

Series: Popular Stories
Title: Learning from Jacob's Faith
Text: Gen 48: 1-22
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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.

Our text today is Genesis 48: 1-22. This is the passage where Jacob adopts Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, and blesses them just before his death. We are told in Hebrews 11 that Jacob did this believing and worshipping the Lord.

Hebrews 11:21: By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, *leaning* upon the top of his staff.

Proposition: The believer worships God by faith which is better than carnal sight and carnal reason.

Hebrews 11: 1: Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

The example we see today is not an example of faith in the strength of life but an example of faith when Jacob was dying. When Jacob approached the hour of death, the Lord did not withdraw his quickening power. God sustained Jacob's faith even till the hour of death. If we are in our right mind, when it comes time for us to die, faith will prove more precious than all physical senses combined. It is so now and it will be so when it comes time for us to die.

Divisions: As we read the text, I will point out our divisions.

1) First, faith believes God's promise. By faith, Jacob believed God's promise to him—**Genesis 48: 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.**

2) Faith obeys God. By faith, Jacob adopted Joseph's sons to be his own—**Genesis 48: 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.**

3) Faith believes God even when carnal sight would appear to contradict God's word. By faith Jacob believed God would make him have many children even though his beloved wife, Rachael, died.—**Genesis 48: 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.**

4) Faith in God never leaves us ashamed. By faith, Jacob saw God's promise brought to pass, even though it appeared his son, Joseph had died—**Genesis 48: 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.

5) Faith sides with God even over our dearest loved ones. By faith, Jacob sided with God even when Joseph thought he was making a mistake—**Genesis 48: 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... 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.**

6) Faith gives God all the glory for all things. By faith, Jacob blessed Joseph's sons, giving God all the glory for all his salvation—**Genesis 48: 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.**

7) Faith believes God until the end. By faith, Jacob believed God even until the time of his death.—**Genesis 48: 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.**

We have seven points so we will only touch on a few of these. The others we will look at in more depth.

I. FIRST, FAITH BELIEVES GOD'S PROMISE. BY FAITH JACOB BELIEVED GOD'S WORD, GOD'S PROMISE TO HIM—Genesis 48: 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.

This was God's everlasting covenant promise to Jacob. God made this promise when Jacob was at Luz (Bethel). The promise was made through the Ladder.

First, we see that God saves his people by covenant promise. God promised to give Jacob many sons and daughters. God's word to Jacob was (v4), "Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people."

All who are saved by God's covenant promise receive this same promise from God. God promises I will make thee fruitful. I will make of thee a multitude of people. God promises us spiritual sons and daughters. They are God's elect, children of promise, born of God.

God was declaring the gospel to Jacob the same as he did to his Father Abraham. God promised Abraham that God would make Abraham fruitful and God would multiply him and God would make Abraham a multitude of people. Did God mean that all Abraham's children would be children of God? No.

Romans 9: 7: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. 8: That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. 9: For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son.

Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. But Ishmael was not the son of promise. Ishmael was the work of Abraham's hands produced through Hagar the bondwoman. Abraham producing Ishmael is a picture of works religion. (Gal 4: 21-31) God rejected Ishmael. God told Abraham, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." God promised Abraham, "At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son." Isaac was the son of promise produced by God's power and grace.

Ishmael went on to be the father of the Arabs while Isaac was the father of the Jews. Today, the hatred between the Arab world among Muslims and the Jewish world is because Arab's believe and teach that Ishmael was the son of promise and Isaac was the rejected son. Yet, even among those who call themselves Jews, not all of Abraham's descendants are God's elect children of promise. Only those chosen and born of God by grace.

So Abraham had Isaac then Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob. Jacob was God's elect son of promise, born of God, and blessed by God's grace but Esau was not. Why?

Romans 9: 10: And not only *this*; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, *even* by our father Isaac; 11: (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) 12: It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. 13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

God taught Jacob the same truth he declares to us. Salvation is by God's electing grace, by God's redeeming grace, by God's quickening grace, according to God's promise in Christ, apart from our works.

Romans 9: 16: So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

In addition, to promising Jacob a multitude of children, God promised to give Jacob and his children the land which God had promised. God gave his word to Jacob saying, (v4) "and [I] will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession."

