

Hope in Death

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Preacher: Cedric Moss

[0 : 00] Today's scripture is taken from Genesis 49, verse 28 through 50 through 26. All these are the twelve tribes of Israel.

This is what their father said to them as he blessed them, blessing each with the blessing suitable to him. Then he commanded them and said to them, I am to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field at Machphela, to the east of Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite to possess as a burying place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife. There they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife. And there I buried Leah. The field and the cave that is in it were bought from the Hittites. When Jacob finished commanding his sons, he drew up his feet into the bed and breathed his last and was gathered to his people. Then Joseph fell on his father's face and wept over him and kissed him.

[1 : 12] And Joseph commanded his servants, the physicians, to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel. Forty days were required for it, for that is how many are required for embalming.

And the Egyptians wept for him seventy days. And when the days of weeping for him were passed, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak in the ears of Pharaoh, saying, My father made me swear, saying, I am about to die. In my tome that I hewed out for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me. Now, therefore, let me please go up and bury my father. Then I will return. And Pharaoh answered, Go up and bury your father as he made you swear. So Joseph went up to bury his father. With him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, as well as the household, as well as all the household of Joseph, his brothers, and his father's household. Only their children, their flocks, and their herds were left in the land of Goshen. And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen.

[2 : 30] It was a very great company. When they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, they lamented there with a very great and grievous lamentation, and he made a mourning for his father seven days.

When the inhabitants of the land of the Canaanites saw the mourning on the threshing floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning by the Egyptians.

Therefore, the place was named Abel Misrium. It is beyond the Jordan. Thus his sons did for him as he commanded them. For his sons carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, to the east of Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite to possess as a burying place.

After he buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt with his brothers and all who had gone up with him to bury his father. When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him.

So they sent a message to Joseph saying, Your father gave this command before he died. Say to Joseph, Please forgive the transgressions of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.

[3 : 50] And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father. Joseph wept when they spoke to him. His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, Behold, we are your servants.

But Joseph said to them, Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good. And spring it about that many people should be kept alive as they are today.

So do not fear. I will provide for you and your little ones. Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. So Joseph remained in Egypt, he and his father's house.

Joseph lived 110 years. And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation, The children also of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were counted as Joseph's own.

And Joseph said to his brothers, I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.

[5 : 08] So Joseph died, being 110 years old. They embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt. Here ends the scripture reading. Thank you, Danielle.

Well, this morning, as we conclude our extended sermon series in the book of Genesis, Genesis, we come face to face with a subject that many people don't like to talk about.

As a matter of fact, many of them don't even like to think about this subject, and it's the subject of death. In this final section of Genesis, we find death sandwiching the section.

It opens with the death of Jacob, and it closes with the death of Joseph. But in this section, there's also another theme beyond the theme of death.

And in our remaining time, I want us to consider both of them. But first, let me pray for us. Father, we're grateful that we are able to gather in this place in your name.

[6 : 33] And Lord, although we, on a human level, made decisions to come, on a divine level, you brought us here. On a divine level, you brought us here to experience all that we have experienced, and to hear what we are about to hear from your word.

And so, Father, would you speak to us? Would you cause us to hear in the context that we're in and what we need to hear?

I ask, Lord, that you would anoint me by your spirit, that I'd be faithful to bring your word to your people. And I pray, Lord, that you'd use the preaching of your word this morning for our collective good and for the glory of your great name.

In Christ's name we pray. Amen. I have two simple points this morning. And the first one is the title of this morning's sermon, which is Hope in Death.

First, in this passage, we have the death of Jacob in Genesis 49, verses 29 to 33.

[7 : 52] Back in Genesis 47, verse 27, we're told that Jacob lived 17 years in the land of Egypt, and he died at age 147.

This means that Jacob remained in Egypt for 12 years after the famine. We know this because based on Genesis 45, verse 6, Jacob's brothers, Joseph's brothers, sorry, came into Egypt in year two of the famine.

The famine was going to last seven years, so there were five more years left. Jacob came shortly after that, and he would have lived there for those five years. And then after that, it had to have been 12 years since he was there for a total of 17 years.

And I think the question is, why didn't Jacob return to Egypt after the famine? Why didn't he go back? This was the promised land.

They came into Egypt because there was a famine, and there was only food in Egypt. So why didn't he go back at the end of the famine? Well, from a human point of view, we can't answer that question.

