

Genesis 50

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- [0 : 00] All right, you can take your Bibles and turn with me to Genesis chapter number 50. Genesis chapter number 50, it's a privilege to be with you. Thank you, Brother Gardner, for allowing me to preach here. The mess that stands before you tonight, Brother Gardner is partially responsible for that because a lot of the training that I received in the ministry, a lot of it came from him, especially the missions aspect of it.
- I learned that in Peru, and I'm very thankful for that because I wouldn't know what I was doing otherwise. Just want to give a little bit of an update on the work there. God's been really good. We had specific prayer requests when we went there, and God has just been really great to us to see a lot of those requests answered.
- God gave us a great pastor for the church there. I pray for Stefan Ross and his family. He's doing a phenomenal job. And then some strong leadership around him, Bucks Ross, and then some other raised up nine preachers in the church, and so we praise the Lord for that.
- One of those, Damien Ross, he likes to watch all services, and so I told him I'd give him a shout-out here. So on the count of three, if y'all could say, is this on live or whatever? Yeah. All right. So on the count of three, everybody say hello.
- Hey, Damien. One, two, three. Hey, Damien. All right. He owes me some money when I get back there. I've done that twice now. All right. Genesis chapter number 50. Pray for my family as we adjust back to the U.S.
- [1 : 20] My youngest son claims to be an American. My oldest son, he claims more of his South African roots. But they all, three of them, my daughter even, make fun of the way I talk. My six-year-old daughter, if you ask her to talk like a country person, she's actually making fun of me.
- And she does a really good job at it. But the other day, Hudson, I think him and Clark, went to the store with their papa.
- And I asked him later on, I said, where'd y'all go? He said, we went to Louie's. I said, where? He said, you know, the place that sells building supplies and all that stuff. I said, Lowe's? He said, I don't know how to pronounce it.
- I said, it's Lowe's. I said, you're the weirdo now. So, that's good parenting, by the way. All right? Don't want to raise up these sensitive boys.
- So, anyways. It's Lowe's. I get to make fun of them for a year now. They're in the South. So, I'm normal here. All right? Genesis chapter number 50. Genesis chapter number 50.
- [2 : 23] We're going to read a few verses here. Verse 22 to 26. This is not a normal passage, I don't think, to preach out of when preaching about Joseph. And my title is terrible. They asked me for the title of my message.
- I was already going to make fun of it and say that's a horrific title to a message. But, Four Lessons from the Death of Joseph. A very lame title. But, now that I've said it enough, maybe you'll remember it. Four Lessons from the Death of Joseph.
- Verse 22. It says, And Joseph dwelt in Egypt. He and his father's house. And Joseph lived in 110 years. And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation.

The children also of Malkir, the son of Manasseh, were brought up upon Joseph's knees. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die, and God will surely visit you and bring you out of this land under the land which he sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So, Joseph died being 110 years old, and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

[3 : 34] Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this day. Thank you for Vision Baptist Church and all that you're doing here, Lord. The people, the missionaries, the progress here, the plans for the future. And God, I pray that you just continue to bless and raise up more, and just help those that are part of the training here, Lord, just to continue to be used of you in an incredible way, Lord.

And pray for greater days ahead. And God, I pray tonight as we open your word that you'd bless the preaching of your word. Help us as we look at your servant, Joseph, to take away these lessons with us this evening.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. This is an awesome book. I preached through this book in South Africa. It goes from Eden to Egypt, basically, verses 37, chapter 37 through 50, is basically dealing with this man, Joseph.

And Joseph, the end of the book, ends with Joseph reassuring his brothers of his genuine forgiveness. And it ends, ultimately, with his death. And it talks about his death here in the end.

But have you ever been to a funeral, a bad funeral before? One where there wasn't anything good to say about somebody? You really couldn't, talking to family and anybody, there was just really nothing that stood out about the person.

[4 : 44] A lot of times in South Africa, when that happens to me, I'll just say, You know what? I didn't know a whole lot about Joe, or Sipo, or Lubaballo, or whoever it is. I didn't know a whole lot about this guy, but I know what he'd like me to say to you today.

