

God's Generational Blessings (13)

The Life of Joseph

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We turn in God's word this morning to Genesis 48. For those who are visitors, I've been preaching a series on the life of Joseph, and I saw when looking at this text that it fit well with the administration of baptism that we witnessed this morning because we look here at the covenant promise of God in the generations, and that God is a God who works in the generations, and that's brought out here on the deathbed of Jacob as he blesses the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh. The text this morning will be the entire chapter, Genesis 48.

1 And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. 2 And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. 3 And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, 4 And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession. 5 And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. 6 And thy issue, which thou begettest after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance. 7 And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem. 8 And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these? 9 And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. 10 Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them. 11 And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed. 12 And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. 13 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his

left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him. 14 And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn. 15 And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, 16 The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. 17 And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. 18 And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head. 19 And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. 20 And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh. 21 And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. 22 Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

Thus far we read God's word.

Let's pray now and ask God's blessing on the preaching.

Our Father which art in heaven, we've come this morning to hear the preaching of the gospel, and we are thankful that we may hear this word of thy faithfulness in the line of generations, that thou art a God who works in the generations. We pray that thou wilt use this word to comfort us. We can easily take for granted that thou art a God who saves our children and their children as well; may we never take this for granted but know that this is a gift of thy grace, and may this word, then, encourage us as we train and teach the next generation in the church. Give strength to thy servant that he may bring this word in truth, that I may glorify and honor thy great name and declare thy covenant greatness and faithfulness. All this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

What is the greatest desire that we have for our children and our grandchildren? Our greatest desire is that they walk before God. That's a phrase that we find here in the text as Jacob talks about his fathers, they walked before God. And as a father himself, that was the desire that he had for his children, and as parents and grandparents, is that not the great desire that we have for the generations that follow us, that they would walk before God as we do and as the generations before have done? And what that means is what we desire for them is that the gospel that we teach them at home and that they are taught at school, and that they're taught in the Catechism classes in the church, that that gospel

they are taught is internalized, that they would know that God loves them, that they would have in their hearts a love for God, who desire that they would know what it means in their lives to trust in God no matter what hardships and difficulties they may face in their lives. We desire that they live, these children, grandchildren, that they live in friendship with God and that they know that they are saved from their sins in the blood of Jesus Christ. And because that's our great desire, we train them and teach them in the things of God and his word. We send them to the Christian schools which will open their doors soon because we desire that the education they receive would be consistent with what we teach in our homes. We're going to prepare them and send them to the Catechism classes ready there to learn the truth of God's word because we want them to have that instruction and to live out of that truth in their lives.

We discipline them and instruct them in our own homes. We have family worship on a regular basis. We read the Bible stories to our kids. We sing together in our homes all because we want that next generation to know the truth of God's word and walk before God, but the question that follows is what is our confidence that that next generation will walk before God, will know the gospel, will know God's love, will love God in their lives? Our confidence is not in ourselves and our ability to teach because the instruction we give is done in much weakness, and along with that, we cannot change their hearts, we cannot work in their hearts, we cannot make our children and grandchildren internalize the gospel of Jesus Christ. And so the confidence is not placed in us, our confidence rests in God and his promises. Our confidence rests in the God who works generationally. We've seen that already in the life of Joseph. We've looked at that blessed truth that God is a God who works generationally, and now this is what comes out as Jacob is lying on his deathbed at the end of his life and he knows his time to have an impact upon his sons and upon their sons and their children, is coming to an end. His confidence does not rest at all in himself but instead it rests in the goodness and the faithfulness of God.

That's what we find here. Jacob is on his deathbed not in the Promised Land but in Egypt. Far away from the Promised Land. And the generations are going to be there in Egypt for about 400 years yet, and the question is what will happen to them? How will they live? Will they walk before God in this land of Egypt and in this Egyptian culture? Will they walk before God with the mess that was found in Jacob's family? That's the question and the answer to that is, yes. Why? Not because Jacob could somehow make up for the mess he had made, or his sons could make up for the messes that they had made, but it's because of the covenant faithfulness of God because he is a God who sends blessings in the line of generations. And that's what comes out in this passage, God's generational blessings. That's the aspect of God's covenant that we look at this morning and that's revealed here in this part of the life of Joseph as Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, were blessed by Jacob and in that they were blessed by God. And so this is a word that encourages us to put our trust in God and God alone for the generations that come in the church.

