Week 10: *Genesis 45*

**Hook**

Main Point: God provides for us in our times of need. We can look back and see how He had been providing for us all along.

**Hook:**

What do you need? Break your Bible Fellowship into small groups. Challenge them to create a list of items that the American Red Cross suggests should be in every home’s emergency kit. Below are the correct answers:

1. Water
2. Food
3. Flashlight
4. Battery-powered or hand-cranked radio
5. Extra batteries
6. Family first-aid kit
7. Medications (seven-day supply)
8. Multi-purpose tool
9. Personal hygiene items
10. Copies of personal documents (medication list and pertinent medical information, proof of address, deed/lease to home, passports, birth certificates, insurance policies)
11. Cell phone with chargers
12. Family and emergency contact information
13. Extra cash
14. Emergency blanket
15. Map(s) of the area

Q: Would you describe yourself as someone who tries to plan for emergencies? Why or why not?

Q: Describe a time in your life when you felt unprepared. How did God provide for your needs?
**Week 10: Genesis 45**

**Book**

**Main Point:** God provides for us in our times of need. We can look back and see how He had been providing for us all along.

**Text Summary:** After Judah offered to take Benjamin’s place out of love for their father, Joseph was so overcome with emotion that he asked all of the Egyptians to leave him alone with his brothers (who still didn’t know that Joseph is their brother). He wept so loudly that the whole household of Pharaoh heard it. The brothers were worried that Joseph was angry with them, but instead, Joseph said, “I am Joseph!” and asked about his father. He explained that he could see how all that happened was part of God’s plan to save his family and others from the famine. He offered to let them live in Goshen and shepherd their flocks there and to provide for them since the famine would last for five more years. Pharaoh was pleased to find out that Joseph’s brothers had come and offered to give them the best of the land of Egypt. The brothers went back to Canaan to get their father and wives and children, laden with provisions for their father and themselves and riches for Benjamin. Their father’s spirit was revived, and he agreed to go back to Egypt to see Joseph before he dies.

**Genesis 45:1-15 [Read]**

**Talking Point 1:** Reconciliation is central to the Gospel message.

Q: Does Joseph’s reaction seem strange? Why or why not?

The overwhelming tone of this passage is tender emotion. Joseph wept openly in front of his brothers; Judah’s speech pushed him to a point where his emotion was overflowing. We saw the same display of emotion between their father, Jacob, and his brother, Esau, when they reconciled after many years of estrangement (Gen. 33).

Today’s passage doesn’t present just a family reunion but a profound reconciliation between brothers who had been estranged for most of their adult lives. Joseph let go of old hurt and anger and showed nothing but love and open arms. He asked them to come near (v. 4). He spoke to them with his own mouth, his own voice, not through an interpreter (v. 12). He showed them intimacy and love with his words and with his actions.

This scene of reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers might remind you of another reconciliation story—the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32). In that story, an estranged son who has wronged his father deeply returns home. The son expects to be chastised, maybe not even welcomed back and prepares a speech where he recognizes he is no longer worthy to be called
his father’s son and begs to just be a servant in his household. Instead, the father welcomes him with open arms. He is moved with compassion for his son. He runs to his son while he is still a long way off, embraces him, kisses him, and orders a feast, even killing the fattened calf for him. Jesus tells this story as a parable, to represent how God, the Father, feels when one of His wayward children come home. The unequivocal forgiveness of God, the lavish love of God are shown; the joy and celebration is overwhelming at the reconciliation of God and humankind—even the greatest sinner.

Q: Have you ever experienced a reconciliation such as this in your life?

Q: What has been your experience of reconciliation with God?

Q: How does this story make you feel about God, the Father?

Through Christ, we are reconciled to God; our relationship with Him is made whole again (2 Cor. 5:11–21). The relationship with God that was broken in the Fall has now been healed. Things are made right between us. God reconciles us to Himself through the death of His Son (Rom. 5:1). Like a bank statement that has been reconciled, Jesus paid our debt on the Cross (Gal. 3:13–15). Our sin no longer keeps us from being in His holy presence.

Like the story of the Prodigal Son, when a sinner comes home, God doesn’t condemn that person (Rom. 8:1). He doesn’t give a laundry list of all of the ways that person messed up and all of the ways he or she owes Him. The debt has been paid by God Himself. He keeps no record of wrong (1 Cor. 13:5). There is just celebration (Luke 15:7). He is just overjoyed that His prodigal child has returned.

Joseph treats his brothers the same way. He doesn’t blast them for selling him into slavery. He doesn’t even say, “Well, I forgive you, but do you have any idea what I’ve been through?” There is no “but” to his forgiveness. He even says to them, “do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here” (v. 5) and he helps them see the bigger picture of how God was orchestrating all of this through them (vv. 5–8). Joseph’s grace for them is so amazing; it is divine. As the old hymn “When I Survey the Wonderous Cross” says, “Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.” That kind of mercy can only come from God.

When we truly understand just how much grace God has shown us, we can’t help but show that grace to others (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13). If we are ever faced with the same decision as Joseph, how will we treat those who have harmed us?

Q: How did Joseph have the strength and the heart to forgive his brothers like that? How can we have that same strength and heart?
Talking Point 2: God orchestrates all things for His good purposes.

Q: Why does Joseph say God sent him to Egypt? Why is that important in God’s plan?

Q: How many times does Joseph say that God is the one who has done all of this?

We have seen God’s sovereignty weaving this plan together every step of the way, but now Joseph says so explicitly, repeating multiple times for emphasis:

• God sent me before you (v. 5).
• God sent me before you (v. 7).
• So it was not you who sent me here, but God (v. 8).