Canaan was a picture of heaven. God promised to give our spiritual father's heaven as their land of promise. Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God." (Heb 11: 10) In the gospel, God promises to freely give us who are his elect the same heavenly inheritance for an everlasting possession.

Now, be sure to get this. All God's promises to his people are in Christ. When God made these promises of salvation to Jacob at Bethel, the Ladder Jacob saw typified Christ. The ladder reached between God in heaven and Joseph in the earth and brought them together. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Ti 2: 5)

All God's promises to his people are in Christ for Christ's glory and our salvation. This same everlasting covenant promise that God makes to his people, God the Father first made to God the Son. (Gal 3: 16) When God makes his everlasting covenant to us, it is apart from our works, because Christ fulfilled all the works necessary so that God's promises toward his people are sure. All God's promises in Christ are yes and amen, sure and certain, so that all God's people shall be saved, whether they be God's elect, Jew or Gentile. (2 Cor

1: 20) Salvation is by God's promise in Christ, not by our works under the law, so that God's promised salvation might be sure.

Romans 4: 13: For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14: For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:...16: Therefore *it is* of faith, that it *might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law [God's elect Jews], but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; [God's elect Gentiles]

So first we see that faith believes God's promised salvation. That is what faith is. It is believing God who promised, believing God is able to do according as he has promised. Jacob believed God's promise in Christ the same as believer's do today.

II. SECONLDY, FAITH OBEYS GOD. BY FAITH JACOB ADOPTED JOSEPH'S SONS TO BE HIS OWN, EVEN AS REUBEN AND SIMEON WERE HIS—Genesis 48: 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.

In Ephraim and Manasseh we see us, God's elect born of Christ from among the Gentiles. Notice, they were born of Joseph in Egypt. They were born alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, alienated from the promises God made to Israel. (Eph 2: 11-13)

But whether Jew or Gentile, all God's elect are his children by adoption through Christ his Son. When God chose us in Christ before the world was made, God blessed us with all blessings in Christ, and God also...

Ephesians 1: 5...predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6: To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Spiritual adoption is through Christ because God sent his Son to redeem us out of bondage by his blood. Then God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts to make us behold God's free adoption so that now we glorify God our Father who sent his Son and redeemed us.

Galatians 4:3: Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: 4: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5: To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6: And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7: Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Just as Jacob adopted Ephraim and Manasseh, making them his own sons the same as Reuben and Simeon so God adopts his elect from among the Gentiles and adopts his elect from among the Jews so that by grace in Christ's finished work we are one. We are no longer Jew and Gentile but we are the sons of God our Father.

Note this because we will see it more in the second message "Your Bones Shall Flourish." All God's elect were dry bones by our death in sin. But after God quickened the dry bones through the gospel, God made them one holy people with one King. (Ezekiel 37: 1-28) Christ declared his is that King and that Shepherd who makes us one when he declared to his elect Jews that he would also call his elect from among the Gentiles and make them all one in him. He said,

John 10:16: And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.

So secondly, we see that faith obeys God. God showed Jacob something of the gospel in this—how it glorified Christ. Therefore, Jacob obeyed God and adopted Joseph's sons to be his own sons. Faith obeys God because we behold how Christ is glorified.

III. THIRDLY, FAITH BELIEVES GOD EVEN WHEN CARNAL SIGHT APPEARS TO CONTRADICT GOD'S WORD. By faith Jacob believed God would make him have many children even though his beloved wife, Rachael, died.—Genesis 48: 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.

By taking his wife, God was declaring to Jacob that God would fulfill his promise by God's grace and not by Jacob's hand. But Jacob believed God was able therefore through faith in God's ability was the substance of that promise Jacob hoped to see fulfill. The object of Jacob's faith—God and God's ability—was all the evidence Jacob needed that God would fulfill the things God promised when as yet Jacob did not see how those things would come to pass.

Hebrews 11: 1: Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2: For by it the elders obtained a good report.

God brings his child into trials like Jacob faced so that we have no ability to overcome the obstacles and God does it to prove our faith. When God proves our faith, God proves to us that it is by God's hand, by God's ability, by God's Spirit that God brings his promised salvation to pass and not by our power or our might.