That's what you say at a lot of funerals when you don't have anything good to say about that person. But Joseph, at the end of his life, we can look at his life and right around the end of his life and throughout, look back upon his life and learn all kinds of lessons from his life.

And so I want us to do that this evening. So the first one is this. We see the goodness of God to the believer. Right here in these verses, I think we see the goodness of God to the believer. God was good to Joseph, even though he suffered so much.

Joseph suffered many times for righteousness' sake, as we find in the New Testament. 1 Peter 3, verse 14 tells us, But and if you suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are you.

And be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled. So we're blessed. We're happy. We're blessed if we suffer for Christ's sake. If we suffer for the gospel, we suffer for carrying our cross, we suffer for living for Jesus, suffer for living for God.

[5 : 48] And many times Joseph suffered for that very thing. No one can argue, looking over at Joseph's life, that he suffered. He was hated by his own brothers. He was left for dead.

He was sold as a slave. He was falsely accused of attempted rape. He was thrown into prison again. And he was even forgotten by those who he helped there in prison.

But we forget, and many times, that the bad things that happen in Joseph's life overshadow the good things that took place in Joseph's life. And if we're not careful, the bad things that take place in our life, because there will be bad things that take place in your life, will overshadow all the good that God does in your life.

And even as a missionary, if you're not careful, the bad things that happen on the mission field with your family and through the ministry and all those things, will overshadow the good things that take place in your life.

It's kind of like when you're doing the phone calls on deputation. You know, 100 people are nice to you, but that one jerk is just mean. And now the next day when you go to call, all you can remember is that one person that was mean to you.

[6 : 53] And if we're not careful in our lives, we'll let all that one little thing or those few things overshadow the multitude of good things that God has done in our life. I want to give you some of those that you may not have noticed in Joseph's life.

He was raised to the highest power in Egypt, second only to Pharaoh. And basically, I think he was the one calling all the shots, basically. So maybe Pharaoh was a figurehead, but Joseph was running the most powerful nation in the world, the goodness of God.

He got to spend the last 17 years of his life reunited with his father and his family. He was given a family and children and got to see even his great-grandchildren's children.

The Bible says there in verse 23, Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation, and they were brought up upon Joseph's knees. That's the goodness of God in Joseph's life. Now, if Joseph was living in 2020, all he'd be talking about was spending that time in jail and how his brothers had mistreated him.

But Joseph wasn't that way. He wasn't a victim. He had to reassure his brethren that, I'm really forgiving you guys. I'm not in the place of God. He had realized that he was not in God's stead, that God had been tremendously good to him.

[8 : 00] And it'd help a lot of us if we could get over ourselves and see the goodness of God in our lives. He also, he lived to 110 years, which what I read, and I don't know if this is a fact, but this is what they say, 110 years was the perfect age, was the age of perfection in the Egyptian culture.

Like, if you lived to 110 years, you'd live to the perfect age. Man, isn't that the goodness of God? God was so good to Joseph. And here's the truth for us to remember. All of us will suffer in this life as Christians, right?

All the God in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. You may not be burned at a stake, but some way, shape, or form, there's going to be suffering in your life as you carry your cross and you live the Christian life.

We're called to carry a cross, and that will bring pain and suffering at times. But even in the midst of all that, even in the midst of all that, I assure you, if you'll just open your eyes and look around, you'll see the goodness of God in your life.

Psalms 73, you should read it sometime if you haven't. But that psalm starts off, I believe, truly God is good to Israel. But then the next, I don't know, several verses just talk about how frustrated this guy is.

[9 : 08] When you read that first verse, you're like, this doesn't really go with what I'm reading after this because it's just complaints and seeing how these ungodly people are prospering. They do what they want to. They live how they want to.

And they're just, it's like everything they do turns to gold and they're just having fun and living the good life. But then he goes into the sanctuary and he gets understanding. You realize those people are on a slippery slope to hell.

They're going to die and burn in hell one day. And then he realizes how good God is to him. And that first sentence, though I see all of this, I realize that that's a fact, that God is truly good.

