



The Sermon

Dr. Steven J. Lawson

Genesis 46:28-34

"Together At Last"

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TRANSCRIPT

So I invite you to take your Bible, turn with me to Genesis chapter 46, and today we're going to be looking at the end of the chapter, verses 28 to 34. The title of this message is "Together At Last." As always, I want to begin by reading the text, then I'll pray, and then we will look carefully at what it says.

So beginning in verse 28, the word of God reads, "Now he" – referring to Jacob – "sent Judah before him to Joseph, to point out the way before him to Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen. Joseph prepared his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; as soon as he appeared before him, he fell on his neck and wept on his neck a long time. Then Israel said to Joseph, 'Now let me die, since I have seen your face, that you are still alive.' Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, 'I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and will say to him, "My brothers and my father's household, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me; and the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock; and they have brought their flocks and their herds and all that they have." When Pharaoh calls you and says, "What is your occupation?" you shall say, "Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers," that you may live in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is loathsome to the Egyptians.'" What an interesting passage of scripture. Let us go to the Lord in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, as always, as we look into Your word, we want to behold Your greatness and the awesomeness that belongs to You alone. And You have pulled back the veil and allowed us to peer into the perfections of Your character and who You are. And I pray today again that we would behold You. And as we look at Your face and look at Your providence, I ask that we would be transformed into the same image from glory to glory. So father, fill me with Your Spirit. Lay Your hand upon me for good. Use me as a tool and an instrument to minister Your word; I cannot function otherwise. And I pray for my brothers and sisters here, that You would give them eyes to see and ears to hear, a heart to believe. Father, we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

In these verses that I have just read for us we see the long-awaited reunion of Jacob with his son Joseph. It has been many years since Jacob has seen Joseph. In fact, it's been over two decades. It's been 22 years since Jacob saw his son last. And Jacob longs to see him. Joseph was only 17 years old at the time that he saw him last, and now he's 39 years old. And so his heart, no doubt, is about to jump out of his chest. He had no idea he was still alive. He had been told by his brothers that he had been eaten alive by wild animals, and he's been living with a broken heart for these last 22 years, and a broken heart that has not yet fully mended; for what could take the place of the loss of a son.

But now the day came when Jacob's son returned from their trip to Egypt, and they came and said, "Joseph is alive." He couldn't hardly believe it. But here were the wagons and here were the chariots that had brought them back, and he could see with his own eyes and the sincerity on their face that Joseph must surely be alive. And Pharaoh has sent word to "come now and be with your son and live here." And so Jacob has packed up all that he owns. He's gathered all of his family, there's some 70 of them, and they have left Canaan. They have come as far as Beersheba, and now they continue this journey. We can only imagine the anticipation in Jacob's heart to see his son Joseph whom he loves so dearly.

And so as we walk through this passage, there are four headings that I want to set before you to help us walk through this text, and the first is "the

entrance into Egypt." That's where it begins in verse 28, the entrance into Egypt. And this really continues from verse 26 and verse 27. It says in verse 26 that "they came to Egypt," in verse 27, "they came to Egypt." And so now in verse 28, here is the realization of this: "Now he sent Judah before him to Joseph."

Joseph is in Egypt. And "he" is Jacob, and he sends Judah, who has become the leading son, and he sends them ahead to be something like a guide, to be like a scout, to be able to find the path and the way to go from Beersheba down into Egypt and then into Goshen. And so Judah has gone ahead, and once he arrives there, he will let Joseph know that the entourage the, caravan, has made its arrival into Goshen.

And so we read, "They came into the land of Goshen," all seventy of them. Jacob who is aged, the aged patriarch, eleven sons, daughters, the sons' wives, grandsons, great-grandsons, they all finally arrive in the land of Goshen. And what's important for us to know at this point is that Goshen is the best part of Egypt. It's in the Nile Delta where the water supply is, the Nile River that just runs through the heart of Egypt. Now it produces the most fertile, the most lush, the most green part of Egypt, and Pharaoh has marked out for them to come live in the best part of all of Egypt. They're not going to be living out in the desert out in the parched land, they're going to be living in Goshen. This is the best zip code in all of Egypt.

