

Turn in you Bibles to Genesis 43. To continue the theme of mercy from last week, we are going to see Joseph extend mercy and forgiveness to his brothers once again, therefore, the title of tonight's message is:

Mercy Abounds!

***Psalm 145:8-9***

***<sup>8</sup> The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. <sup>9</sup> The Lord is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.***

The word ***abound*** means: overflowing, to exceed a specific measure, given in abundance.

The word ***abound***, describes God's mercy, grace and love that God extends to everyone around this whole world! God does not just execute judgment and wrath upon us as wicked, evil sinners. Judgment and wrath is the consequence of rejecting his constant offer of mercy and grace to turn from our sins in repentance through the grace as described in Titus 2:11-14

***Titus 2:11-14***

***<sup>11</sup> For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, <sup>12</sup> training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, <sup>13</sup> waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.***

I do want to break down these verses in a very simplistic context:

**The GRACE of God has appeared, bringing SALVATION** – Jesus, Cross, Resurrection – The Gospel  
**For ALL people** – Us

**Training us to renounce ungodliness, worldly passions** – Repentance

**Live self-controlled, upright and godly lives** – Obedience, Sanctification (Holiness)

**Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ** – Jesus' 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming – Glorification

For me those verses have always described God's mercy extended to the lost, and a reminder for those that are saved the importance of obedience and holiness, God desires, and expects in our lives to be a witness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In Chapter 43, Joseph's brothers are becoming a big part of this story. I don't like using the word story because some people will use that in a negative connotation as if it isn't true. Like for this as an example.

You are describing an event and the person you are talking to says, "You are not telling me a story, are you?"  
Meaning, "You're not lying, are you?"

Describing one's life or an event can be described as a story, and it still be 100 % true. I've been asked about how I got to be here at Mount Pleasant and end up one of the two Pastor/Elders. I said, "Well, let me tell you my, Story!"

Let's get into Chapter 43 tonight and we will begin to see that God has not only been working in Joseph's life, but God has been working in his brother's as well.

### **Genesis 43:1-10**

*<sup>1</sup> Now the famine was severe in the land. <sup>2</sup> 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.” <sup>3</sup> But Judah said to him, “The man solemnly warned us, saying, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.’ <sup>4</sup> If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. <sup>5</sup> 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.’” <sup>6</sup> Israel said, “Why did you treat me so badly as to tell the man that you had another brother?” <sup>7</sup> 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?’” <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> If we had not delayed, we would now have returned twice.”*

As we saw last week the famine had started in the land of Egypt. How long was the famine to last? Seven years! The brothers of Joseph come to Egypt to buy grain and as the law stated they are brought before Joseph. Joseph's dream comes to fruition as his brothers bow down with their face to the ground before Joseph. Joseph recognized his brothers, and he began to accuse them of being spies.

The brothers begin to take up for themselves, saying they are not, they are sons of one man, and even their youngest brother was back home with their father now. But, to prove they are not spies, Joseph puts this test upon them.

1. He puts them in custody for 3 days.
2. He tells them they are to go back home and that unless they bring their youngest brother back with them they will be considered spies.
3. Joseph lets them go with their grain that they came to purchase but to ensure they would come back Joseph keeps Simeon as surety if you will. The brothers leave.

The brothers of Joseph have returned to Canaan, not only with the grain they bought, but with their money that had been put back into their sacks by Joseph's servants.

Why they did not turn around, or at least send a couple of the brothers back to Joseph with the money and explain what they found? I believe we see it here. Fear!

Here they are out of food and Jacob tells his sons to go back and get more grain. They definitely had money to buy more grain because they had what they took from the first trip. Judah reminds Jacob of what Joseph's requirements were for them to come back before him. Benjamin was to go back with them if they ever returned.

