

Genesis 200
God's Trustworthiness
Genesis 50:22-26
May 11, 2025
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Let me invite your attention this morning to Genesis 50:22-26, which would take us to the end of the book. Wow! The title of our message this morning is "God's Trustworthiness."

God has dealt so marvelously through this man Joseph, in the final chapters of the Book of Genesis, and now it is time for Joseph's burial. It is not quite his burial. His bones are going to be buried somewhere else. It is his death.

- I. Joseph's death (Genesis 50:22-26)
 - A. Joseph's lifespan (22)
 - 1. Place (22a)
 - 2. Years (22b)
 - B. Joseph's seed (23)
 - 1. Ephraim (23a)
 - 2. Manasseh (23b)
 - C. Joseph's charge (24-25)
 - 1. Prediction of his death (24a)
 - 2. Prediction of return to Canaan (24b)
 - 3. Oath (25)
 - D. Joseph's death (26)
 - 1. Age (26a)
 - 2. Burial (26b)

We are looking at Joseph's death this morning, the very last event in the Book of Genesis (Genesis 50:22-26). Here is a rough outline to follow: Joseph's lifespan (Genesis 50:22); Joseph's seed (Genesis 50:23); Joseph's charge (Genesis 50:24-25); then the Book of Genesis concludes with Joseph's death.

Notice, first of all, his lifespan. I am getting that from Genesis 50:22. Two things are mentioned: the place of his death, and the number of his years.

"Now Joseph stayed in Egypt, he and his father's household, and Joseph lived one hundred and ten years." (Genesis 50:22)

Apparently, the place of Joseph's death, along with his brethren, would be in Egypt. Egypt is mentioned there. As we have worked our way through the Book of Genesis, we have always drawn attention to the places of geography. The reason we keep drawing

your attention to that is we want people to understand that this was real history, these were real places, and real people.

Apparently, Joseph's family, his brothers, now that Jacob has passed on, stayed with him there in Egypt. It talks about "he and his father's household." You look at the second part of Genesis 50:22—most people skip right over this, but it is actually very interesting. It says, "*Joseph lived one hundred and ten years,*" and then if you go to the very end of the book, Genesis 50:26, it says, "*Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years.*"

He lived apparently 54 years after Jacob's death. Remember Jacob, his father died, and they traveled to Canaan to bury Jacob. Then Joseph, just like he promised, returned back to Egypt. That is where he spent those remaining 54 years—in Egypt. He lived up to the ripe old age of 110, which is mentioned twice in this paragraph. Once at the beginning (Genesis 50:22), and once at the end (Genesis 50:26).

Why the emphasis on 110 years? Arnold Fruchtenbaum writes this:

"Moreover, living up to 110 was considered a very ideal age for an Egyptian, in fact, so ideal that in 'Ancient Egyptian Texts' there are twenty-seven references to this age. For example, in the 'Inscriptions of Vizier Ptah Hotep,' who held the same position that Joseph did, states, 'What I have done on the earth is not inconsiderable. I attained 110 years of life which the king gave me, with favor foremost among the ancestors through doing right for the King up to that point of veneration.'"¹

It is interesting to me that when the Bible talks about 120, 110 years, that fits the time period. It fits an age of honor for a person in Joseph's position at death. My point is, the Bible takes place in a very credible archeological, geographical scenario that can be validated. One hundred ten years would fit the time period of that day, particularly someone in Joseph's position, very, very well.

When you read the Bible and you read about Egypt and Canaan and 120, 110 years of life, this is not VeggieTales, as I like to say. This is not Jack and the Beanstalk. This is real history that transpired, and it fits the history very well of that time period.

Then we move on to Joseph's seed. You see that there in Genesis 50:23. What became of Ephraim and Manasseh and their children?

"Joseph saw the third generation of Ephraim's sons;"

Who is Ephraim? That goes back to Genesis 41:45, which says,

¹ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Genesis*, 660-61.

"Then Pharaoh named Joseph Zaphenath-paneah; and he gave him Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, as his wife. And Joseph went forth over the land of Egypt."