So we look this morning at "God's Generational Blessings." That's our theme. Notice first, the confidence expressed by Jacob. He did express a wonderful confidence here in

the text. Secondly, notice that that's based on the truth of God, theological truth, and that's what comes out in verses 15 and 16, we learn about God here. And then, thirdly, we see the future hope that is ours. As Jacob lies on his deathbed, he blesses Joseph by blessing Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. We see here a generational blessing that is given, a blessing that is handed down from one generation to another, and in this blessing that Jacob gives to the two sons of Joseph, we see here, we read here of the blessing that God gives in the line of generations.

Now this is something that's not familiar to us and something that we don't do in this way but that's because of the birthright blessing, as that was focused on the coming of Christ, and that's what this blessing that we read of in Genesis 48 is part of. It's part of the birthright blessing that we read of in the Old Testament. And there are two surprising things about this blessing that was given by Jacob to the two sons of Joseph. The first surprise is that the birthright blessing is split now between two of Jacob's sons. Here's what I mean by that. The birthright blessing included two things, there was a spiritual aspect and a physical aspect to the birthright blessing in the Old Testament. The physical aspect was this: the son who received the birthright blessing received a double portion of his father's possessions. So that was the physical aspect, a double portion of his father's possessions. The spiritual aspect was this: it was a promise that the Messiah would be born in the line of generations. Before this time, the spiritual and the physical went together. Isaac and Jacob, they received the physical and the spiritual aspect of that birthright blessing. There was the promise that the Messiah would come from their line and their seed, and along with that they received the double portion of their father's possessions. But now here Jacob splits the birthright blessing, and he does that according to the will of God. This is what God wants to be done. We don't read otherwise here in the passage. And so what happens is that on the one hand, Jacob gives the physical aspect of the birthright blessing to Joseph, to his two sons, and he gives the spiritual aspect of that birthright blessing to Judah because from Judah would come Shiloh, we read of that in chapter 49, that Shiloh, which is another name of Christ, a prophecy of Christ. But to Joseph by means of his two sons, he was given the physical aspect of this blessing. He receives the double blessing. It's given to Ephraim and Manasseh. The double blessing is given to Joseph's two sons so that they will each receive an equal inheritance in the land of Canaan, an inheritance that would be equal to what their uncles received. So it wasn't that Joseph received one blessing equal to his brothers, and then that was split. No, Ephraim and Manasseh received territory in the land of Canaan equal to their uncles, the brothers of Joseph.

So this was the double blessing that was given by Jacob to Ephraim and Manasseh and God did this through Jacob for the coming of the Messiah, that's part of it. It's all part of the history and you read on in the history of the Old Testament how Ephraim is involved in that, and Manasseh is involved with that. God was using this blessing for the coming of the Messiah Jesus Christ. So that's the first thing that's surprising, Jacob splits the blessing. The second thing that's surprising is that Jacob purposely crosses his hands when he blesses his grandsons. Joseph had it all thought out. His father's 147 years old and in his old age he doesn't see so well. Joseph knew that so he lined up his sons appropriately to receive this blessing from his father. He put Manasseh so that he would

come under the right hand of Jacob because he was the older son, and then he put Ephraim so that he would come under the left hand of Jacob and receive that blessing. But when those two sons come near, Joseph brings them close and Jacob is ready to put out his hands, he doesn't put them out like this, he puts them out like this, he crosses them and he puts his left hand on Manasseh and his right hand upon Ephraim, the hand was supposed to be upon the older son and he blesses in that way. And we read there, this morning, that Joseph tried to correct his father. "Dad, no, that's the wrong way. Manasseh is on your right. Ephraim is on your left. I brought them to you in the right way." And Jacob says, "No. This is God's will. It's meant to be the other way." It's meant to be the other way, so that Ephraim will be the greater of the two sons and the tribe of Israel as well. In this way Ephraim and Manasseh received this blessing from God, we read of that in verse 19, "his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations."