And this is an expression of the goodness of God, that God has provided for them over and above and beyond what they could expect. And we learn some things here about the goodness of God, not just for Jacob's life, but for your life and my life as well. And we learn here that sometimes God's goodness in its fullest expression is delayed. It was for Jacob here; it's been delayed for 22 years. He's had to live with hurt and disappointment and discouragement and emptiness with the loss of a son for 22 years. But now is the time for God to open the floodgates and for the goodness of His hand to come gushing forth into the life of Jacob.

It will be that way in your life and in my life many times. God takes us through valleys and takes us through difficult times, but it doesn't mean that God is not good. What it means is that there is a delay in God pouring out His goodness to us. And this should encourage you, because today you may be in a season of difficulty in your life; and in no way does that mean that God is not good. No, His goodness may be just right around the corner, or it may be in a couple of years, and we have to wait and be patient.

And the other thing we learn from this is that this fullest expression of God's goodness is often unexpected. Jacob would have never dreamed that his son is still alive, and yet this has come, just dropped out of heaven almost into his lap. And God's goodness in your life and in my life is so many times unexpected, untold blessings that God continues to pour out that was not even known in the recent past. I mean, this church, for example, is an unexpected blessing, that I had no idea that God would be doing this in your life and in my life; and yet here we are.

And another thing we learned from this is that God's goodness often comes through secondary means. God is actually using Pharaoh who is an unbeliever to bring about goodness in Jacob's life and in the life of his family. And God may work through an unsaved employer, God may work through an unconverted parent, God may work through and an unsaved physician to bring goodness into your life; but that's how God works. God usually works through secondary means to usher in His blessing to our lives. And that's what we see in verse 28. So this is the entrance to Egypt.

The second thing that I want you to note as this unfolds is "the embrace of Joseph" in verse 29, because the great moment has now come. It's been 22 years, as I've already said, since Jacob saw Joseph and since Joseph saw Jacob. And putting ourselves into both of their sandals, "Will they recognize one another?" I mean, Joseph was 17 years old. Now he's married, he has children, he's 39 years old. The last time Jacob saw Joseph he probably had some peach fuzz on his chin, and now he's grown up to be a mature man, and now perhaps a few wrinkles in the forehead. And will Joseph recognize Jacob, who's now much older; and no doubt, with age comes some change in just even facial appearance.

And so we read in verse 29 this grand moment, "Joseph prepared his chariot." He's received the word from Judah, who's gone out ahead, to be the forerunner that they are now arriving in Goshen. And as soon as Joseph receives the word, he immediately prepares his chariot. Literally this word "prepared" means to harness, and it gives us the idea here that Joseph, who always has servants attending to his needs, and he would just speak the word and they would go prepare whatever he needs.

In this instance, Joseph is so sitting on ready, he prepares his own chariot. He's living in a palace, and he arises from wherever he is in the palace and he goes immediately to the carriage stall, to the chariot stall, and harnesses his own chariot, which is a royal chariot, by the way, probably gold-encrusted, and probably some insignia on it designating him as the Prime Minister of Egypt. He's the Chief Executive Officer, he's the Chief Financial Officer, he's the Chief Operating Officer, all in one package. He is running the entire Egyptian dynasty, he is second command to Pharaoh, and Pharaoh has given him the keys to the car; he's turned the whole nation over to Joseph.

But here we read that he prepared his own chariot, because he's so anxious and excited, to be able to take off as fast as he can; and as he does, no doubt, making his journey now short distance to Goshen, there would be other wagons around him, because he would always need security, and helpers on hand, and there would be runners who would be running alongside his chariots to attend to every need, to provide protection. And as he makes his way, we read, "He went up to Goshen" – he ascended some elevation or he went slightly north – "to meet his father Israel."

Now what strikes me is there's seventy of them – I mean, his eleven brothers, their eleven wives, their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren. But it says he wants to meet his father. He has his heart set on his father. He is going to meet his father. And it speaks of the deep, deep affection that he has for his father Jacob.

And we read, "As soon as he appeared before him," – as soon as he approaches Jacob, as soon as he sees him, we read – "he fell on his neck." Now we need to understand what's going on here. The word "fell," I looked it up: *naphal*. It means to fall prostrate, or to fall upon someone or something. And so the idea is as he comes in the chariot, which elevates him, and Jacob would be standing on the ground, he literally leaps out of the chariot and falls down onto his father and fell on his neck. He throws himself around his father's neck and embraces him and hugs him and drapes himself all around him and hangs on to Jacob. This is an extraordinary moment in redemptive history.