It is interesting that Joseph was given a Gentile bride by Pharaoh, and that fits very well to the typology that we have been developing, as we have been moving through the Book of Genesis, between Joseph and Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ also has a Gentile bride. Do you know who that Gentile bride is? It is you. It is the primarily Gentile church of Jesus Christ. Although the Bible is clear that there are many Jews who have come to know Christ within that family as well.

From this Gentile wife, Joseph had two children. We learn this in Genesis 41:50-52. It says,

"Now before the famine came, two sons were born to Joseph, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On, bore to him. Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh, 'For,' he said, 'God has made me forget all my trouble in all my father's household.' He named the second Ephraim, 'For,' he said, 'God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.'"

No matter where Joseph went, whether he was in prison or in the palace. He was fruitful unto the Lord, which was what God has for all of us. God wants us to be fruitful for Him, no matter where we are, or to bloom where planted, so to speak. Because of that fruitfulness that God gave Joseph, that is where the name Ephraim came from.

According to Genesis 50:23, *"Joseph saw the third generation of Ephraim sons."* Joseph saw Ephraim's children up to the third generation. That was one of the blessings that God gave to Joseph in those 54 years after Jacob, his father's death.

Then the second part of Genesis 50:23 talks about the other child, the firstborn, Manasseh, and Manasseh's children. It says,

"...also the sons of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were born on Joseph's knees."

Apparently Manasseh had a son named Machir. Machir had children, and Joseph knew those children as well. This is a fulfillment of a prophecy given about Joseph back in Genesis 49:25. Jacob is giving these prophecies on his various sons who would become Israel's Twelve Tribes.

*"From the God of your father Jacob, who helps you,
And by the Almighty who blesses you
With blessings of heaven above,
Blessings of the deep that lies beneath,
Blessings of the breasts and of the womb." (Genesis 49:25)*

This progeny—children and grandchildren—up until the third generation, Joseph saw. This is a very important thing for us to remember: according to God, children are a blessing; grandchildren are a blessing. It is not that they cannot be a headache from time to time, but God put them in your life to bless you. That is pure Bible.

Psalms 127:3-5 says,

*"Behold, children are a gift of the Lord,
The fruit of the womb is a reward.
Like arrows in the hand of a warrior,
So are the children of one's youth."*

I am always sensitive to the fact that you have situations where couples cannot have children for whatever reason. I am not saying that their lives are less significant or less blessed, but this is just looking at all things being equal, without going into every single particular and specific, children are a gift from the Lord.

*"Like arrows in the hand of a warrior,
So are the children of one's youth.
How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them;
They will not be ashamed
When they speak with their enemies in the gate." (Psalm 127:4-5)*

In fact, what did God say at the beginning of human history? Genesis 1:28:

"God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves.'"

"Be fruitful and multiply." In fact, as you get into post-fall, post-flood—as we brought up in the Book of Genesis—the command to be fruitful and multiply continues. This really needs to be emphasized in our day and age as children are looked at as a nuisance, an obstacle, something that we stumble over on the way to financial prosperity. That is the way our culture very sadly looks at children.

This is not a political sermon, so do not worry, but we would not be aborting children around the clock like we do in our nation if we believe what God said. I understand that there are all these unique circumstances when you talk about abortion, but the truth of the matter is, abortion is used as a means of birth control. We do not want them around. We do not want the kids around us. What does the Bible say, by contrast? It says, "Wow! You are blessed."

I was rebuked about this a couple Sundays ago when I was in South Carolina. I saw a young woman in church, and she was traipsing her army of kids through to get them to their respective places. I said something that I probably should not have said. I said, "Wow, you really have your hands full this morning." She said to me, "Yes, but I am

blessed." I had to say to myself, "Lord, forgive me for that attitude," saying something like that, when she, a very young mother, saw herself not in the place of burden or being overwhelmed. It is okay to feel overwhelmed as a parent, because parenting can be overwhelming. But she saw herself in the place of blessing.

This is the way the Joseph story ends, with this record of his children and his grandchildren. It says here up to the third generation, and it is a blessing just like his long life, reaching to the age of 110 was a blessing in Egyptian literature.