So those are two surprising things about this blessing. As we see this blessing that was given, we must see as well the confidence, the confidence, the trust that Jacob had as he gave this blessing, and that's what stands out in this history because of the New Testament commentary that we have on this in Hebrews 11. Hebrews 11:21, the outstanding passage in the New Testament on faith. Almost every verse begins by faith or faith, and it has to do with the faith of God's people in the Old Testament. We read that in verse 21 as well, "By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph." This blessing was given by Jacob in faith, in confidence, trusting the promises of God, trusting those promises even as he was dying.

Let's understand really how amazing that is and understand what that faith is, that faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen, as we read in Hebrews 11:1. It's not about what we see. Jacob's confidence was not in what he saw at that moment because if his confidence rested on what he saw, there would be no confidence. Just consider that, consider where Joseph is at now at the end of his life and the things that have happened in his life. This was a difficult promise for Jacob to believe that God would continue to work in the generations. It was a difficult promise for Jacob to believe from a human point of view because of where they were at. They're now in the land of Egypt. They're not in the Promised Land. They've been brought down to the land of Egypt in this time of great famine, but what that means is that there's a generation in his family that's growing up that does not remember life in the Promised Land of Canaan. Understand that. That's alarming, no doubt, for Jacob at the end of his life. There's a generation growing up that doesn't remember the experience of living in the Promised Land of Canaan, and the dangers that they would forget about the Promised Land of Canaan, that they would get comfortable in the land of Egypt. And now they're living in this land of wickedness and sin, idolatry is practiced here in this land of Egypt and the question is will the people of Israel, his sons and his daughters and their generations, eventually be absorbed into the culture of Egypt? We've seen that danger already, but think of how real this must have been for Jacob at the end of his life.

He knows he's going to die, but what's going to happen to the generations that follow? But there's something more to it than that. Jacob, no doubt, remembers the wickedness in his family, the wickedness that we've seen as we've looked at the life of Joseph. His sons, except for Joseph and probably Benjamin, his sons for a majority of their lives lived in awful wickedness. Remember what they were before God changed them. They were murderers, and they were thieves, and they were liars. When they wanted to kill Joseph and then changed their plan and instead sold him as a slave into Egypt, when they wanted to kill Joseph, remember that was not out of character for these guys. That's the kind of men they were, cold-blooded killers they were, thieves who would rob others of their things, liars. They lied to their father for 22 years about their brother saying he was dead when they had sold him as a slave into Egypt. If we had sons like that, children like that even though they were changed but who lived the majority of life that way, brought up their children in that, we would wonder what about those generations? What about those generations after who saw all that wickedness and sin. And then if that's not enough, think about this for Jacob at the end of his life: he knew he had contributed to this mess. He had walked in sin. He showed favoritism to Joseph. He had created a culture of jealousy and envy in his own home with the marriages to his wives, as well. What a mess there was in his own family.

Now the question is what will happen in the line of generations? But that's not all Jacob saw, he saw amazing things too. He saw the change in his own sons. Now he did get to see Joseph again. He saw the change in his own sons. God had changed them, turning them from their wickedness and sin, and now they're living in obedience before God. But yet here he is at the end of his life and why does he believe the promises of God when he sees all of this wickedness and sin and all kinds of dangers for his children and their children? Well, it's because Jacob believes the promises of God. What are those promises? Well, he believes the promises that were given to his fathers, to Abraham and to Isaac. We think of the promise given in Genesis 17. We read part of that this morning in the baptism form. But there's more to that, beginning of verse 4, Genesis 17, "As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." What a beautiful promise. Jacob knew it. He knew it. What he knew is that God promised to send this seed of the covenant, and that God would use the generations to accomplish that, the generations in his own family. Yes, Judah, which is the direct line of Christ through David, but more than that, that he would use his sons and their children's children to be part of the church that would be saved and redeemed by Jesus Christ.

He trusted in God and the promises of God, so it's not about sight. That's not what faith is. It's not about what we see. It's about the promises of God. That's what faith trusts in, it trusts in the unfailing plan of God, the unfailing plan of God that is revealed by God and that we have revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures. It's a plan that centers on Jesus Christ. He is the very heart and the core and the center of the plan of God and Jacob knew that.