And we read, "and he wept." The word "wept" here, I looked it up, and it means to weep bitterly with loud cries. He's just openly sobbing and bewailing with tears that just come gushing out of the fountain of his eyes. And it says, "he wept on his neck," because he won't let go of his father's neck. He just keeps him in a bear hug and just weeps and cries on his neck, until his neck is drenched with Joseph's tears, and they're running down onto his shoulders and down his back.

And then we read the last three words of verse 29, "a long time." It's just one word in the original Hebrew and it just means basically again and again and again and again. He can't stop crying. It's like a river that's been dammed up for many years and the force is just increasing and the water level is rising until the dam is removed, and then there's almost a tsunami of water that is unleashed. This pent up emotion inside of Joseph has been dammed up and has been held back until this grand moment, and it is as if the clouds are pouring down tears out of his eyes and onto the neck of his father Jacob.

And I also wants you to note here that "no words are spoken," according to this text. None were needed. Joseph, no doubt, is so full of emotion and, really, so choked up, and his feelings are so deep, that he can't even get words to come out of his mouth. If he did, his voice would be cracking and of a high pitch. And his emotions are just running sky high, and all he can do is just hug his father, and hug his father, and weep over his father, and hug him some more, and not let go of his father. What a moment this is.

Let me tell you what I love about this scene. I mean, we love so many things about this, a son loving his father. But what I love about this is that Joseph has risen to a position of great prominence in Egypt – I've already told you this. He is the Prime Minister of Egypt, he is second in command only to Pharaoh, and he has far exceeded his father in success in the eyes of the world. He's come from a humble background, and now he has risen to the top of the mightiest nation in the known world.

And Jacob, whom he's hugging, is a shepherd. He's a lowly shepherd. He's a lowly, wandering shepherd. And Joseph could have had his nose in the air. Joseph spends his time with Pharaoh. Joseph has new friends in high places. Joseph has elevated to the very top into the pinnacle of the social order of the of the day, and Joseph could have had no time for his less sophisticated father. He could have been standoffish with his less than successful father. Joseph could have been embarrassed, as Joseph is now dressed, no doubt as the custom of the day, with the aristocracy. He would have been dressed in pure white linen. He's been living in a palace. He has waves of servants all around him. He eats off of the best plates and he eats the best food, and he has silver adornments all around him, and here is his entourage around him. And now here is his family and here is his father.

He could have been somewhat standoffish. He could have been arrogant and haughty. But instead, his love for his father transcends all social barriers, and he threw his arms around his father publicly in front of everyone and just wept like a baby and just cried. And because Joseph loved his father, he honored his father. And this is before Moses even received the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:12 to "honor your father and mother." This is already in the heart of Joseph. And he is honoring his father, when others might have been embarrassed, might have pulled back at arm's length.

There's something for us to learn here. And what I want to have to say doesn't apply to everyone in this room, but it applies to some in this room. Do not move to Dallas and get a big time job with a big salary and forget where you came from. You're not that good, OK. I love you and I'm telling you the truth. Do not become so bigtime that you're too big for your

britches to be able to spend time with your family, that may not have gone up the ladder like you have gone up in an affluent city like Dallas, with lots of things, opportunities going on. And now you've got new friends, and maybe you've got some successful friends, and you like kind of riding that wave. Do not forget to honor your father and your mother and love them, and remember your roots and remember where you came from, and do not have your nose in the air or be embarrassed about your hard-working father and mother. That's not intended for everyone in this room today, but it's very much needed by some.

So, that's the embrace of Joseph. And if you have parents that are still alive, you need to embrace them as long as you have the opportunity, as long as they're still alive.

Now the third thing I want you to see as we come to verse 30 is "the elation of Jacob." So how does Jacob respond to this somewhat emotional meltdown of Joseph? So we read in verse 30, "Then Israel said to Joseph, 'Now let me die.'" What a strange thing to say. "I just got here, the party just started. Now let me die, since I have seen your face, that you're still alive."

