Genesis Ch48v1-22 - Blessed With All We Need

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[0:00] at verse 1 in chapter 48. Sometime later, Joseph was told, Your father is ill.

So he took his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, along with him. When Jacob was told, Your son Joseph has come to you, Israel rallied his strength and sat up on the bed.
Jacob said to Joseph, God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and there he blessed me and said to me, I am going to make you fruitful and increase your numbers.
I will make you a community of peoples, and I will give you this land as an everlasting possession to your descendants after you. Now then, your two sons born to you in Egypt before I came to you here will be reckoned as mine.
Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are mine. Any children born to you after them will be yours. In the territory they inherit, they will be reckoned under the names of their brothers.
[1:07] As I was returning from Paddan to my sorrow, Rachel died in the land of Canaan while we were still on the way, a little distance from Ephraim.

So I buried her there beside the road to Ephraim, that is Bethlehem. When Israel saw the sons of Joseph, he asked, Who are these? They are the sons God has given me here, Joseph said to his father.
Then Israel said, Bring them to me so that I can bless them. Now Israel's eyes were failing because of his old age, and he could hardly see. So Joseph brought his sons close to him, and his father kissed them and embraced them.
Israel said to Joseph, I never expected to see your face again, and now God has allowed me to see your children too. Then Joseph removed them from Israel's knees and bowed down with his face to the ground.
And Joseph took both of them, Ephraim on his right towards Israel's left hand, and Manasseh on his left towards Israel's right hand, and brought them close to him.
[2:15] But Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim's head, though he was the younger. And crossing his arms, he put his left hand on Manasseh's head, even though Manasseh was the firstborn.

Then he blessed Joseph and said, May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked faithfully, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the angel who has delivered me from all harm, may he bless these boys.
May they be called by my name and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and may they increase greatly on the earth. When Joseph saw his father placing his right hand on Ephraim's head, he was displeased, so he took hold of his father's hand and moved it to Ephraim's head, from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head.
Joseph said to him, No, my father, this one is the firstborn. Put your right hand on his head. But his father refused and said, I know, my son, I know.
He too will become a people. He too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations.
[3:36] He blessed him that day and said, In your name Israel will pronounce this blessing. May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh. So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

Then Israel said to Joseph, I am about to die, but God will be with you and take you back to the land of your fathers. And to you I give one more ridge of land than to your brothers, the ridge I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow.
Thank you. Thanks so much, Louise. Well, let's keep our Bibles open.
Just one comment before we get into our text, and that is Jacob and Israel are the same people.

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Okay, so his names are changed here and there. Jacob just means deceiver. Israel means one who struggles with God. His name is used, interchanged.
[4:41] I'll just use the name Jacob throughout, so don't get confused with that. Let's pray before we look at his word. Speak, O Lord.

Speak to us, because we need to hear your word to us. We are needy. We are desperate. And we know that in your word is life.
So speak to us afresh today for our blessing and for our good. In Jesus' name. Amen. So what do you get a kid that has it all?
It's Christmas time, and you're wondering what to buy your nephew or your niece. A voucher is no good, because, well, they've got more money than cents already. And it seems that with every item you pick up, you're saying to yourself, well, they've already got one of those.
But you get a kid who has it all. Well, look at verse 1 of chapter 48. Sometime later, Joseph was told, your father Jacob is ill.
[6:09] So he took his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, along with him. Jacob is now nearing his end. He's about to die.

And that means blessing time. So Joseph brings his two boys along to see grandpa for the last time.
But what does an old man give to a couple of kids like Manasseh and Ephraim? Their father Joseph is ruler of all of Egypt, the most powerful nation at the time.
They have everything already. Power, status, position, wealth. These kids are heirs to a fortune. What do you give to a child that already has everything?
What about you? What about me? Maybe you feel that you've got everything that you need already, that in your life, well, you're just content with what you have.
[7:17] Well, it seems that when it comes to God's perspective, children and adults, all of humanity, have nothing to lose, and we have everything to gain.