[9 : 18] We don't know because we don't know what was going on in his mind. But from a divine point of view, as we consider the book of Genesis, we know that providentially, God kept Jacob and his family in Egypt because that was a part of his plan, that he revealed to Abraham back in Genesis 15 that his descendants were going to live in a foreign land as sojourners, and that they would be enslaved in this land.

But here's what's clear. Even though Jacob was in the land of Egypt for 17 years, Jacob's heart was back in Canaan.

His heart was in Canaan. He wasn't attached to anything in the land of Egypt. He went before Pharaoh and wasn't impressing Pharaoh, spoke a few brief words to Pharaoh and left.

All of the pomp and pageantry that his son Joseph had come into wasn't impressive to him. His heart was still back in the land of Canaan.

And we see this first with his interaction with Joseph when he was about to die in Genesis 47, verses 29 to 31, where he calls Joseph and he made him swear that he would not bury him in Egypt, but that he would carry his body out and that he would bury him with his fathers in the land of Canaan.

[10:59] And now, at the end of chapter 49, we see Jacob blessing his sons. And after blessing his sons, he commanded them.

He's already made Joseph swear, but now he commands all of his sons, bury me in Canaan. Do not bury me in the land of Egypt.

You'll notice in verses 29 to 32, that three times Jacob describes the place where he was to be buried.

Three times. There was no way for them to confuse or not understand what he wanted them to do. He wanted to be taken back to Canaan. He wanted to be buried with his fathers and with the other faithful who had been buried in this cave that was in the field of Ephron, Machpelah, that his grandfather, Abraham, purchased from Ephron, the Hittite.

No doubt about it where he wanted to be buried. May Joseph swear, commanded his sons, and three times he told them repeatedly, bury me in this place.

[12:19] Clearly, it was important to Jacob to be buried in Canaan. Why was it important? Why was it so important for Jacob going to die to be buried in the land of Canaan with his fathers?

Jacob wanted to be buried in the land of Canaan because he believed the promise that God had made to Abraham. Centuries later, he's believing this promise that God would give him and his descendants the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession.

And his insistence on being buried there was an expression of this. His insistence to be buried in the land of Canaan showed his faith in God's promise to give that land to the children of Israel, even though at this point, all they possessed was a field, a burial place.

That's all they possessed at that point. And here we have Jacob dying in faith, and he says to his sons, you are to bury me in this field.

You know, a lot of people today are pretty much indifferent about what happens to them when they die. They really don't care.

[13:48] They may say to their loved ones, do whatever you want to do. Bury me where you want to bury me, cremate me if you want to cremate me. It really doesn't matter. Do what you think is best, or do what is easiest for the family.

Not Jacob. Jacob wanted to be buried in the promised land. He wanted to be buried at home because Canaan was his home, not Egypt.

He wasn't concerned about the details of his burial. He left no instructions about that. He simply told them one thing, you are to bury me where my fathers have been buried.

He wanted to be buried in this field. That was the deposit as it were, that God was going to perform his word and give this land to the children of Israel.

And this was no small request. This was a burdensome request that Jacob laid on Joseph and on his brothers.

[14:57] We see in Genesis 50 verses 4 to 14, the effort that had to go into fulfilling this request.

Joseph needed to request a leave from his work to be able to do this. All of the sons of Jacob and their wives and all the adults in the family, they made this pilgrimage back to the land of Canaan.

They only left their little ones and their livestock in the land of Egypt. Again, why all this effort?

Again, because Jacob believed the promise that God was going to give the land of Canaan to the descendants of Abraham and Isaac.

And even in death, Jacob believed God and was holding on to God's promise. When you consider this account of Jacob's death, it is not marked by despair.

[16:05] It is not marked by darkness. He had not yet come into the possession of this land, but for him, it was enough to know that in death, he was going to be buried in this place that God had promised that they were going to possess.

And he believed that his descendants behind him were going one day to possess this land. He believed that God is going to perform his word to his descendants.

In the account of Joseph's death that we see at the end of this section, in verses 22 to 26, we see that Joseph shared the same hope as Jacob did.

We see in verse 26 that Joseph died at 110 years old. And this means that he lived in Egypt for 93 years.

He came there when he was 17. He's 110 when he dies. He lived in Egypt for 93 years. He had the privilege of seeing the children of Ephraim to the third generation.

[17:27] They were entrenched with their lives in the land of Egypt. And still, Joseph did not see Egypt as his home.

Joseph's life in Egypt, a life of power and privilege and prestige, did not cause him to forget that he had a connection to God's covenant people.