What does this mean? It means this: Jacob is saying, "I can now die a happy man." Jacob is a man who has his priorities in order, and what is most important to him is his relationships and with his loved ones. And he says, "I can now die a happy man. I can now go to my grave without regrets and without wondering why."

He now sees his son, and everything is restored. And here's what's interesting: Jacob will live for another 17 years. So it's not like he has one foot in the grave. It's not like Joseph is coming to see him in the hospital and he's in ICU and he's on his deathbed. No, he's going to live for another 17 years. "The big picture for my life: I can now die a happy man."

So let me ask you a very personal question. What would it take for you to die happy? Would it be to see a loved one come to faith in Christ? Would it

be to see a loved one walking with the Lord? Would it be to see a loved one serving the Lord and investing their life wisely? What would it take for you to die happy? Whatever that is, you need to be praying for it right now.

Now this leads us finally to number four in verse 31, "the examination before Pharaoh." And what Joseph will now do is prepare Jacob and his family for their meeting with Pharaoh. So he's going to prepare the seventy for when they're brought up to Pharaoh's palace and they stand before him. I mean, this is like going into Buckingham Palace and you have an audience with Queen Elizabeth before she passed away, and you would be prepared for what would be the protocol and how you should act in front of the queen. So verses 31-34 is something like that, "It's the preparation for your appearance before Pharaoh, that you will do well."

So in verse 31, "Joseph said to his brothers," - the eleven - "and to his father's household," - and he will now give them this advice for when they will be summoned, he explains to them - 'I will go up and tell Pharaoh and say to him, "My brothers and my brothers' household, who are in the land of Canaan, have come to me.'" So he's saying, "Here's what's about to happen. I'm going to leave and I'm going to go back to Pharaoh and I'm going to tell him you're now here," - and remember, it was Pharaoh who had sent for them to come, so this is not a total surprise to Pharaoh; the only question is, "When will they come?" - "and I'm going to let him know that you are now here."

And then he says in verse 32, "and the men" - which are his brothers - "are shepherds, for they are keepers of the livestock; and they have brought their flocks and herds and all that they have." Now the importance of verse 32, the end of verse 32 especially, is two things, when he says, "they brought their flocks and they brought their herds," two things. Number one, that is saying to Pharaoh that this is a permanent move. They have loaded up everything. They've locked the door and thrown the key away and left their old dwelling place and they have brought everything with them now down to Egypt, down to flocks and herds. This is a permanent move, this is not a weekend getaway, this is not a week-long vacation, they're here to stay.

And the second thing that it says to Pharaoh is that these are hard-working men. "They're not here for a handout. They're not wanting to live off of Egyptian subsidy. They've brought their flocks and they've brought their herds, and they work hard and they have brought all that they have. And so as they come here to live among us, they're not here as leeches, they're not here to skim it off the top, they just want to place where their herds and their livestock can graze, and they're going to get out in the field and they're going to work." And we are reminded here of the virtue of hard work.

We are created in the image of God. And being created in the image of God, part of that is that there is a dignity to work. God is a working God; and if we're going to be like God, that means we're going to be working, whether it's at work or at home or at church or wherever that is. And God works every moment of every day. We go to sleep, God remains awake. "He who watches over Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep," the psalmist says.

And, "God is causing all things to work together for good to those who love Him, called according to His purpose." God is, every moment of every day, administrating the universe and overseeing the affairs of providence and answering prayers, and calling sinners out of darkness to light, and imputing the righteousness of Christ into those who believe and sustaining their faith. Every moment of every day God is building His church, and "the gates of hades will not prevail against it." God is constantly working.

And we need to be reminded that there is dignity in work, and that there is a virtue to work. And even if you are retired, you still have work to do: work in serving the Lord, work on your knees in prayer, work at the church as a volunteer. "God has foreordained good works for us to walk in," Ephesians 2:10. And as long as you are breathing on this earth there is still work that God has assigned you to do.

Years ago John Piper wrote an excellent book called *Don't Waste Your Life*. It rocked a generation. And I remember on the back of that book there's like

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a little scene on the back of the book jacket of a retired couple. The man had been very successful, and he was able to cash out. And so they've moved to Florida, and they're seated on a beach at the ocean, and he holds up a seashell to his wife and says, "See my seashell." And that's what they're living for, that's their life: "See my seashell."