Long before Jacob's trial, God promised Abraham that through his son, Isaac, God's promised Messiah would be born into this earth. Then God told Abraham to offer up Isaac. By carnal sight and carnal reason it appeared God's promise would never come to pass if Abraham killed Isaac. But Abraham believed God. He offered Isaac, fully intending to slay his son, "Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead." (Heb 11: 19) Likewise, though carnal sight appeared to contradict God's promise, Jacob believed God was able.

Believer, even when carnal sight appears to contradict God's word, believe God rather than your carnal sight. Lean not to your own understanding but believe God at all times. God is able!

IV. FOURTHLY, FAITH IN GOD NEVER LEAVES US ASHAMED. By faith, Jacob saw God's promise brought to pass, even though it appeared his son, Joseph, had died—Genesis 48: 11: And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed.

This is why we should believe God in spite of carnal sight. We will never be ashamed for simple child-like trust in God. He will bring it to pass according to his promise.

Often, due to the lusts of our flesh, we insist on having our way. Despite the warning from mother or father, despite the warning from the preacher, we lust to have our own way. We decide we will not wait on God, we will not obey God's word, we will not seek to honor Christ because by the lust of our sinful heart we want some particular thing and we want it now! One thinks, "I want this now, I want this lust fulfilled now, I'm not going to listen to God's messengers, I'm not going to heed the truth from my pastor or my father or mother or my brethren, I've got to fulfill this lust now, I've got to have my own way now!"

If you are God's child then God your Father will work everything in providence to bend you over his knee and chasten you just like a father does his child. You will suffer, you will sorrow and it will be very painful. But God will not allow his child to be ashamed for trusting God. When we insist on disobeying God due to our lusts, if God let us have our way then it would end with us surely being ashamed for trusting God. Therefore, God will make his child hear his word, repent from our vain way, turn to Christ and follow Christ.

The "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" is Christ. (Heb 12: 13) Therefore, when God's child turns from following Christ, God will chasten his child, "that *we* might be partakers of his holiness." (Heb 12: 10) By his chastening, God will make you "lay aside every weight and the sin of unbelief that "which doth so easily beset *us*", which caused you to turn out of God's Way for your own way. Our faithful Father will make you "run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto" the holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, which is "Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith." God will do it because God will not allow his child to be ashamed for believing on him. God is faithful! He will not allow his child to be ashamed for believing on him. Therefore, though it shall cause us much sorrow, God will chasten his child and keep us following Christ by faith.

Child of God, save yourself that pain. Heed the word of God delivered to you by your pastor, by your believing father and mother, and do not insist on having your way! Save yourself the suffering that is sure to follow. Believe God and follow Christ, seeking his honor above your deceitful, selfish lusts! Faith in God will never leave us ashamed for trusting him!

V. FIFTHLY, FAITH SIDES WITH GOD, EVEN OVER OUR DEAREST LOVED ONES. Manasseh was the first born son. So when Jacob blessed Ephraim as the first born it displeased Joseph. Joseph tried to move his father's right hand to the head of Manasseh—Genesis 48: 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.

You know how much Jacob loved Joseph. Jacob loved Joseph so very much. But if Jacob takes his right hand off Ephraim's head and puts it on Manasseh's head then Jacob will be disobeying God. So even though he loved Joseph so dearly, Jacob took sides with God over that son he loved so much.

Often our dearest loved ones mean well. But their word to us and the way they would have us to go is not according to God's word. If we side with our loved ones then we will dishonor Christ. If we side with our loved ones when they are in error we will be disobeying God.

"Preacher, why do we have to do it this way? This displeases me. I want to do it this other way!" Faith answers, "I know, my son, I know. We are going to side with God and do this God's way. Even though it may offend you who I love dearly, we are not going to look God in the face and say, 'No, God!' We are going to trust God and take sides with God and follow the Lord in his way."

When it comes to siding with men or siding with God, true faith sides with Christ over even our dearest loved ones. Faith may not understand God's command or understand what God will do. Faith may know it is going to temporally hurt our loved one. But true faith, trusts God and takes side with God knowing that God will bring glory to his name and it will be best for God's people, even best for my dear loved one. This is the way that faith gives Christ the honor which Christ is worthy to receive. But Christ said,

Matthew 10:37: He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. **Amen!**