And in death, Joseph shared the same hope that Jacob had, that he would be buried in the land of Canaan. Joseph could have been afforded the most elaborate and glamorous experience in the land of Egypt.

But we don't see him vying for that. His concern was that he would be buried in the land of Canaan. But there's a significant difference between the hope that we see Jacob having and the hope that Joseph expressed in his death.

Look again at the account of Joseph's death, starting in verse 23, verse 22, sorry. So Joseph remained in Egypt. He and his father's house.

[18:58] Joseph lived 110 years, and Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation, the children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were counted as Joseph's own.

And Joseph said to his brothers, I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

And Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, God will surely visit you, and you shall carry my bones up from here. So Joseph died, being 110 years old.

They embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt. The first difference that we see is that Joseph did not make a special request to be buried in the land of Canaan.

Jacob made that request. He said, I want you to bury me there, and they fulfilled it. They took him into the land of Canaan. Joseph doesn't make a similar request.

[20:11] Instead, two times, in verses 24 and 25, Joseph tells his brothers, God is going to visit you. God is going to visit you.

And by this, Joseph shows that he believed the words that God had spoken to those who had gone before. He believed the words that God had spoken to his grandfather, great-grandfather, Abraham, that his descendants were going to live as slaves.

They were going to be enslaved for 400 years in the land of Egypt. But then he was going to take them out. He was going to deliver them from that. And Joseph, as he is dying, he doesn't say, take me there.

He is so confident. He says, God is going to visit you. And when God visits you, you take my bones with you. You take my bones to the land that God has promised.

Joseph had no way of knowing exactly when that day of Exodus would come. But he knew that it would come. He had a rough idea because it was told 400 years, but he did not know specifically.

[21:30] But he had the confidence that it was going to come, that God was going to visit his people, that the God who cannot lie made this promise and that he was going to fulfill it.

You know, sometimes a person would kind of make a request that they're not so sure something might happen because the circumstances are difficult, so they kind of get a head start from everybody else.

No, Joseph was convinced that this would happen. He didn't need his brothers to go and take him, and then he would kind of like wait for them in Canaan.

He says, no, you take me with you when you go. Take my bones to this land. Joseph was a part of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and he wanted to be a part of this visitation that God had promised that he would bring, this exodus from the land of Egypt.

In Hebrews 11, verse 22, the writer to the Hebrews commends Joseph for his faith in these words. [22:41] By faith, Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

Joseph believed God's promise that he would give the land to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

And even in death, though he did not experience this, he had this hope that one day, God will visit his people and his bones will be taken from Egypt and buried in Canaan.

Now, at this point in redemption history and the divine revelation that has been revealed up to this point in Genesis, we don't have any evidence that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their descendants had any hope of eternal life beyond death.

At this point in redemption history, at this point in the book of Genesis, in the lives of these three patriarchs, we have no evidence that they had an awareness of a hope beyond eternal life, beyond death for eternal life.

[24 : 06] And yet what we see in the case of both Jacob and Joseph, they still had a hope. They had a hope that in the face of death, this promise that God had given to his people, that they would realize that promise eventually.

Jacob realized it immediately and Joseph was going to realize it eventually when the Lord visited his people.

That was the hope in death that both Jacob and Joseph had. And brothers and sisters, the hope in death that Jacob and Joseph had, it points to, and in some ways, it is a shadow of the hope in death that those of us who belong to Christ can have.

Theirs is the shadow of it. We have the substance of it. Their hope is in a place. Our hope is in a person. Their hope was in a physical location that God had promised to his people.

Ours is in a person. Ours is in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the one whom God himself promised in Genesis 3 that he was going to send into the world the seed of the woman who's going to crush the head of the serpent.

[25 : 34] That is the one in whom we hope. In the fullness of time, God sent him. And as he hung dying on the cross, he crushed the head of Satan, the one who had power over death.

Listen to what the writer to the Hebrews says in Hebrews 2, 14 to 15. Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

Brothers and sisters, our hope is in the Lord Jesus Christ who has conquered Satan and who has overcome death. In his resurrection, he has conquered death.

death itself. And this is our hope because if we are in Christ, we will die in Christ. And we have this promise from God that to be absent from our bodies is to be present with the Lord.

This is our hope in death, brothers and sisters, that we are the Lord's. whether we live or we die, we are the Lord's.