There's nothing wrong with going to the beach and there's nothing wrong with having a vacation, there's nothing wrong with holding up a seashell. What's wrong is that your life, you think you can retire and that there's nothing left on this earth to do to serve the King of kings and the Lord of lords. You think that the gospel has reached everybody, you think the whole world is converted, you think that everything's been done that's going to happen? No.

And so there is virtue in work. And as Joseph will go up to Pharaoh, he wants him to know, "No, they have their flocks, they have their herds. They're not looking for a handout, they're going to work while they're here."

Verse 33, "When Pharaoh calls you and says, 'What is your occupation?' - that's a reasonable question to ask. Whenever I meet someone for the first time, especially a man, I will usually say, "So what do you do for a living? What is your occupation?" It's a way of beginning conversation. And so Joseph knows Pharaoh, and he's, no doubt, been in the inner circle of many power meetings with people maybe from other lands, kings, and royalty who have come to call upon Pharaoh, and he knows what question Pharaoh's going to ask: "So what is your occupation?" because it's very important what you do.

"You shall say," - this is how you answer the question to Pharaoh - "you shall say, 'Your servants.'" Now let's just stop right there. "Your servants." It's really poorly translated, to be honest. It should be "slaves." It's the Hebrew word *ebed*, which means a slave, which is lower than a servant. "You are to present yourself with great humility, as one who is here to not be a part of the problem, but to be a part of the solution to whatever

problem there is here; and we are under your governance, and we are here to serve your best interests."

That's what you need to say to your employer. That's what you need to say to others who are in authority over you. That's what you need to say to those who are under you: "I'm your servant." Remember, God is opposed to the proud, He gives grace to the humble." It's 1 Peter 5:5. It's also quoted in James 4, I think it's verse 6, which is quoted out of Proverbs 3. "Present yourself when you're standing in front of Pharaoh as 'your servants.' You will be living under his authority; let him know that. You will not be a threat to him, you will exist to make him successful. 'Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth even until now.'"

Now that's important also because that lets him know that they're not bouncing around from one job to another to another to another and like their agenda is like a five-page handout where they've had ten jobs in five years. "No, we've been doing the same thing since our youth, all the way back," - in fact, it says - "both we and our fathers." This goes back generations: "When we put our shoulder to a plow, we stay after it. And we're not looking for doing something else. We're not daydreaming about being someplace else and having something else going on." And by the way, you know why the grass is greener on the other side of the fence; there's more manure on the other side of the fence, OK, that's why. "No, we we've been keepers of livestock from our youth. We persevere, we work with endurance. We don't just start a job and leave it undone or half finished. No, we do a turnkey job, and we are keepers of livestock, even from our youth. We are dependable."

"You need to convey this" - because it's the truth - "to Pharaoh," - and he adds - "that you may live in the land of Goshen. He will allow you to remain in Goshen, which is the best of the best of the best land, if he knows that you're a hard worker and you've brought your own livestock, then he's going to let you have this land." Now there's no substitute for telling the truth; and they've told him the truth - or they will tell him the truth when they have that opportunity. And so they're being coached right now by Joseph, "This is how you will speak to Pharaoh."

Now at the end of verse 34 is an interesting little way to end this chapter, and it's been a little bit of an enigma, and I'm going to try to help us understand what this means. He ends verse 34 by saying, "for every shepherd is loathsome to the Egyptians." Now the word "loathsome" is a Hebrew word, it's a very vivid, graphic Hebrew word, and it means abominable, abhorrent, disgusting. So if there's anything the Egyptians look down on with absolute disgust and disdain it is shepherds.

So what is the meaning in this context? I mean shepherds have always been looked down upon. And that was a part of what's going on in Luke's account when the angels appear to the shepherds, "And glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will with men with whom He's pleased." The good news first came to shepherds. They're not even allowed to testify in court. I mean, they are the lowest of the low of the ancient world; and that's who the gospel came to that night.

But here in this context, what does this mean, "Every shepherd is loathsome"? Well, it's one of two possibilities, and it may even be both; and let's try to understand this, that shepherds would be loathsome to Egyptians, number one, because what is to be implied here is these shepherds are non-Egyptian shepherds who cross the border unlawfully to graze their herds on Egyptian land. They're trespassers. "You have no permission to be here, and you're grazing on our land." In essence, "You're thieves. You're stealing. You've entered our country unlawfully, and you now have the benefit of our country that we have worked hard to provide. And so those who are freeloaders, those who come in unlawfully, those who have no permission to graze their flocks on our land, it's abominable." That's the first possibility. And that would be true.