Joseph has a very firm theological interpretation of this situation. God did this (Ps. 105:16–22). This was all part of God’s plan from the beginning. Yes, the brothers hurt him, but it all worked together to bring about the positive result they now had.

Joseph reveals who he is twice. The first time his brothers are dismayed, worried at what he would do to them (v. 3). In Hebrew this word was a term for the kind of paralyzing fear for your life that sometimes was felt in the middle of a war.iii So he asks them to come near, drawing them into intimacy (v. 4), iv and he repeats himself—I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. He quickly follows this up with his theological points, to reassure them that he has no plans for revenge.v

Joseph’s theological point—that God was using all of this for good—may seem repetitive, but that is intentional. Genesis weaves that same point into every episode of the story—God is really the subject of every action in this story.vi God is the main character of the story. God is the hero. Not just of this story, but of the whole Bible, and of the whole history of mankind. This is the story of God’s grand plan to rescue the world. Joseph gives God all of the credit for orchestrating all of this. For putting him in this position in Pharaoh’s house. For giving him Pharaoh’s trust and authority (v. 8). For using him to preserve life (v. 5).

God can use things we never expect to accomplish what we could never believe. He takes things and flips them on their heads. Normally, envy and contention and competition between brothers will ruin families. But God used them to save Jacob’s family. The only reaction to this kind of God is praise. A God who weaves everything together into a beautiful tapestry in ways we could even ask or imagine.

Q: How can we trust that God’s plan is best?

Q: If we really believed that God was orchestrating our lives for good right now, how would it change the way we lived? The way we talked? The way we prayed?
Talking Point 3: Believers should reflect God’s generosity.

Q: Why was Joseph so generous to these brothers who had hurt him so much? What does this say about his character?

Q: Why was Pharaoh so generous to Joseph’s family?

Not only did Joseph offer to provide for the brothers and their families, now Pharaoh offered to provide for them, too—from the best of the land of Egypt! This is how loved Joseph was by Pharaoh—“God has made me father to Pharaoh” (v. 8). Not that he was higher than Pharaoh, but that Pharaoh looked up to him like a father—coming to him for advice, trusting his wisdom and judgment to make all the decisions. It was a term for the chief advisor of the king.

And Pharaoh loved Joseph like family. As soon as he heard Joseph’s family was there, he offered his generosity to them, without hesitation, taking care of Joseph’s family as if they were his own (v. 16). Joseph had provided for his people—for all of Egypt; now Pharaoh delighted in providing for Joseph’s family. Pharaoh had all of this food and wealth only because of Joseph, so he was glad to share it with Joseph’s family. Joseph had that same attitude, but toward God. Joseph knew that everything he had was given to him by God (James 1:17), so he was happy to share it with God’s family rather than hoard it for himself. Everything we have belongs to God; we are merely managers of it (Luke 16:1–15). When we understand that concept, it is easy and natural to be generous with what we have been given.

Out of love, both Pharaoh and Joseph delighted in sharing their blessings with Joseph’s brothers. They lavished upon them wagons, so the women and children wouldn’t have to walk from Canaan (v. 21). They gave them all provisions for the journey, and to Joseph’s father, Pharaoh sent 20 donkeys loaded with food, provisions and “the good things of Egypt” (v. 23). Joseph had promised them the land of Goshen in which to live, because it had excellent pastures in which to graze their flocks. The ability to be generous to those we love is the greatest blessing that wealth and power can give to us. Joseph didn’t care about his position, power and wealth for himself, but only for how he was able to help others with it. Joseph never said, “God did all this to make me wealthy and powerful,” but that God did it so that He could save many people (vv. 5–8; Gen. 50:20).

Q: How is God calling you to be generous with what you have been given?

Q: How may God be using you to bless someone else in your life? Either financially, physically, emotionally or spiritually?
Q: How can being generous to others actually be good for you? How does generosity bring joy to the giver?

Q: In what ways has God been generous to you?
Week 10: *Genesis 45*

**Took**

**Main Point:** God provides for us in our times of need. We can look back and see how He had been providing for us all along.

Take a moment to reflect on how the Lord has provided for you in the past. Think through the circumstances surrounding the event; how you felt in your need, the way that the Lord provided and the impact that provision had on your faith. Pray that God would use that memory this week to spark a Gospel-centered conversation. This could be with your children, coworkers, friends or perhaps your spouse. Pray that this conversation will be used by God to inspire others and strengthen your faith.

**CHALLENGES:**

**THINK:** *How may God be calling you to let go of guilt and shame?* Is there some guilt in your life that you have been holding? Have you let it eat away at your self-worth, even lead to self-hatred? Have you been beating yourself up about past choices you have made instead of forgiving yourself and letting it go? How can you move past those feelings? How can you find freedom in Christ?

**PRAY:** *For God to orchestrate His plans in your life* – This prayer will be a simple one—simply pray for God’s will in all things and situations in your life. You can share your heart and your desire with Him, of course—He wants to hear that—but *pray* for His will. Really ask for that. Really submit your heart to it. Then trust that He is already bringing it to pass.

**ACT:** *Do something generous* – What is some way you can bless someone else this week? It doesn’t have to be elaborate as 20 donkeys laden with riches! But how can you be generous to someone else? Maybe you can take the time to write that person a sweet note. Maybe you can take someone out to lunch or coffee and listen to his or her struggles, bearing his or her burden. Maybe you can offer to babysit for a stressed single mom or young couple for free. Maybe you can spend time with a lonely elderly person in your church or neighborhood. Or maybe God is leading you to be financially generous—only you can know how God is leading you.

---


vii Wenham, 428