[27 : 00] We have the substance of the hope that Joseph and Jacob had, and it's the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Just recently, an uncle of mine underwent surgery, and on Tuesday, I received a call that he had really deteriorated and the hospital was calling for family to come because he was very, very sick. And I made my way there and in a short while, he was gone even before I arrived. And then on Wednesday, I got a call from a cousin that a first cousin of mine who was very sick, terminally ill, in hospital, was very low, and asked if I would go and pray with her.

And I agreed and went. My brother Paul came with me and we went there to pray with her. And as we left, we were coming back.

I just said to him, I said, isn't it amazing how we watched our parents and uncles and aunts die, and now we're seeing our siblings and our cousins die?

[28 : 28] Yesterday, a number of us attended the funeral of Calvin Dean's mom. And I was just reminded, we are surrounded by death. Death is all around us.

And death is around us more than sometimes we even fail to comprehend. Sometimes we are hearing about death, we're seeing death, but we're not registering it in our minds because we're distracted or we're busy.

We just don't contemplate it. But when we stop to think, we are surrounded by death. But brothers and sisters, in the face of death, those of us who have put our trust in Jesus Christ, we have a hope.

We have a certain hope by a God who cannot lie that death for us is not final, that death is actually the gateway to greater life to those who have trusted in Jesus.

That death enables us to be more alive than we can ever be in these bodies that are frail and weak and passing away.

[29 : 46] In the face of death, we can have a hope that's better than this hope that Jacob and Joseph had that they were so confident in. And they were so aware of as they were dying.

We have something better than that, brothers and sisters. And our hope, again, is not in a place, but it is in a person.

But not everyone has this same hope in the face of death. Some have fear in the face of death. And in this final section of Genesis, what we find is sandwiched between these two accounts of death, the death of Jacob and the death of Joseph. Sandwiched between them is the fear that Joseph's brothers had in the face of their father's death.

And this brings me to my second and final point, which is fear in death. Look again at the fear that Joseph's brothers had after their father's death, starting in verse 15.

[31 : 10] When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, it may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him.

So they send a message to Joseph saying, your father gave this command before he died. Say to Joseph, please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin because they did evil to you. And now please forgive the transgression of your servants, of the God of your father. Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

So Joseph's brothers are fearful after Jacob passes away and they think that Joseph is going to punish them, he's going to exact revenge on them, he's going to repay them for what they did to him.

And when you read this account closely, you see that they were so fearful that they did not even have the courage to go to Joseph himself and tell him what they said his father told them.

[32 : 29] They didn't have the courage to go to him, so they sent a messenger, they sent a message to Joseph and say, this is what your father commanded, it, that you are to forgive us for the evil that we did to you.

And this account doesn't appear to be true, doesn't appear to be a credible account. When we think of the facts that we read about in the book of Genesis, certainly from 49 on, when we see that Jacob has his private audience with Joseph and there's no evidence that he said anything to Joseph about his brothers, then shortly after that, they all gathered around Jacob, he blesses them, and the last one he blesses is Joseph.

And when you read the blessing that he gives to Joseph, in that, he indirectly alludes to the treatment, the evil treatment, that Joseph experienced at the hands of his brothers, and he mentioned nothing about their selling him into slavery and their mistreatment of him.

Now, I don't believe for a moment that Jacob was not aware. I mean, they had to explain to Jacob somehow, how did this brother that you told me was dead, was eaten by wild animals, is now alive? And so, clearly, Jacob knew, but there's no evidence that he told them what they actually said that he told them.

[34 : 16] And when Joseph heard it, it says he wept. Why did he weep? And the best we can do is speculate as to why he wept.

And I don't know, but I somehow think that perhaps Joseph wept because he saw that even though he had obviously forgiven them by everything that he did for them, by providing for them and their children, having the power over them, I mean, even to the point when he was giving them free food, all the things he was doing for them, and yet they did not come to appreciate that he had forgiven them.

I think some of us have experienced maybe a hint of this when someone misconstrues our motives. We have the best of motives towards them and somehow they get distorted and think it's quite the opposite and that just brings pain in our hearts.

And perhaps Joseph was experiencing something of this level, but their fears were unfounded. Joseph was kind to them. As a matter of fact, when you read the account, God enabled Joseph to forgive his brothers even before they came to Egypt.

And he named his two sons to memorialize how God worked in his heart and enabled him to forget all the pain and the misery that he experienced in his father's household and how despite all that they did to him, God made him fruitful in the land of his captivity.

[36 : 04] But notice Joseph's response starting in verse 19. Joseph said to them, do not fear, for am I in the place of God.

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good. to bring it about that many people should be kept alive as they are today.