We move from Joseph's lifespan to Joseph's seed, and then we move into Joseph's charge (Genesis 50:24-25). Here is where Joseph says, "I am going to die, just like Jacob died 54 years earlier. I am going to die as well." You see that prediction right there in Genesis 50:24.

"Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am about to die...'"

Just like Jacob, Joseph would die in Egypt. Joseph, on that basis, says, "Something is going to happen to this nation after I die. Even though I am going to die in Egypt, this nation is going to come out of Egypt one day, and she is going to go right back into the land of promise—the land of Canaan." You see Joseph making that prediction there in Genesis 50:24.

"Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land which He on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.'"

God is very, very good at something. He is good at everything, but He is really good at this as well. He is really good at seeing His people uprooted from their land and then going back into that land. In fact, if you are a Bible reader, you know that this has already happened two times and it is in the process of happening again right now, as I speak.

There was a prediction given in Genesis 15:13-14. This is something that God said to Abraham, "You are going to go into a foreign country—Egypt is the country—but 400 years later, you are going to come out of Egypt with many possessions, and you are going to go back into this land where Abram was when God gave him this prediction." That is exactly what happened.

That is what happened in the Book of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, and into the Book of Joshua. Right on time, after 400 years of bondage, they came out of Egypt and they went back into the Promised Land. Then they were in the Promised Land for about 800 years, and they got involved in all kinds of worshipping false deities, sacrificing their own children to a god named Molech, the god of prosperity.

This is a tie-in with the comments I made a little earlier about abortion—wanting to get rid of children, murder children—because they are in the path of prosperity. This is not

too dissimilar from what the Nation of Israel got involved in on the eve of the Babylonian captivity. God raised up the prophet Jeremiah, and Jeremiah said, "You are going to go out of the land again. This time you are not going to Egypt, you are going east into Babylon."

Here is the Scripture, Jeremiah 25:11 and 29:10. "You are going to be in time out (as I like to call it) for 70 years; but at the end of 70 years, you are going to come out of Babylon and you are going to come back into this land." Lo and behold, that is exactly what happened. That is what the whole books of Ezra and Nehemiah are about.

Then God, through the prophet Ezekiel says it is going to happen. Ezekiel is not the first to announce it; you will see it in the Book of Deuteronomy also. Ezekiel says, "It is going to happen a third time, and this time it is going to be completely and totally different. You are not going into one nation to the southwest and Egypt. You are not going east into Babylon this time around. You are going to be scattered into the whole world." It is called the diaspora—the dispersion. Then at exactly the right time, I am going to regather you from the four corners of the earth and bring you back into your own land."

Christendom says, "Can God do that?" I say, "Yes, because He has done it twice." If God can bring them back from Egypt after 400 years and from Babylon after 70 years, it is not too hard for God to recycle His people back into their own land after roughly 2,000 years of worldwide dispersion.

| Reliability of the "Divine Regathering" Predictions | | | |
|---|---|-------------------|--------------------|
| | RETURN | PREDICTED | FULFILLED |
| 1 st | From Egypt to Canaan | Gen. 15:13-14 | Joshua 1–12 |
| 2 nd | From Babylon to Israel | Jer. 25:11; 29:10 | Ezra & Nehemiah |
| 3 rd | From the Diaspora to Israel's restoration | Ezekiel 36:24-28 | Millennial Kingdom |

Beloved, it is happening as I speak right now. It is the miracle on the Mediterranean, as some have called it, because a nation outside of its homeland typically assimilates into the host culture and they lose their cultural distinctiveness. They lose their language. Sometimes they lose their religion. They lose their cultural distinctives, their ethnicity. That is why today we do not have Girgashites and Jebusites, even though they are mentioned in the Bible along with Israel. We do not say, "So-and-so and so-and-so moved in down the street. What a lovely Jebusite family they are," because the Jebusites and all of the -ites—the Jebusites, the Girgashites, all of them—disappeared.