You see, God gives what we don't have and what we all desperately need. God gives what we don't have and what we all desperately need.
So, we're going to look and see in the text this morning four spiritual blessings that God offers to us today.
Four spiritual blessings that he offers to us. First, adopted into God's family. So, Joseph, in the text, and his two boys go to see Pops.
And it seems he's in one of his storytelling modes. Look at verse 3. Do you remember, Joseph? God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and there he blessed me.
[8:31] Verse 7. Did I ever tell you, as I was returning from Paddan to my sorrow, Rachel, your mum, died in the land of Canaan while we were still on the way?

Well, this is no doting grandfather who's lost his marbles and loves telling old stories. Jacob represents God's chosen family.
And as father of God's family, he has the authority to bless. You see, behind Jacob stands God. And God is working through Jacob to give what these two boys don't have. So, look at verse 5. Jacob says to Joseph, Now then, your two sons, born to you in Egypt, before I came to you here, will be reckoned as mine.
[9:34] Now, Manasseh and Ephraim are not Jacob's sons. They are not under God's covenant blessing. They're Egyptians. Their father was raised by Egyptians.

Their mother was an Egyptian. All their life is Egypt. They're not part of God's family. But yet Jacob speaks to them and says, I will count them as mine.
Jacob is adopting these two boys into the blessing of God's family. And if we're in any doubt about it, look what the rest of verse 5 says.
Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine. Just as Reuben and Simeon are mine. Now, Reuben and Simeon were Jacob's first two children.
So, he's saying to Joseph, your two boys are going to be treated just like my two boys. They'll be welcomed and treasured and accepted as my very own sons.
[10:41] They're going to come under the covenant blessings of God. You see, the father has the right to welcome who he determines into his family.

Now, for these two sons, these two boys, being part of the Egyptian elite was no small thing. But nothing compares to being adopted into God's family.

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To be called sons and daughters of the creator God. The God who owns all things and rules all things. You see, the Bible is very clear in its message that each one of us are all born outside of God's family.
Our rebellion, our sin, our pushing away of the creator God disqualifies us, separates us, keeps us out. But yet, God, in his kindness and in his mercy, brings us in.
He adopts us. He embraces us. You see, that's the kind of God that we have. God gives what we don't have and what we all desperately need.
[12:02] So that's the first blessing. We can be adopted into God's family. Here's the second. Blessed through God's promise.

Blessed through God's promise. As sons of Jacob having been brought in to God's family, that means they now receive the same family blessings.
And one of those promised blessings was a place for God's family to live. Did you notice what Jacob kept remembering in his story time?
Verse 3. God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and then he blessed me. And in verse 7 he's talking about his wife Rachel who had died where?
In the land of Canaan. You see, it seems as if he's got Canaan on his mind. It's in his focus. Because the land of Canaan was the land that God had promised to God's family.
[13:09] It was going to be a land of blessing. And the land was important to Jacob and as he gets older in his age and as he's dying all he can think of is Canaan.

But the problem is Jacob and his family are now down in Egypt in a foreign land. So where's the blessing?
Well, Jacob is holding on to the promise. Look at the end of verse 4. God said to Jacob end of verse 4 I will give this land as an everlasting possession.
Now there's something about that word everlasting that should grab our attention. The land, the place for God's family would be permanent, eternal.
It wasn't just going to be for the here and now. He says it will be an everlasting possession. You see, Jacob's vision was beyond anything temporal on this earth.
[14:19] His focus was on the promise of something better and greater to come. He was looking forward to an eternal possession. An inheritance that lasts forever.

God's eternal kingdom. And that's what he wants for these two boys. Jump ahead to the end of verse 16. See the second half of verse 16.
He says, May he bless these boys. May they be called by my name in the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac. May they be adopted and welcomed into my family.
And may they increase greatly on the earth or literally in the land. He wants them to share in the inheritance.
You see, the kingdom of Egypt would be a great inheritance for these two boys. Their father Joseph is the ruler. He's in charge.
[15:22] They are set up to inherit something great. The prospect of wealth and power is enticing. But you know what? It's also temporary. When we die, we take nothing with us.