Jacob believed that. God promised to send this Messiah and he promised to send that Messiah from his line and from his seed, and this Messiah would bear the sins of his people so that they would have life and fellowship with God. He believes that but Jacob knows, too, and this is important for us to understand, that many times that plan of God is surprising to us. It's surprising to us and because of that, we have to remember not to manipulate God's plan, think that we have it figured out and try to accomplish it ourselves. You see, that's what Joseph was trying to do. Remember Jacob, he crosses his hands. We learn something from the crossing of the hands there, it doesn't always go as planned, but that's not surprising because, remember, it was Jacob and not Esau, Jacob and not Esau that was this line. And you find that in the new. Testament, too. How surprising are some of the things we read there that Saul of Tarsus, who is the chief persecutor of the church, becomes Paul the apostle who preaches the gospel of grace to the Gentiles.

There's so many surprises in this plan of God and the way it's worked out, and that's what we have to see and understand, too. It's not according to our logic and our standards. We have to see and know that in our lives, too, it doesn't always go as planned. Think about what happened in Jacob's own family, the mess that was there. You would think that all hope is lost for the generations that follow in the family of Jacob. But it's not. In fact, God uses the very sin, the very sin of those brothers for the accomplishing of his purpose. So also in our lives there may be awful hardships, abuses as Joseph was abused, difficulties that we couldn't imagine, awful sins that are committed in homes, in families, and yet the hope and comfort we have is the unfailing plan of God to always accomplish his purpose generationally in the line of generations, and nothing, nothing can stop that work of God. We see that. We see that in the line of Christ. Nothing could stop Christ from coming, nothing can stop either God gathering his church in the line of generations.

Jacob believed that. That was his confidence and that was based on theological truth. It's based on what God had done in the past. We find that in verses 15 and 16 Jacob, when he blesses Ephraim and Manasseh, his hands are resting on their heads, what does he speak about to them? He speaks about God and the great things that God had done. You see, he looks back, he's not all consumed with the future. We know that. We know how that goes. The questions start running through our heads, all kinds of questions. What if this happens? What if that happens? This is happening, but what does that mean and how is that going to affect the future? We're always thinking about the future but Jacob in his life here teaches us, no, before you're going to look at the future and ask questions about the future, first look to the past. And not just look at the past in general, but look at the past in regard to what God has done. See what God has done in the past in the generations to see and understand what God will do in the future in the generations.

And so that's what Jacob does here in the passage, and notice there are three things that he says about God here. And if you have an outline with you, I have those in italics, those are direct quotes from the text. These are the three things that we want to look at and see what these things teach us about God. First of all, as Jacob blesses Ephraim and Manasseh, he says, "God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk." So again, remember Jacob is pointing to the past. He's talking about his father and his

grandfather, Abraham and Isaac, that they walked, they walked before God. What does that mean that they walked before God? Well, first of all, they walked before God as those who knew God. They didn't just know things about him, they knew his love for them, they knew his goodness and his faithfulness, and they knew that because God had revealed himself to them. And so Abraham and Isaac knew his name, his will, his power, his glory, his commands, his promises, and they walked before God. That means that they lived out of what God revealed to them about himself. They lived out of the truth of God and they want the people of God trusting his promises and obeying his commands. Just think, for example, of Abraham. God came to him in Ur of the Chaldees and said, "Go to the land I will show thee." Go to that land. Didn't tell him where it was. Didn't give him a map of how to get there. Didn't describe it at all for him. Just said, "Go to that land," and Abram walked before God. What does that mean? He trusted what God was doing and he obeyed the command of God. He lived out of this knowledge of God.

Now Jacob is saying here that his sons and their generations will walk before this same God. He has that confidence that his sons and their sons would know God because God revealed himself to them, he would work this in their lives and they would walk before God in faith and in obedience. Now his confidence was not that they would do it perfectly but that they would be saved by God, they would know God. This confidence is not either that all the sons of Ephraim and Manasseh, or that all of his children and grandchildren, great grandchildren, and so on in the line of generations, that they would all know God. It's not saying that either. We know how God works in generations. He doesn't save everyone in the line of generations, only those who are his chosen, who are his elect people. They are redeemed, then, in the blood of Jesus Christ and they walk before God. But here's the confidence, then, that we have for our generations, we know how God has worked in the past. Many of us, maybe all of us, can look back in our generations as far as we can see in the generations and we see fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers who walk before God. But even if we can't, even if one of us here today would be a first generation Christian, we can still look back and see fathers who walked before God because Abraham and Isaac are our fathers too, our spiritual fathers, and the church that has gone before us, they are made-up of our spiritual fathers.