So do not fear. I will provide for you and your little ones. Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Notice that Joseph acknowledges their acts of evil against him. he also expressed to his brothers that he didn't have the right to hold them accountable for the evil that they committed against him. He said to them, am I in the place of God? I mean, you're fearful of me, but am I in the place of God? In other words, Joseph was reminding them, and by extension, he's reminding us, that God alone is the judge.

[37 : 13] Even when people sin against us, and they commit evil against us, it is not our right to deal with them. That's what Joseph was saying. He says, I'm not in the place of God.

God is the one you need to be concerned with. God is the judge who will judge you. And so Joseph assures them that there was no need for them to fear him.

And again, he promised to provide for them and for their little ones. forgiveness. If you ever want to see a picture of true forgiveness, it is this picture of Joseph and his brothers.

This picture that he is able to speak kindly to them, he's able to comfort them, even as they resurrect the very painful experience that he had at their hands.

he's able to do this towards them. So how does a person who's been sinned against in such a grievous manner forgive those who sin against him and show kindness to them?

[38 : 27] How does one do that? And I think all of us have lived long enough to realize that extending forgiveness, genuine forgiveness, is one of the hardest things we can be called upon to do.

I think we're polite enough to be able to utter those words, but I think many times we are aware that we've just uttered those words. We're doing it because it's what we're supposed to do.

It's the right thing to do. But how does one from the depths of one's soul extend forgiveness to someone who sinned against us?

I think Joseph helps us to see it in his words to his brothers. In verse 20 he says to them, as for you, you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive as they are today.

I think the way that we're able to truly extend forgiveness to those who have committed evil against us.

[39 : 47] Yes, we need the grace of God to be able to do that, but what we need as well is we need to recognize that God is sovereign and he's even sovereign over the act of evil that happened against us.

That was Joseph's perspective. Joseph recognized and said, you know what, you meant this for evil, but God meant it for good. When we focus on the you meant it for evil and we stay there, forgiveness is hard to extend.

But when we end on the point, but God intended it for good and God has promised that he will work in all things for the good of his people, that includes sins against us.

All means all things. And this is how Joseph was able to forgive his brothers because he maintained a divine perspective of God's sovereignty.

He wasn't fixated on the sin that had been committed against him. He fixed his eyes on the Lord, the sovereign Lord, who ordains all that comes to pass, the sovereign Lord who allows whatever comes to pass, a nothing outside of his sovereign will happens to anyone.

[41 : 07] This was Joseph's perspective. And he was able to extend forgiveness to his brothers because he saw God's sovereign hand in it.

And notice as well that Joseph, he realized that this isn't just about me. This is about God's purposes. God had me to experience all the experience because he wanted to bring it about to preserve many people so that they would be kept alive.

And brothers and sisters, we need to live with this conviction that all of our life, every aspect of it, is under the sovereign care and direction of God, and nothing happens to us outside of his sovereign will.

We're best positioned to extend forgiveness when we have the same conviction that Joseph had. But here's the reality.

The reality is that God doesn't always show us why we walk through some of the things we walk through in this life as he did for Joseph. He doesn't show us every single thing.

[42 : 24] And he doesn't even promise that in heaven he will show us every single thing. So the conviction that we need to have is not in knowing what God is doing as we walk through different circumstances.

The conviction that we need to have is that God is sovereign and in this situation that I don't understand, he is working out his purposes. He's sovereignly doing it.

He's doing it for my good. And you know what? Sometimes the good that God works in our lives will bring tears to our eyes. Sometimes the good he works in our lives will bring pain in our souls.

But we hold on to the conviction that God is sovereign, God is directing and caring for me in this situation, and therefore I trust him. And therefore, should I need to forgive?

forgive, I forgive. Because my eyes are fixed on the Lord. So in the wake of Joseph's death, the fear of his brothers was unfounded.

[43 : 36] But not only was the fear of his brothers unfounded, the fear of his brothers was misdirected. The fear of Joseph's brothers were misdirected to Joseph when Joseph was saying to them, your fear needs to be directed to God.

Your fear needs to be directed to God himself, the only one who can and will judge you. Brothers and sisters, Joseph's words to his brothers reminded them that God is their judge, and they remind us as well that he is our judge.

And the face of death, our hearts and our minds should be directed to the reality that one day we are going to stand before the judge of the earth.

We should be reminded of the words of the writer to the Hebrews that it is appointed to all of us once to die and then the judgment. And we'll be standing before a judge, before whom everything is naked, nothing is hid.

