant nothing to them except envy and hatred. But God has done a work on Joseph, and he's done a work on the brothers as he redeems their sin and offers them grace. It's not just providing for them so that they can continue to come and get more food. The offer from Joseph is that they should dwell in the land of Goshen.

Men, what does this have to do with us? This is a family conflict thousands of years before us. When we look at our desperate situation before Christ we can see that just like God through Joseph showed mercy and grace to his brothers who had sinned, our Father in heaven shows us grace by sending his son Jesus as our substitute. And now we don't just receive salvation; the promise is that we will dwell with the Lord forever! Every tear will be wiped away. Men, this gives us hope because no matter how desperate your life becomes, no matter the trials that you endure, all of it pales when compared to what we find with Christ. This gives you hope. The question for any of us is will we take our view off of our burdens and look to our God and what he's given us in Christ?

Spend some time thanking God for His mercy and grace that is given at the cross of Jesus. Ask Him for help to live in hope today because Jesus rose from the dead.

For Further Reading: Genesis 45:1-28