We saw Jacob's response to this. ***“Why did you treat me so badly as to tell the man you had another brother?”*** It appears that Jacob is still in this state of grief and everything is about him. Back in Genesis 37 when we started this study as the brothers devised the scheme to let Jacob think Joseph was dead, and Jacob thinking Joseph was, he said these words from Genesis 37:35

### **Genesis 37:35**

*<sup>35</sup> All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, “No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning.” Thus us father wept for him.”*

We are now 24 plus years past that time, and it appears Jacob is still in that state of mind. Last week we learned that upon their arrival from Egypt they told Jacob what Joseph's terms were. Reuben gave an offer to go back

with Benjamin, but Jacob said no. Jacob said, Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and now you would take Benjamin. All this has come against me. In other words! I can't take this anymore.

Jacob is still operating out of his grief and all he has before him is this offer from Reuben that I'll take Benjamin and if he doesn't come back with me, you can kill my two sons. What a noble offer Reuben! What a guy!

Tim set up how this offer from Reuben seemed so disingenuous. Tim presented it as a question, "Is there one that would not offer his own sons but would offer his own life to protect and save the members of his family. I am going to close out that with the answer.

Judah spoke up!

***Genesis 43:8-9***

***<sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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.***

We saw in Chapter 38 that Judah had left his family. Before that the brothers had deceived their father in to believing that Joseph was dead and though they tried to console their father, Jacob would have none of their consoling. That broke the camel's back for Judah if you will. He had enough of his father's favoritism towards Joseph. Now thinking maybe his father's love and care would be shifted towards he and his brothers. It was not.

Judah said, I'm done! He goes and lives with a pagan Canaanite named Hirah. Married a Canaanite woman and things spiraled downhill fast in the life of Judah. At that time Judah hit rock bottom and the only place for him to look was up.

A few weeks ago, I said that all that Joseph went through in his life was not just for him. Yes, it was to strengthen his faith, to trust God in the path God was directing by his sovereign hand. God's sovereign hand would use Joseph to save a nation, birth a nation, reconcile a family, and allow God to change the hearts of his brothers within his family.

So, it is here with Judah! Judah has come back home. I would propose to you he asked forgiveness for his actions first from God and then his family. Now, Judah stands boldly before his father and says, "I will be a pledge of Benjamin's safety. My life for his if I don't bring him back."

This idea of a pledge means to exchange. As I said, Judah was saying, my life for his so that Benjamin may live.

There is another person that gave pledge with his life. Jesus said in John 15:13 - ***Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.***

In John 10 as Jesus is describing himself as the "Good Shepherd", and a good shepherd will give up his life for his sheep. Jesus said this about his life!

***John 10:17-18***

***<sup>17</sup> "For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. <sup>18</sup> No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."***

Judah and his brothers had brought the requirements Joseph had laid before them to not be tried as spies and to get Simeon back. Because of Jacob's response the first time, they did not bring it back up for quite a while. But now Jacob has because they were out of food.

Judah saw that this was now life or death, and he stands up and says, I've got to do something to save my family's life.

God the Father new, because of sin, it is eternal life or eternal death for us, if something wasn't done. Through God's sovereign plan, Jesus the Son of God, became the pledge, the exchange for us. Jesus' life for ours that we may live. Jesus sacrificing his life so that we could be brought back to our Father. Jesus' sacrifice does not make that automatic.

The conviction of the Holy Spirit has to come upon us to show us in our heart the wickedness of our sin and we come before God with open hands and call out to God in repentance to save our souls, acknowledging the fact that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, but rose again the third day and is seated at the right hand of God the Father right now.

We can call out as David called out to God in Psalm 51:1-2

***Psalm 51:1-2***

***<sup>1</sup> Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. <sup>2</sup> Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin!***

Mercy – not receiving what we deserve and that is death because of our sin, but we can receive life because of the mercy that is extended to us through Jesus Christ.

If Jacob did not let Judah take Benjamin what was going to happen to the family. They were going to starve to death. They were running out of food, so Jacob, all the sons and their families were going to die.

Judah, in his last plea, tells his dad, that if we had not been delayed, we could have returned twice. We don't know what the timeline Judah is referring to here. There was definitely a period of time that has passed since they returned from Egypt from the first time to where they are out of food.

Personally, I since a little exaggeration going on here. It's kind of like when you tell someone to do something, and they procrastinate. You come to them to see if they accomplished the task, and they haven't. So, you tell them again to get it done. But, they go into this long drawn out explanation of why they haven't gotten it done. You are wanting to say or you may say, "Well, with the amount time you just spent explaining why it isn't done, you probably could have gotten it done or at least got some of it done, now."