God used all that evil that fell on Joseph, that happened to Joseph for Joseph's good and God's glory. And I believe that in my own life, that the bad that happens in my life is for my good. And I believe it's for God's glory.

I believe somehow, some way, God will turn it for my good, that he is conforming me to Christ and that it's going to build me up into a better man, make me more like Jesus. And that's what I want to be like.

[10 : 05] My mother, when I was a kid, she was a cruel lady. Not really. She may be watching this too. But she had a warped sense of humor. And I have this with my own kids.

I can be a little warped, have a warped sense of humor. But we would go to amusement parks and she would put me on roller coasters. And I hated roller coasters. But my mom loved to put me on roller coasters. That's what I remember anyways.

You know, it seems like it was a hundred times, but it was probably one time. And so I can remember getting on roller coasters and my mom laughing and I just close my mouth and close my eyes and hold my breath from beginning to end.

I don't enjoy it. I endure it from the beginning to the end. And I grow up with bitterness in my heart toward my mom. And many times, the hardships, the trials, the difficulties that come into our life, we kind of hold our breath and close our eyes through them.

Rather than learning the lessons that God has for us and growing through them. The thing that blows my mind about Joseph, all those years and all those, you know, slander and imprisonment and being forgotten and hated and all that stuff, you don't find him complaining.

[11 : 14] And I don't think it's that the Bible just didn't say he complained. All the indications there is that the guy really didn't complain. He really believed that God was in control.

He really believed that God had not forgotten him and that those promises that he gave him eventually were going to come true. Even when they forgot him in prison, you know, you would think if it was us today, when the chief butler and baker said, hey, when Joseph sees them and he says, why are you so sad?

And they say, we got these dreams and there's no one to interpret our dreams. You would think if it was us, we'd be like, don't say dream again or I'm going to punch you in the face. I'm sick of dreams.

I don't want to hear another thing about a dream because I had a dream and look where it's gotten me. But that's not the case. Immediately he said, I know the interpreter dreams. Tell me your dream. God. He still believed God.

He still believed God was working in his life. God used all that evil to build Joseph, to put him in the place where he wanted him. The story is told of a man that had a dream one night and in the dream he remembered all of his past suffering and he sobbed as he saw and he relived that suffering.

[12 : 21] He just broke down crying as he remembered the terrible things that he went through when he was younger. And he was then offered a towel to rub out or erase if he wanted to all the troubles and pains and sufferings of his past.

And he started wiping them away, but as he wiped over here in the past, he noticed that a lot of the good acts and the character and the future that had been built into his life were also erased. And he realized at that moment that a lot of those difficulties and trials that he went through weren't meant to make him bitter and bad and broken, but were to make him better and stronger in the future.

You can look at how you want to, and I can tell you how the world wants you to. They want you to get bitter, and they want you to hold a grudge against the people that did it to you in the past, but the God of heaven wants you to get over it.

And he wants you to forgive, and he wants you to become a better person and realize that it doesn't matter where you came from, the goal is the same, to make you like Jesus. And we're all broken, we're all sinners, and we're on that same path.

We just come at it from different directions. He brings all that good, all that evil for good. James says, That means become like Jesus, an entire wanting nothing.

[13 : 42] Will you count your blessings today? Or are you a pessimist, as my pastor says? I just finished a marriage retreat with my pastor, and it was awesome. He's an incredible teacher on marriage, and his jokes are awesome, but the way he pronounces word is even better sometimes.

We just got a real kick out of that. Pessimist, but he called it a pessimist. How is God building you through your troubles? Look at that. Stop being bitter, and stop looking back and holding on to things and feeling like a victim.

Get over that. If anybody was a victim, it was Joseph. He went through, he suffered more than any of us, and probably all of us put together. But man, God used him in an incredible way to save the world in his days.

And what can God do through you? And then the second one is this, the powerful witness of a believer to the very end. We're talking about these four lessons from the death of Joseph.

It's not up there anymore. But anyways, the second one, the powerful witness of a believer to the very end. Joseph spent his life and went to his grave believing and proclaiming the promises of God. In verse 24, it says, And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die.