It all stays behind. But when we're adopted into God's family, we become heirs of a heavenly kingdom, a land full of blessing and everlasting possession.
It's the heavenly kingdom, the new creation. You see, that's the kind of God that we have. God gives what we don't have and what we all desperately need.
So we are blessed with an eternal inheritance. Third blessing, sustained by God's faithfulness.
So these two boys, as they're brought into Jacob, have been adopted into God's family. They've been given an eternal inheritance. But they're young, aren't they?
[16:33] They're going to need God's continued care and keeping as they continue through life. So having embraced the two boys, Jacob now steps forward to bless them.

Look at verse 13 with me. And Joseph took both of them, Ephraim on his right, towards Israel's left hand, and Manasseh on his left, toward Israel's right hand, and brought them close to him.
Now you might be a little bit confused about all these hands, left and right, what's going on. Well we're going to come back to that in a minute, hold on to that. But for now I want us to look at the blessing that Jacob gives.
Let's pick it up in verse 15. May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked faithfully, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the angel who has delivered

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me from all harm, may he bless these boys.
Jacob is scanning back over his life and he's seeing that God has been faithful to him every step of the way.
[17:55] He describes it like this, first he says, do you see it there in verse 15? God who has been my shepherd all my life, right up to this day.

Jacob, as we know through our studies, had been a cheater and a liar. He had deceived his family, he was an unfaithful husband, he was a hopeless father, he was an absolute mess.
Yet in it all, verse 15, God was a shepherd to him. God was with him, God watched over him, God provided for him, God persevered with this messy, broken, sinful man.
man. And then he says, verse 16, the angel, that is a reference to the angel of the Lord, the one who represented God as he met with God.
So he talks about the angel who has delivered me from all harm. Well, Jacob in his early life was running from his brother who was chasing after him to kill him.
[19:07] he was going to be killed by his own brother. Well, that's what happens when you go stealing your brother's inheritance. That was the kind of person Jacob was. And then later in life, he and his family were on the brink of starvation because of a famine.

And he was too stubborn to get up and move to Egypt to go and get food. They were all going to die. But yet he was delivered from all harm.
God delivered him time and time again. Now when we look back on Jacob's life, it's a wonder that he even managed to make it so far.
He was a deceiver and a struggler. But yet God stood by him. God never gave up on him.
In spite of Jacob's sin, God remained faithful. the only reason why Jacob was where he was, was because of the faithfulness of God who sustained him.
[20:13] So Jacob with all of this in his mind, he now turns to these two boys and he says, may this God, the God who has been my shepherd, the God who has been my deliverer, may he bless these boys.

You see, if these two boys are going to make it, if they're going to get through, they're going to need a faithful God like this. Now isn't this the kind of God that we need?
The God who will shepherd us and who will deliver us, who sticks with us and keeps with us year in, year out, despite our mess and our brokenness and our sin.
This is the kind of God we have. He gives what we don't have and what we all desperately need.
So, on to our fourth blessing. Humbled by God's grace. So they've been adopted, they've been blessed, blessed, they are being sustained, but now humbled.
[21:36] Let's go back to verse 13, that funny hands business. Joseph presents his sons to his father and Joseph does what is tradition and practice.

Verse 13, Joseph took both of them, Ephraim on his right towards Israel's left hand, and Manasseh on his left hand toward Israel's right hand and brought them close to him.
You see, the right hand was a symbol of authority. So Manasseh is presented to Jacob's right hand.
Manasseh is the firstborn and the firstborn son always, always gets the primary blessing. blessing.
Verse 14, but Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim's head, though he was the younger, and crossing his arms, he put his left hand on Manasseh's head, even though Manasseh was the firstborn.
Verse 17, when Joseph saw his father placing his right hand on Ephraim's head, he was displeased.
[22:59] He was furious. So he grabbed hold of his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. Joseph said to him, no, my father, this one is the firstborn.