Israel has been outside of its land for 2000 years, and it goes right back into the exact same homeland that it was evicted from beginning May the 14th, 1948, in the War of Independence and the Zionist movement. They are speaking Hebrew again. Their religion is the same, their culture is the same. People say, "I wish God would perform a

miracle today. If God would just perform a miracle, I would believe." Yet there is the miracle happening before our very eyes—the miracle on the Mediterranean.

The reaction of our society is a bunch of college kids under the influence of their very Marxist professors, saying, "From the river to the sea, the land of Palestine shall be free." They are not just denying a miracle, but hating it. Yet what you are seeing in the Middle East is a miracle of God. Is it the final product? No. There is going to come a conversion of Israel yet in the future leading to the Millennial Kingdom, but you are seeing it happen.

If God can do it once from Egypt, and if He can do it twice from Babylon, then God says, "Believe me when I am going to do it a third time." We do not even have to believe anymore, we just have to be able to see and read and watch cable television and commentators. This is what they are all reacting either with or against, this miracle on the Mediterranean—the three great returns by the Nation of Israel to their homeland.

Bible prophecy is such that God intended it to be interpreted literally. John Walvoord's book, "Every Prophecy of the Bible" which I frequently promote, will show you this pattern of God's predictions. When God says it, it happens. It just takes a little time for it to materialize, but a delay is not a cancellation; a postponement is not a cancellation. Just wait on God. Exactly what God says will happen.

We should believe because He has quite a track record. I believe in the coming Rapture of the church. I believe in a coming seven-year Tribulation period. I believe in a coming Second Advent. I believe in a thousand-year Kingdom. I believe in a coming Great White Throne Judgment. I believe in a coming Eternal State. "Why in the world would someone of your education believe something like that?" I have been asked sometimes. I believe it because God has made nine free throws in a row. That is why I believe it. He stood 15 feet out of the basket and He has nailed nine free throws. If He has done that, is it too much of a leap to think He can make the tenth one when we have this prophetic track record?

Maybe if the track record was not there, I would have some trouble believing some of these ideas; but I do not anymore because I see what God does. He honors His word over His name. He will not be caught with egg on His face because His word has somehow been broken. For the Scripture tells us *"it is impossible for God to lie"* (Hebrews 6:18).

This is what Joseph is predicting here. He is predicting, "I am going to die in Egypt; but you know what, you guys? This nation coming from my brothers and myself is going to eventually get back into the Promised Land, because God said that would happen." He is referring here to the Abrahamic Covenant. Genesis 15:18 says,

*"On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying,
'To your descendants I have given this land,
From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates,'"*

This is a covenant, a contract; but it is not as if they made a covenant with God. America did that. It is called the Mayflower Compact. At the beginning of our nation's history, we made a covenant with God. It is the first formal legal document in the yet to be burgeoning United States of America in 1620. I thank God that our forebears made that agreement; but you see, Israel does not have a covenant from them to God. They have a covenant from God to them. Do you see the difference?

This covenant is so sure that God put Abraham to sleep, and He alone passed through the severed animal pieces, meaning that if God does not execute exactly what He said He would do, let He be cut in half as these animals have been cut in half. That is what is happening in Genesis 15. What a piece of land that will be one day. Israel today has a small fraction of it, but it will extend all the way from modern-day Egypt to modern-day Iraq; all the way from the Nile to the Euphrates. It probably looks something like this map.



It will completely and totally materialize because that is what God said will happen. That is why Joseph, on his deathbed says, "It is going to happen. It is just with you guys, it will be return number one, but after 400 years, you are going to go right back into that land."

Now, here is what is very interesting. The revelation of the Abrahamic Covenant, which is foundational to Genesis, and the entire Bible, was given by divine revelation to Abraham. Then it was reaffirmed by divine revelation to Isaac; and then it was reaffirmed by divine revelation to Jacob; but I cannot find the place in the Bible where it was affirmed by divine revelation to Joseph. Maybe you can find that verse, but I cannot find it. As far as I can tell, Joseph did not have the divine revelation, the dreams, the visions that the others had, of God speaking about this Abrahamic Covenant to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

My question becomes: How did Joseph know it existed? He had no dream. He had no vision. Obviously the way Joseph knew it existed is that it was passed down by faith as the word of God to Joseph. I am not sure Joseph would have any real knowledge of it if the Nation of Israel was not committed to transferring truth through the generations.