Now the point is, as we look back in those generations and see what God has done, this is our confidence for the future as well, that he will give a true knowledge of himself to our children and they will walk before God in obedience, and it's not because of us. So we must teach them. We must set a faithful example and there are consequences if we don't, but it's not based on us, it's based on the work of God, what he's done in the past he will continue to do in the future so that our children and their children will know his word, his commands, and his promises and live by them. That's the first thing that Jacob reveals about God. Secondly, "the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, The Angel which redeemed me from all evil." Okay, first, Jacob looks back at his fathers. Now he looks at his own life and sees the goodness and faithfulness of God. How comforting that must have been for him on his deathbed. He sees the goodness and faithfulness of God.

He mentions two things there. First, the Angel of the Lord. Jacob knew this Angel of the Lord. He had met him. Now Abraham did, too. There was Abraham the time when those

heavenly visitors came to him. But Jacob knew the Angel of the Lord. Four times he met the Angel of the Lord in his life. The Angel had come to him and spoke to him, and he got up close and personal with this Angel of the Lord, he wrestled, he wrestled with him. This Angel of the Lord is not simply an Angel from heaven, it's the Old Testament revelation of Christ. This is the Angel of the Lord that Jacob speaks of here, and we know that because he speaks of the Angel of the Lord, "Redeeming me from all evil." Redemption, that's not the work of an Angel, redemption is the work of God and now Jacob here speaks of that redemption and that's what he clings to. The redemption of the Angel of the Lord, that Angel that he wrestled with, that Angel appeared to him as his redeemer who redeemed him from the guilt of his sin. That's the comfort of Jacob on his deathbed. Oh, he's seen his sins probably like he never saw them before, but he knows there's redemption in the Angel of the Lord, who is to come, and there is deliverance from the power of sin in his own life. Jacob's not the same man here in Egypt at 147 years old as he was so many years before when his son Joseph was but a young man. He's not the same man. God had changed him. That was the work of the Angel of the Lord. He learned to trust more and more in God's promises.

He learned to obey God in his life, and so he knew that redeeming work of the Angel of the Lord. He testifies of that to Ephraim and Manasseh. And then along with that he speaks of God feeding him. "He fed me all my life long." The term "fed" there really is the term for shepherd. Shepherd. Jacob is confessing here, "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want." What a testimony to these grandsons. "God has led me through the whole of my life. He's taken care of me. He's led me in all the sorrows that I had in the Promised Land of Canaan when I was told that Joseph was dead." For 22 years he grieved his son and now he's in the land of Egypt, not so sure about all of that, out of the Promised Land, but he knows that the Lord is taking care of him, the Lord is his shepherd and that's his confidence for his sons and daughters and their children going forward as they're in the land of Egypt. The Lord will lead them. The Lord will take care of them. We know that for our children, to, our generations. Just as God has led us, he's been a faithful guide in all of life, he is a faithful shepherd, so he will be the faithful shepherd of our children in the line of generations, our children, those who are his children.

We read of that beautiful truth in Isaiah 40. Isaiah 40:11, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." We know he's a faithful shepherd because he sent the Good Shepherd to pay for our sins, who laid down his life for us, and he is the faithful shepherd who redeems his church and his people in the generation. He keeps them in that salvation. So that's the second thing that Jacob speaks of. He speaks of the greatness of God as redeemer and shepherd, and then, thirdly, he says, "and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." So this is Jacob speaking, but Jacob and his changed name Israel. "Let my name be named on them." Not Jacob but Israel. Jacob was his natural name pointing out his sinful nature, but Israel was his new name, the one changed by God. And therefore what he is saying here as he looks forward now based on what he's known of God in the past, is that his children and their generations will be named with his

name. They will be Israel. They will be the people of God. Not, of course, every one of them but many of them. The people of God.