Put your right hand on his head. It would have been outrageous, a scandal. Now, if you're finding it hard to kind of get to grips with this, imagine with me for a moment that King Charles of the monarchy across the water can no longer carry on being king.
So in a ceremony he's arranged to pass the crown to his son. So there's King Charles standing before his two sons, William and Harry.
Well, everyone knows, the world knows, that, well, William, the firstborn, gets the crown. He's the good boy, isn't he? Does what everybody wants him to do.
He's been preparing this for his whole life. And then comes the crowning. But just as the crown is going to be placed on William's head, at the last moment Charles stutters, turns and plonks it on the

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disgraced Harry.
[24:28] Could you imagine the scandal? What would be in the papers the next day? What's going on here? It's William, not Harry.

Manasseh should get the blessing. Not Ephraim. Everything is turned upside down and on its head. But this is no mistake.
It's intentional, verse 19. But Jacob refused and said, I know, my son, I know. I understand protocol and tradition and practice.
I know all that. he too will become a people and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he.
Why? Why? Why mess with tradition? Well, it's what God has been teaching us all the way through Genesis. God is a God of grace.
[25:36] He blesses the least and the last. This has been God's pattern all the way along. Israel, or Isaac rather, was chosen over his firstborn Ishmael.

Do you remember? Jacob was chosen over the firstborn Esau. And Ephraim is chosen over the firstborn Manasseh. There's a pattern we should pick up.
You see, God's grace doesn't come because of status and position. We don't receive grace because we earn it or deserve it. It doesn't matter your religious privilege or your social standing. God gives his grace to who he determines, to the humble, to those who don't qualify, to those who have nothing and need everything from what God gives.
you see, if we are to experience the favour and the grace of God, we must learn humility.
[26:47] Look at this scene again with me of the two boys and Jacob being blessed. On the one side, we have these two boys. They're young.

They're the elite of Egypt. They have it all, possession, wealth, and power. In the eyes of the world, these two boys are already blessed. They have everything. And then on the other side, picture it, an old blind man on his deathbed.
In the eyes of the Egyptians, he's detestable. Why do we say that? Do you remember what his job was? He was a shepherd.
shepherd. And you know what Egyptians thought of shepherds? Well, chapter 43, verse 32 tells us they wouldn't even eat with them because they were detestable.
Chapter 46, verse 34 tells us that Jacob and his family had to move to a far part of Egypt, far away, because all shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians.
[27:55] Christians. Now, what can an old, detestable, despised man give to these two elite boys?

Well, he gives them what they don't have and what they desperately need. You see, isn't this the way God works with us too?
If we're to experience being adopted into God's family, blessed by his promises, sustained by his faithfulness, we need to be humble.
You see, before us stands the Lord Jesus Christ, despised and rejected by mankind, held in low esteem, a nothing, a nobody.
There he is on a cross, beaten, mocked, flogged, crucified, cursed. What can a detestable, dying man possibly give to people like us?
[29:08] Well, he gives what we don't have and what we all desperately need, God's grace. You see, the one who is nothing in the eyes of the world, the one who is despised and rejected, humbles himself for us, and dies for us so that we might receive from him.

He goes to the cross to take my sin and your sin. He takes the curse so that we can have the blessings. things. It takes humility to come and bow before a God like this, to admit that you actually have nothing and that you desperately need Jesus.
God's grace flows not uphill but downhill to the least and the last. It embraces the weak and the broken and the crushed.
It flows to the harries of this world, the rebellious and the rejected. It comes to people like you and I. In humility and by grace we receive what we don't have and what we all desperately need.
Let's pray together. As we pray the words that we started with this morning, these are the ones I look on with favour, those who are humble and contrite in spirit and who tremble at my word.
[31:11] Father, give us a humble heart. Help us to see that we are empty, that we have nothing and that we desperately need the Lord Jesus, his grace, his kindness, his welcome, his inheritance, and his sustaining faithfulness.

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Humble us before you, we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen. Well, we're going to sing together. When I was lost, you came and rescued me, just as God was ashamed of me.

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