[14 : 49] He says this, God will surely visit you and bring you out of this land and the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. The powerful witness of a believer to the very end. He lived in Egypt a total of 93 years from the age of around 17 and 13 years in slavery or prison and then spent his last 80 years in power under Pharaoh from the age of 30 to the age of 110.

He believed the promise that was given to his great-grandfather Abraham in Genesis 15, 13 that says, And he said unto Abraham, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs and shall serve them and they shall afflict them 400 years.

And also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge and afterward shall they come out with great substance. Joseph continued to believe the promises of God and continued to be a witness for God until the very end of his life.

He didn't get to experience the promise himself, but he continued holding on to and proclaiming the promise to the very end. He believed God would visit his children in grace and love and mercy and deliver them to the promised land.

He was responsible and faithful to proclaim that truth, though small, for God until the end of his life. He wanted his life to speak for God even after he was gone. And today, let me just say this, the greatest way that you can ensure that your life speaks after you're dead and gone is something that Brother Gardner teaches and preaches on all the time, I'm sure, and that is to disciple someone else and leave them behind.

[16 : 17] Joseph, at the end of his life, is still proclaiming the promise of God. At the end of his life, he's telling people, he's telling those around him that God is surely going to visit and God is going to bring you out of this land.

He's clinging to those promises to the very end of his life. And the greatest thing that we can do with our life is even after we're gone to allow it to speak for Christ. And so the second thing that we see here is his life, the powerful witness of a believer to the very end, making his life count.

The third thing is the traveling spirit of a believer. In verse 25, it says, And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from hence.

Joseph knew he did not belong in Egypt. Joseph knew he did not belong in Egypt. Now let me ask you a question. Do you know that you do not belong in this world?

Do you know that you do not belong in this world? Or is this world the only hope that you got? As Paul said, if there's no life after this, we are all men most miserable. We're crazy.

[17 : 19] We're wasting our lives. We're a bunch of goons and goofballs hanging out in this place if there is no afterlife, if there is no new heaven and new earth. And if there is, we're crazy if we're living as if this is the end.

If we're driving our roots down here and all we're living for is this place. It's absolutely crazy. My family just made a 30-plus hour trip, seven plus hour trip to get here.

We went around the world. I got cheap tickets. We went from Port Elizabeth to Durban to Johannesburg to Qatar, and then we flew up to see Santa Claus and came back down to Atlanta. It was a long trip.

The plane, the airport, the lady rubbing my arm behind my seat with her nasty foot, and the food that went along with it all paled in comparison to reaching the great city of Tunnel Hill, Georgia, where I could get a pecan waffle, Tijuana's, Bojangles, and even Walmart.

I enjoyed, I endured those things for the joy that was set before me. At no place and no point did I feel whatsoever that I was at home in Qatar or Joburg or Durban or on that airplane.

[18 : 23] I was looking forward to getting my feet down. I could endure that stuff and those cheap tickets and terrible trip to get to my destination. And this world is not my home. I can serve Christ.

I can give Him my all here and now because I know that my life is a vapor. I know my life is a hand breath. I know my life is grass that sprouts up and the sun shoots and it withers away. I know that this life is very short and that Paul said in Romans 8, 18 that I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.

And so I have a traveling spirit. Joseph had a traveling spirit. He knew Egypt is not my home. Friend, do you know that this world is not your home?

I know you're in a missions-minded church. I know that this church makes one of the greatest impacts around the world for foreign missions but it's still easy to fall through the cracks here. It's easy to go through the motions. It's easy to just fall in here maybe to even give some money and act like that does the job and that doesn't do the job.

You've got to know in your heart of hearts that this world is not your home because here's what happens. Here's what happens. You can throw money at it but your children see where your heart is and then you lead them after idols in this world and that may be sports, that may be education, that may be success, whatever it is and they go chasing after these things because your heart led them there.

[19 : 43] That's where your heart is because in your heart of hearts this world is your home. And so as Joseph looked, his heart was not in Egypt. His heart was where God had promised them.

He was sure about it. In Genesis 50, 25, actually, yeah, verse 25, he took an oath of the children of Israel. He made them swear to him, you will not leave my bones in Egypt.