We'll be standing before a judge who is exacting in his righteousness, perfect in his righteousness, and that's the standard that he judges by.

[45 : 16] And so if you don't know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, your concern shouldn't be on other things. your concern should be on the one who will be your final judge on the day of judgment.

Your concern should be that one day we will all die, and none of us knows that day. And the truth is that if we could interview all those who have died, or a great majority of those who have died, what we would find is many believe they had more time than they actually had.

None of us knows the day or the hour of our death. Surrounded by death, being reminded of death, and so we should be aware that one day we will die, and then on the day of judgment we will stand before a perfect and a righteous judge.

judge. But the good news is that that perfect and righteous judge that we will all stand before one day is now offering mercy and grace to all who would turn from their sin and who would trust him as Savior and Lord.

He invites all those who will one day be judged, to accept the perfect life that he lived and the substitutionary death that he died as their own, and so that they are able to stand before the righteous judge on that day.

[47 : 10] And I pray, if you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ, that today will be the day that you will look to him and trust in him. But there's another reality about death.

Jacob's brothers had a misdirected fear in death, and sometimes those who have put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, trust.

They know him in the pardon of their sins, and yet, for any number of different reasons, they have doubts about their own salvation.

They have doubts about whether their sins have truly been forgiven. They have doubts about whether they have truly been repentant, and whether they might be among that company of people who will come before the Lord, and he will say, I never knew you.

Even though within their heart of hearts, they've done all that they've known to do to respond to the gospel. And the reality is that in the face of death, if there's ever a time that the enemy of our soul will torment us and will accuse us, it will be in the time of death.

[48 : 39] And the worst thing that anyone can do, whether in life or death, who professes to know the Lord Jesus Christ, is to look more at themselves in the issue of sin and righteousness than they look at the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because Jesus is our only hope. He's our only hope in life. He is certainly our only hope in death. And so in death, our hearts and minds have to be fixed on him, who alone is our confidence, who alone is our assurance of salvation, and not in our works, because our best works, our best works, are filthy rags in the sight of a holy God.

God's love. And so we are to fix our eyes not on ourselves, but we are to fix our eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are to look to him and to him alone. When we consider these two accounts of death, Jacob's and Joseph's, again, there's no hint of fear on the part of any of them.

And brothers and sisters, we have a better covenant that is founded on better promises, and therefore we ought not, we need not fear in the face of death, because we have put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who has forgiven sins, the one who has died for sins, the one who has promised that all those who come to him, he will never, ever turn away.

[50 : 37] And therefore we need not fear in the face of death. The book of Genesis ends with Joseph expressing this conviction that one day God was going to visit his people and bring them out of the land in which they were living as exiles, where they were harassed and where they were enslaved, and he's going to take them to the promised land.

And that's exactly what God did in the book of Exodus. The book of Genesis ends. to point to the book of Exodus, where God is going to fulfill that promise that he gave to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

And God has given us a promise. He's given us a very similar promise, that one day he's going to return, and he's going to receive to himself his covenant people, his redeemed people.

And he's going to usher in a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. And brothers and sisters, the same God who cannot lie, who fulfilled his promise to his old covenant people, will fulfill his promise to his new covenant people, because we have a better covenant that's established on better promises.

God swore to Abraham, the God who cannot lie, cannot lie, but he appeased Abraham by swearing to him, I will perform my word.

[52 : 28] That same holy God gives us the same promise. And whether it is in death or whether it is in the return of the Lord, we can hold on to the conviction that God will take us to our true home.

This is not home, brothers and sisters. Let's live in it, let's be faithful in it, let's perform our duties in it, but let us keep our eyes on our home.

We are exiles in this place, and one day God will visit us. As he visited his Old Testament people, he'll visit his New Testament people, and he will take us home to be with him.

And may our confidence be in the Lord Jesus Christ, who makes all that possible. Let's pray. Oh, thank you that you God God.

God, you're the God of hope. You're the God who has given hope to your people in life's darkest moment, which is death. And I pray, Lord, that as we live this life, as we face the death of others, and eventually as we face our own death, death, I pray that our hope in the Lord Jesus Christ will continue to grow, and he will indeed be our hope in death.

[54 : 07] Lord, would you help us to live on this earth, remembering that this is not our home, but we are exiles here, we are sojourners here, and one day you will visit us, and you will take us home to be with you forevermore.

I pray, Lord, that these truths will echo in our souls, and they will be the lens through which we live life. We ask all this in Jesus' name.

Amen.