The second possibility of what this means is that shepherds take care of what? Sheep. And sheep are often used for sacrificial offerings on an altar to be offered to God, whosever god you're offering it to, and it will be a part of false pagan worship in the eyes of the Egyptians.

And in the next book, Exodus 8 – don't turn to it – but Exodus 8:22-26, Moses actually says that it was abominable to the Egyptians, because offering sacrifices to God represented false worship. And so the shepherds would be look down upon, disdained, because they are providing the shepherds that would be used to be offered to God that the Egyptians believe is abominable to worship that God. Whichever one of those two, or both, is the best that Bible scholars are able to come up with; I report, you decide.

So what should we learn from this? Well, how important it is to have given forethought when you have a meeting that's about to come that you don't go in unprepared and just spontaneously off the top of your head begin to talk, that you have already lined up what you will say and how you will say it, if you are wise, and if you are to be effective. And it would be very unwise to be unprepared when you go in to speak to whoever this person is with whom you have a need to be in communication with or you need something from them. I mean, we certainly learn here of the need to be prepared. And so as you would have business meetings, as you would have encounters with your children, as you would have opportunities to talk to others, at the very least, we learn here, it is wise, as Joseph shows here, to coach people and help them be prepared for the meeting that is at hand.

Now as we wrap this up, I want to help you be prepared for a meeting that you have. Just as Joseph helped his family be prepared to stand before Pharaoh, I want to coach you up, I want to help you, because you have a big meeting, a really big meeting coming up, a meeting with God. And everyone in this room, whether you're a believer or an unbeliever, every one of us has a date with destiny and with Deity, with God, and you're going to stand before God one day. And there is an old question, diagnostic question, that came out of Evangelism Explosion years ago that D. James Kennedy came up with in witnessing that when you die and you stand before God, and He says, "Why should I let you into heaven?" what would you say? Well let me tell you what don't say, all right.

Don't say this: "You should let me into heaven because I'm a very morally good person." Don't say because you went to Trinity Bible Church. Don't

say because you grew up in a Christian home, or you went to a Christian school. And don't say that you've been baptized. Don't say, "Because I have given my resources and my time for the service of others." None of those will be acceptable when you have your day to stand before God regarding your admission into heaven. In fact, Jesus said that, "Many will say unto Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name? Didn't we preach a lot, and didn't we cast out demons? Didn't we perform many wondrous works?' And I will say unto them in that day, 'Depart from Me, you who work iniquity; I never knew you.'" Yeah, we need a nursery back there. You will be expelled from the gates of glory if that is your answer.

So what is the right answer? Because I want it to go well for you in that day. I want that to be your best day, the best day that you have ever had as a human being. So here is the answer that you need to give. You ready? "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Savior of sinners, the Lord of heaven and earth. And I believe that He lived a sinless and perfect life in my place, and He has lived the life that I could have never lived. He lived a perfect life in my place. And He went to the cross and He died in my place. And there upon the cross, all of my sins were transferred to Him, and Him who knew no sin, God made to be sin for me; that He shed His blood, He made the only atonement for my sin; and that he was taken down from the cross, and He was buried, and He was raised on the third day, and He is seated at the right hand, Father, where You are; and I have committed my life to Him. I bring nothing of any good works, I bring nothing of any morality, I bring only my faith in Christ." And at that moment the gates of paradise will swing wide open, and the Father who's the Judge will say, "Enter into the joy of My kingdom."

Have you said that? Have you committed your life to Jesus Christ? There is no other Savior and there is no other hope. But if you will entrust your life and your soul to Him, it will go well for you in that day when you appear before God.

What will it be like in that day when you stand before God? I want it to go well for you. Believe in Jesus Christ alone, and it will be the greatest day of your life. Let's pray.

[Prayer] Father in heaven, we do ask now that the words that have been preached would find deep lodging within our hearts and souls and that it would bring much good into our lives, that You would take from what has been said today from this passage and that You would cause it to work for good. Make us more like Christ, in Jesus' name. Amen.