This was not a joke. It was not a formality. It was him living by faith. It was real to Joseph. He was sure about it. Verse 25, it says, God will surely visit you.

We see in Joseph that same hope that was in Jacob. That is the confidence that God would give them the land that he had promised early on to even Abraham. He was steadfast about it. It was his dying wish not to meet a famous person, not to eat a specific meal or to go somewhere special.

It was that his bones would not be left in Egypt. The book of Hebrews mentions his steadfast dying wish above everything else that he did. Think about that. Hebrews 11, verse 22.

[20 : 45] Listen to this. By faith, Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel and gave commandment concerning his bones. This world was not Joseph's home.

Egypt was not Joseph's home. And he had it made. Friend, is this world your home? Are you too at home in this world? Joseph had power. He had family.

He had friends. He had riches in Egypt. He spoke the language. He wore the clothing. He ate the food of the Egyptians for decades. His heart bled for the city of God.

Hebrews tells us that. That all those of Hebrews chapter 11 died in faith. They were persuaded of the promises of God. They embraced them. They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

And they desired a better country. A heavenly country. Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God for he hath prepared for them a city. God says likewise in the New Testament, 2 Peter chapter 3, that he is going to create a new heavens and a new earth.

[21 : 44] And he tells us that this whole world is going to be dissolved. That it's all going to be burnt up. And the ungodly are going to be judged. And Peter asks the question, How then shall we live in light of these things?

And he says we're to anticipate, look forward to, and live for the coming of Jesus Christ. As if this world is not our home. And if the world prolongs and the world goes on and the coronavirus doesn't kill everybody, that we're to account that that is the salvation of God.

That God is long suffering and the reason he's allowing days to go on is because he still wants people to get saved. Not for us to drive our stakes down a little bit deeper here and live a little bit more in doubt of his return.

These men like Joseph would not live in that land in this life but look for God to bring them into that land later on in the eternal city of God and the life to come.

The end of Genesis reminds us to have faith in a bodily resurrection. It reminds us to hope and to live for and to plan for the fulfilling of the promises of God.

[22 : 44] And then lastly, and I'm finished, we see the inevitable end to every man. Inevitable end to every man. In verse number 26 it says, so Joseph died being 110 years old.

They embalmed him and he was put in a coffin in Egypt. In a coffin in Egypt. You know the stat, they say the stats on death are staggering. Ten out of ten die. Joseph was a good man.

Joseph was a great man. I think he was probably tops. One of the top ones in the Bible. But the Bible says he died. We find in Genesis it started with creation and ends with a coffin. Joseph died.

Every man will die. Now come to grips with that. You know Psalm 39 I think it is. It talks about the rat race of life. And it talks about how men are disquieted in vain. They run over here and they run over there and they're doing this and doing that and sweating and stressing and can't sleep at night over business deals and all this sort of stuff.

And it says, I think if we could just see it from God's eyes we would just and we could see things as they really were. It's like this guy's over here piling up a pile of dirt and this guy over here is jealous so he's piling up a pile of dirt even bigger. And this guy over here he's running over here he's stealing dirt from this guy's pile and building his pile up even bigger and God's like it's just dirt guys.

[23 : 50] It's just dirt. You know one of the biggest factors in my life in giving my life to serve Christ in becoming a preacher and really not wanting to do something else with my life is because I heard preachers preach that my king was coming back again one day.

That's it. And I was afraid that I would be goofing off playing around when I knew that God had put a strange desire that was not a Kevin Hall desire the old Kevin in my heart to preach his word.

And I really believe that. How many of y'all believe that? Do you really believe that Jesus is coming back? Do you really believe you're going to die one day? Do you really believe that God has a new heavens and a new earth?

Man let's live for it. The inevitable end to every man you are going to die and here's a fact sooner than later you're going to die real soon. That's a fact. Joseph died just like every other man he was in Adam and he was going to die.

He had that curse upon him that sin brings into the world and death by sin so all men are going to die one day and Joseph died just like we are going to die one day.

[24 : 58] And so here are four lessons from the life of Joseph I want to leave with you this evening. I hope it was a blessing to you. Let's have a word.