

THE LIFE OF JOSEPH – SERMON 21

FINISHING ON THE RIGHT NOTE

Genesis 47:27-48:22

INTRODUCTION

- In these closing chapters of Genesis, the focus turns back to Jacob, his final words to his sons and his burial.
- At the age of 147, he's come to the end; and despite all his flaws and failings, he finishes on the right note.
- In Genesis 47:29-31, Joseph is called by Jacob to perform the firstborn's role of organizing his father's burial.
- Note Jacob's wisdom in preparing everything in his family before his departure.
- He attends diligently to spiritual matters as well as to physical.
- Two whole chapters deal with Jacob's deathbed pronouncements.
- Chapter 48 is a private meeting with Joseph and his sons, then chapter 49 involves all of Jacob's sons.
- Jacob reveals to us the state of his heart just prior to his departure, and usually this is what happens at the end of one's life; all is stripped bare, and those things that truly matter to the person come forth.

Jacob shows us four characteristics of a life that has finished on the right note.

I. BELIEVE IN GOD'S PROMISES (3-7)

A. Because of who God is

1. "God Almighty" – *El Shaddai* – "the all sufficient God"

2. Jacob was able to trust in God's promises because of who God is
 3. God's word is sure (Psalms 19:7; Matthew 24:35)
- B. Bring others to trust in God's word
1. Jacob related God's promises to his son and grandsons so that they too would believe in them
 2. Parents are commanded to pass on the word of God to their children and grandchildren (Deuteronomy 6:6-7; cf. 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15)
 3. Jacob adopted Ephraim and Manasseh as his own sons
 4. Joseph took the place of the firstborn, seeing that Reuben had forfeited it (1 Chronicles 5:1-2)

II. BLESS OTHERS WITH GOD'S PRIVILEGES (8-20,22)

- A. "Blessing" is a main theme of this chapter (9,15,16,20)
1. This was a solemn ceremony that began with the question, "Who are these?"
 2. Manasseh and Ephraim would have been in their twenties
- B. God's blessing is not always material (16)
1. Jacob wanted his grandsons to have his name, as well as Abraham's and Isaac's names upon them.
 2. He wanted them to be under the covenant blessings that he enjoyed.
- C. God's blessing may not be the way we expect (14,17-19)
1. Ephraim, the second born, received the greater blessing
 - a. Ephraim was more numerous than Manasseh (Numbers 1:32-33, 35; 2:18, 20).

- b. Ephraim is listed before Manasseh (Psalm 80:2)
 - c. The great leader Joshua came from the tribe of Ephraim (Numbers 13:8)
 - d. The tribe of Manasseh was divided, half on one side of Jordan and half on the other, which weakened it (Deuteronomy 3:13; Joshua 13:7)
 - e. Ephraim became the prominent tribe in the northern kingdom so that the name Ephraim became a metonymy for Israel
2. God often passed over the first-born and blessed the second-born
 3. God blesses the second birth (John 3:3-7)
 4. Often we don't see blessing the way God sees it

D. We can bless others through our testimony

1. A testimony of God's redemption (16; Job 19:25; Psalms 19:14; 107:2; Revelation 5:9)
2. A testimony of God's care (15; Psalms 23:1; Philippians 4:19)
3. A testimony of God's goodness (11)

III. BOW TO GOD IN PRAISE (Hebrews 11:21)

A. Jacob final hours were spent in worship

1. The word "worship" has the sense of "worth" and being "worthy"
2. Men generally die as they lived
3. Jacob, for all his infirmities, led a life of devout worship

B. Worship takes focus away from self

C. Don't wait to worship

1. Even with his sons and grandsons with him, Jacob paused to worship God

IV. BASK IN GOD'S PEACE (21)

A. The righteous have peace, even in death

1. Jacob simply says, "Behold, I die."
2. The death of God's saints is precious (Psalm 116:15)
3. The ungodly desire to die as the righteous die (Numbers 23:10)

B. God's presence brings peace

1. "God shall be with you" (John 14:18)

C. Faith in God's promises bring peace

1. "And bring you again unto the land of your fathers." (cf. John 14:1-3, 27)

CONCLUSION

1. As mortal beings we are all "appointed once to die" (Hebrews 9:27)
2. Yet most people in the world do not prepare for their departure
3. On what sort of note will you end your life?
4. Will it be with regrets, doubts and fears?
5. Or will it be with blessings, worship and peaceful assurance?
6. What will be the legacy you leave behind to your posterity?
7. What will be your reception before God's throne when you give account for life God gave you?