In marches the biblical significance of Mother's Day. Mom and dad, grandma and grandpa, that is your job. You are to transfer truth to those children and grandchildren that you love so much. The very best thing you could give them is the truth of the Word of God. "What are youth pastors for and youth groups for?" They have a big role to play, too, but they are not center stage. Did you know that?

There are not a lot of biblical verses about how to set up a youth program. I am in favor of youth programs; but the truth of the matter is a youth program, a youth ministry, a children's ministry can only reinforce what is taking place within the home from Mom and Dad. God gave this job to parents, Mom and Dad.

It is called the Hebrew "Shema", which means "listen". That is what the Hebrew word "Shema" means. Deuteronomy 6:4-7:

"Hear, O Israel! The Lord your God, the Lord is one!... These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and you shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up."

This is a job that God gave to parents, and it cannot be outsourced. Do not do the "dispensational dodge" on me. Do not say. "That is just Deuteronomy 6, that is not Church Age stuff." Yes, it is. Read Ephesians 6:4, and you will see it very clearly. In fact, in the conquest, as the miracle happened related to the drying up of the Jordan River (Joshua 4:19-24), they were to set up this giant pile of rocks, which probably made no sense to them.

What are these rocks for? God said, "One of these days your children or your grandchildren are going to ask that question. 'Hey, Dad, what is this pile of rocks doing here?' Now is your opportunity to talk to them about what God did drying up the Jordan. By way, do not stop there. Go back a generation and talk about what God did in terms of drying up the Red Sea."

It is going to arise not so much out of a scheduled lecture as it is going to arise out of a spontaneous conversation when one of these children or grandchildren that you love so much asks that question. This is how the knowledge of Yahweh is going to be transferred through the generations.

The youth pastor can reinforce that, but this cannot be outsourced to you. This is a parental obligation. Look at how spontaneous this is:

"You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up," (Deuteronomy 6:7).

This is talking about the spontaneous, unplanned, and sermonized events of life. You are so full with the knowledge of the Word of God that you have this ability to communicate it when the circumstances of the day merit it.

My wife is just an absolute master of it. I saw her do this with my daughter when she was very young. She took an event and turned it into one of the best sermons I have ever heard. That is the type of obligation that is placed on parents. It is almost as if we are focused on everything but this today. We are focused on activity; we are focused on making more money; dual income. Am I against those things? Not necessarily, but they get out of focus really quick where you forget why God put those children, those grandchildren in your life.

You are probably the first awareness of God that they will ever hear. I remember when I was under the senior pastor when I first started in Pico Rivera, California. He said, "I want you to watch the parents of this church very carefully because there are two kinds of parents. Parent A are parents that take their kids to church and actually stay at church while their kids are there. Then there are Parents B. Those are people that use the church as a babysitting service. "Let us dump the kids off. Let us go have some coffee. Read the paper, and I will come back and pick them up when the church is over. I will just get some babysitting relief."

The pastor said, "When the kids of those respective families reach a certain age where the kids can start making their own decisions. You will notice that the kids of the parents that use the church as a babysitting service will start to not come to church anymore; but the kids of the parents that modeled and did not only preach about church attendance start to stick with the church in those foundational high school, college, and young adult years.

You see, what I am talking about here is not something that is taught. I am talking about something that is caught. It is one thing telling your kids, "We have to pray, pray, pray, pray." It is a completely different thing when a circumstance hits your household and you say to your whole family, "Let us go to the Lord with this." They are going to hear a powerful sermon on the importance of prayer by watching behavior. That is what we need to think about on Mother's Day, Father's Day, and every day, quite frankly.