Either way, Judah was making the point to his father, we need to go or we will die.

Jacob finally relents.

***Genesis 43:11-14***

***<sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> Take also your brother, and arise, go again to the man. <sup>14</sup> 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."***

Jacob finally saw that this had to be done. If Jacob had stayed in his obstinance, “What would have happened to the family?” I already said it. They would have died and beloved Benjamin with them. Benjamin was more apt to live because Joseph said if you bring your youngest brother back with you, it will show to me you are honest men. This is the only plan that will save the family.

It is for those who will not relent, or I would say not repent to God’s plan of mercy, that if they will repent of your sins and surrender their life to the one who wants to save you he will rescue you from death and bring you to life.

Jacob uses a similar tactic he used when he was about to face Esau after leaving Laban and goes back to eventually Bethel in Chapters 32 and 33 of Genesis.

He makes sure a gift is given to Joseph (The Man) and he prays for his son’s success and for God’s help in the situation. What Jacob does not realize is that God is already working and has been working all the time since Joseph had been sold into slavery by his brothers.

But we continue to see this woe is me, pessimistic, everything and everyone is against me mindset Jacob is in. He says, “If I am to be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.” That phrase is actually one word in the Hebrew. The word is:

### ***Sakol – to make childless***

Though Jacob prayed for God to have favor on his sons, he has delved into this self-pity hole and that is not showing trust or faith in God. Let’s face it, we can get there sometimes ourselves. Satan likes to get us there because we render ourselves useless for the kingdom of God. In doing so we miss out on the abounding mercy God extends to us each and every day.

Jacob agrees to let his sons go back to Egypt with Benjamin, so off they go.

### ***Genesis 43:15-25***

***<sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> 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.” <sup>17</sup> The man did as Joseph told him and brought the men to Joseph's house. <sup>18</sup> 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.” <sup>19</sup> So they went up to the steward of Joseph's house and spoke with him at the door of the house, <sup>20</sup> and said, “Oh, my lord, we came down the first time to buy food. <sup>21</sup> 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, <sup>22</sup> and we have brought other money down with us to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks.” <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> 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, <sup>25</sup> they prepared the present for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they should eat bread there.***

As they arrived in Egypt this intimates the first location, they meet Joseph is that the place where Joseph was set up to sell the grain or corn to those that have come to buy the food. As Joseph saw his brothers and Benjamin was with them, he tells his steward of his house to bring him to his own home and he would dine with them at Noon.

Joseph still had his duties to finish, and he would meet them at his home. This caused his brothers to become afraid. They talked amongst themselves and said he knows about the money, and he believes we put this scheme to not pay for the grain the first time. Joseph accused them of being spies the first time. Is he now going to accuse them of theft and take them to be slaves of his?

To try keep what they are dreading from happening, they go to the steward and begin to explain what had happened and how they didn't steal the money and they don't even know how it got put back in their sacks. Now, I don't think they were all talking at the same time to the steward. I believe it was Judah once again being the spokesman for his brothers.

There is a change that has happened and is continuing in the heart of Judah. He is becoming the leader that will put him in the place of through his lineage will come the Messiah, the Savior of the world. We will see this later as Jacob blesses each of his sons before his death in Chapter 49.

They are standing at the entrance of the house, in fear of being judged of a crime they did not commit. The steward puts their mind at ease. I am aware of the money. In fact, I am the one that put the money in your sacks. It was because of your God, Elohim, and your father's God, Elohim, that his mercy has been shown to you. You are not here to be arrested. You are here to have a meal with my master.

We see here that the steward had become quite acquainted with God or he himself has now put his faith in the one true God that Joseph shared about openly even before Pharaoh.

To put their hearts at even more ease, the steward brings Simeon out to them. I want to point out the change that is taking place in these men's hearts. They were ready to confess that they had found the money returned to them from the first visit. They were ready to confess they had done no ill will towards Joseph.

Remember it was Judah who proposed to sell Joseph into slavery to get a little money out of the situation. They were ready to return it all.