What Jacob is speaking of here is that God will work in the line of generations. He will do this and he still does that today. He is a God who works in the line of generations giving to our children that spiritual name children of God, people of God, his. They're named by that name. That's the promise of God to us. We need to hear that. God is a God who works in the line of generations because God's covenant is one. There are not many covenants of God, there's only one covenant of God. And we're told in the Old Testament and New Testament that in that covenant God works in the line of generations. We read earlier Genesis 17:7, God's promise to work in the line of generations, and that's the promise in Acts 2:39 as well that we read in the baptism form, "the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." God is the God who continues to work, continues to work in families and in generations.

That's our hope, that's our comfort as parents and grandparents today: God still works in the line of generations until the coming of Jesus Christ. And we need that hope. We need that hope. We need the hope that God's plan cannot fail and does not fail, that God's plan is great and it's always accomplished, that his covenant purposes are always accomplished, and we see that in Jesus Christ. If there's nothing else, all we have to see is not only what God did in Jacob and his family, we have to see the big picture of what God did in the whole Old Testament, promise after promise of the coming of Christ. Genesis 17:7 goes back to Genesis 3:15, and then there's so many promises that follow, Christ is coming with all the pictures in the tabernacle and temple and all the rest. And what happened? Christ came. He came to save his church and to redeem his people. He came, the great wonder of the Incarnation, and he accomplished our redemption. The wonder of the cross and by the wonder of the resurrection ascension, he now sits exalted over all. We believe that. Believing and knowing that, we believe that he also is a God who through Jesus Christ will continue to work in the generations.

We need to know that. We need to know that because of our own sin. Whenever we hear about the calling we have to parent and instruct our children, the thing that it reminds us of is how far short we fall in all of this. I gave a speech this past week at Grace Church on parenting teenagers, and that was the reminder to us who were there. It was a reminder to myself. It was a reminder to the other parents and that was a comment I heard quite a bit from people afterwards, how far short we fall. It's a good thing. It's a good thing that the future spiritual lives of our children does not rest upon me or upon us. We fall so very far short. Not only that, but there's all kinds of hardship and wickedness that is found in our own homes. Sufferings and hardships that you can't imagine. Awful things that people endure, not just out in the world, but even within the church. And without the work of God, it would crush and it would destroy and there would be no hope. But there is because God, because God is faithful blessing in the line of generations and saving his people in the line of generations. We need that hope and comfort because without it there would be only despair as we train up and rear our children in this wicked world. That's the other part of it, the culture in which we live. What's going to happen to our children? I

can't tell you how many times people say that to me. "What's going to happen in the this world in which we live today?" Older folks saying, "I can't imagine training children in the age in which we live today, how difficult that must be. Yep, it is difficult, no doubt about it, but our hope is not in ourselves and that we're on top of it all, our hope is in the God who blesses in the generations. May we keep that always before our minds. May we do that as parents in this work that is so demanding, hard and filled with so much sin and we believe and know that God is with us and he will bless this instruction. Amen.

Let us pray.

Our Father in heaven, we are thankful for this hope that we have. We do live in an age of great wickedness. We see so much sin and weakness in ourselves. There are awful hardships and sufferings that we and our children face at times. And O Father, teach us to trust in thee, to have the trust of Jacob on his deathbed, that we would know thy promises and be filled with the assurance of them so that we would not fear and know that thou art faithful as thou dost work. Give us that strong faith, Father, and give us strength as well to teach the generations to come, and the confidence that thou wilt bless this. All this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Genesis 48

August 24, 2014

Baptism of Garrett Daniel Kamps, Sylvia Elizabeth Mingerink, and Claire Elizabeth Schipper

Introduction

- I. Our greatest desire for our children is that they walk before God.
- II. What is our confidence that our children will walk before God?

The Life of Joseph

13. God's Generational Blessings

I. The Confidence Expressed

- A. As Jacob lies on his deathbed, he blesses Joseph by blessing his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. We see here a generational blessing with two surprises:
 - B. Jacob blessed Joseph's sons trusting in God's plan to save in the line of generations. We know this from the NT commentary on this found in Hebrews 11:21.

II. The Theological Truth

- A. *God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk.*
- B. *The God which fed me all my life long unto this day; the Angel which redeemed me from all evil.*
- C. *And let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.*

III. The Future Hope

- A. The promise of God comes to those who walk before God. Do you walk before God?
- B. What a comfort this to us, as we have children in these last, evil days in which we live.