Some way, somehow, Joseph had this knowledge of the Abrahamic Covenant independent of divine revelation because somebody invested in his life. I am thinking it was parental, but we are not sure of everything. Joseph was Jacob's favorite; there is no doubt in my mind that Jacob talked to Joseph all the time about this Abrahamic Covenant.

Do you talk that way to your children? Do you talk to them about the gospel, Jesus, salvation, grace, faith? Do we? Is that part of the conversation, or have we outsourced that and say, "That is what they do in church." You cannot outsource something that God told you to do. One of the tragedies of the Bible to me—there are some very terrifying things mentioned in the Bible—is Judges 2:10. The Judges generation followed the Joshua generation. It says,

"All that generation was gathered to their fathers [the Joshua generation]; and there arose another generation [the Judges generation] after them who did not know the Lord, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel."

They raised a whole generation that really knew nothing about the things of God. They did not know about the conquest and the miracle at Jericho. They did not know about the Red Sea. They did not know about the ten plagues in Exodus. They did not know anything. What happened? The Joshua generation, as good as they were, dropped the ball, that is what I think happened.

That is why the Joshua generation paves the way to the Judges generation. You have about 800 years of disobedience in the land, because the Joshua generation did a lot of wonderful things, but for whatever reason there was a blind spot to Shema. Something went wrong.

That is the big question today: what is wrong with this country? All the commentators and analysts on cable TV are talking about it all the time. I think I know what is wrong with the country. I think we have a generation today that knows absolutely nothing about the Bible. They know very little about God. They know very little about the United States Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, or of freedom itself. Ronald Reagan said that freedom does not just get passed through the bloodstream—it has to be taught.

We rail against the economy, we rail against politicians. I think what has gone wrong is that we have not followed the New Testament understanding of Shema the way we are supposed to. I think that is what is wrong. It is much easier, is it not, to vent frustration against public figures. It is a bit harder to look in the mirror where God says, "Maybe you are the problem."

This is where the whole subject of repentance, change of mind, comes into play. I think we need to change our minds about a lot of things and get back to doing things God's way, because our way does not seem to be working. Maybe it is not the White House, maybe it is the church house or your family house that is the problem. This is not popular preaching today.

There is the prediction of Joseph's death; the prediction of the return to Canaan. He had a knowledge of the Abrahamic Covenant, so he swore his brothers to an oath. Look at Genesis 50:25.

"Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, 'God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones up from here.'"

This is serious language. There is language of an oath; there is language of "surely you are going to get out of Egypt at some point—400 years—and when you do that, I want you to take my bones back to Canaan. I will be dead and gone soon, but do not let my bones stay here."

It is interesting how the Nation of Israel did that. You can actually see, like when you fly and you check your bags in and you get this little thing on your phone that gives you the progress of your bags, it is as if God is tracking these bones through the Old Testament. You can jot down Exodus 13:19. This is right at the Exodus. It says,

"Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, 'God will surely take care of you, and you will carry my bones from here with you.'"

Then you get to Joshua 24:32, and it says,

"Now they buried the bones of Joseph, which the sons of Israel brought up from Egypt, at Shechem, in the piece of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem, for one hundred pieces of money; and they became the inheritance of Joseph's sons."

They come out of Egypt, and here come Joseph's bones, 400 years later (Exodus 13:19). Then they finally get into the promised land after about 40 years of a debacle. Then they get into the Promised Land, here come the bones. The bones are buried exactly where Joseph, 400 plus years earlier, told them to bury his bones. For this very simple thing Joseph's name is permanently inscribed in the Hall of Faith.

What is the Hall of Faith? It is Hebrews 11, a record of all the people that trusted God against great odds. For this very simple thing, Joseph gets a permanent entrance, forever marked in the Hall of Faith. It is in Hebrews 11:22. It says,

"By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones."

It is interesting to me that Joseph is not recorded in the Hall of Faith for turning down sexual immorality, when he did that as a young man. That is very honorable. He is not put in the Hall of Faith because he became second-in-command of Egypt and saved Egypt from worldwide famine, and Israel for that matter. But he is inscribed for this simple instruction that he gave, "Not if, but when you all get out of here—and you will because God said so, because of the Abrahamic Covenant—take my bones and do not let them stay here in Egypt, but bury them in the land of promise."