Now, we continue to see the mercy that is extended to the brothers. The steward brings them into the home, and they prepare themselves to meet Joseph as he will arrive soon.

#### ***Genesis 43:26-34***

***<sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> And he inquired about their welfare and said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?" <sup>28</sup> They said, "Your servant our father is well; he is still alive." And they bowed their heads and prostrated themselves. <sup>29</sup> 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!" <sup>30</sup> 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. <sup>31</sup> Then he washed his face and came out. And controlling himself he said, "Serve the food." <sup>32</sup> 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. <sup>33</sup> 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. <sup>34</sup> 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.***

Once again, we see the childhood dreams of Joseph come to reality as his brothers lay face down in front of him. With his power and authority, he could have done whatever he wanted to them. Oh, he is still testing them, as we will see in the case of the portions of the food given to each of them.



In the meantime, Joseph inquired about Jacob and then he fixed his eyes on Benjamin and the outpouring of love for his brother brought him to weeping. It has been approximately 25 years since Jacob had seen Benjamin. How old was Benjamin when Joseph was sold into slavery. We can only speculate that he was just a young boy. Joseph was just 17. Now, Benjamin was a grown man, more than likely with a family of his own.

Joseph leaves the room to gain his composure, and then returns to have the meal served.

Now we have three meal settings here. Joseph ate at a table by himself, the other Egyptians by themselves and then the brothers by themselves. Egyptians would not eat with foreigners because it would make them ceremonially unclean.

As they were eating, the brother's noticed something. They were seated in full view of Joseph. They were served from Joseph's own table. Two other things that caught their attention. They had been seated by age, in the order of birth. The brothers looked in amazement and with some confusion at each other as if to say to each other, "How did he know this?"

As I mentioned earlier, Joseph also brings a little test before them. As the portions of food were be passed around, Benjamin received 5 times the amount the rest were given. Hey kids! It would be like this. Your Dad brought chicken nuggets home from Chick Fil-A. He brings several plates to the table and puts the plate down in front of you and you've got two nuggets. You look at your brothers or sisters' plate and they have ten nuggets.

What is more than likely going to happen. Hey! Why did they get ten and I only have two?

Joseph as testing his brothers to see how they felt about Benjamin. Was there jealousy, hatred towards Benjamin, because he probably became Jacob's favorite now. No, none of that. They ate what was put before them and they feasted and enjoyed their time with Joseph. Joseph's mercy abounding before them.

As we close tonight, we see how in Joseph's love for his brothers he is testing them to see if there is a change happening in their lives. Are these the same men that through him in the pit those 20 plus years ago? Have they learned anything?

Mercy is God's bent or leaning or what is first extended to us. You are probably tired of hearing this, but I go back to the Garden of Eden, as Adam and Eve, sinned in their disobedience. When God says don't, there is always a warning. He told Adam and Eve, don't eat of this tree, you will surely die.

In their disobedience it brought sin, destruction, pain, disease, death to mankind. But God, that same day God extended mercy and promised a savior, he gave them a way to repent and have forgiveness of their sin and salvation.

So, it is with us. God extends us mercy to us each day, are we going to latch on to it to one find salvation if you are not saved and lost in your sin. Will we receive his mercy that is constant, continuous, and abounding. How we respond to God's mercy does determine how our lives are to be on this earth, but it also has eternal ramifications as well. The last verse of Psalm 23 reads as two parts:

***Psalm 23:6***

***<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of life!***

Revealing to us that if we will receive God's mercy that leads to salvation, now, there is no circumstance in this life that God does not extend his mercy to us to bring us strength, comfort, peace, and joy as we await Jesus' return.

We live with that future hope as is shared in the second part of verse 6. So, let's read the whole verse.

***Psalm 23:6***

***<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever!***

Here is the opposite of that verse! If you respond to God's mercy by rejecting the salvation that comes because of his mercy, your forever will be in Hell in torment. Oh that we will repent and receive God's mercy and live in the glory that is revealed to us through his abounding mercy.

For Joseph's brothers, there are more tests to come, so come back next week to see this next huge test!