What does that show you about God? It shows you that God honors faith. God honors people that simply believe what He said. After all, Hebrews 11:6 says, *"and without faith it is impossible to please Him."* For whatever reason, God is very pleased with people that hear His truth and believe it, and then build their lives on what they believed. To God, that is a big deal. To me, I read this as bones schmones. It just looks trivial. You read over this and it is like, "Why is he saying this? Who cares about the bones? Just go to the Neptune Society and get cremated, and you do not have to get rid of the issue entirely."

That is my Western mindset in the 21st century when I read that, but to God it is huge. Joseph did something in the eyes of man that looked so simple, but to God, it is a big deal—he believed God. He was told about the Abrahamic Covenant, and he knew that that covenant would be executed one day because God does not lie. He says, "When, not if, but when you get out of here, take my bones with you and bury them." It is a different way of looking at God and what He values versus what man values.

Then you go to Genesis 50:26 and you have Joseph's death. Joseph died at the age of 110 years, which, as we said before is actually a big deal. It is mentioned twice. It is mentioned in Egyptian literature as the age of prosperity and wealth; it was significant when people in Joseph's position died. The wonderful thing about Joseph is he died having executed his purpose.

What a joy it is to come to the end of one's life, and you die after God has achieved through you what He wanted to do. David died that way. It says in Acts 13:36:

"For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay;"

When did David die? When his purpose for living was fulfilled. Paul died that way. Paul says in his last will and testament, called 2 Timothy,

"I fought the good fight, I finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day; and not to me only, but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7).

This is where Paul, in 2 Timothy 4:6 says,

"For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come."

"But I am not leaving this earth without having fulfilled the race, the course, the purpose to which God called me."

What a privilege to leave this earth like that. I have given you this quote many times, but the truth of the matter is, most people in this world do not leave the earth this way. They

leave the earth with regrets. Mark Twain wrote about his experiences in life as he neared death. He said,

"A myriad of men are born; they labor and sweat and struggle for bread; they squabble and scold and fight; they scramble like little, mean for little mean advantages over each other. Age creeps upon them and infirmities follow; shames and humiliations bring down their prides and their vanities. Those they love are taken from them, and the joy of life is turned to aching grief. The burden of pain, care, and misery grows heavier year by year. At length ambition is dead, pride is dead, vanity is dead; longing for release is in their place. It comes at last—the only un-poisoned gift earth ever had for them—and they vanish from a world where they were of no consequence; where they achieved nothing, where they were a mistake and a failure and a foolishness; where they left no sign that they have existed—a world that will lament them for a day and forget them forever."²

How different that is from Paul—"I finished the course. I completed the race"—and David, whose purpose was fulfilled.

Look at what God did through the life of Joseph? Now it is time for Joseph to go home. I think that is why the psalmist said in Psalm 90,

*"Teach us to number our days,
That we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12).*

Lord, I do not want to spend my life rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic, involved in Trivial Pursuit. I want my life to mean something beyond myself. I want to be pressed into eternal things, because I do not want to leave here with a bunch of regrets of what could have been. May the Lord help us to understand this, because you do not have a lot of time to make proper decisions.

I think one of the greatest deceptions that we are under is that we have a lot of time. We will talk to the people that are at death's door, who thought they had a lot of time, too. In fact, most of them cannot believe where they are now age-wise. My mother just turned 89 years old. She says to me over and over again, "I cannot believe I am 89 years old." She says to me, "You are going to be really shocked when you hit 89." I say, "Well, I think the Rapture might come before that." That is my out.

Death. Who wants to talk about death? Let us have a sermon series at Sugar Land Bible Church on death. That will pack the place out, right? But death is something we have to think about. In fact, Solomon says it is the wise man that stays in a house of mourning and death compared to somebody at a wedding feast (Ecclesiastes 7:2).

² Mark Twain, *Autobiography*, 2:37.

There is something about death that really wises you up. Our family has really gone through it in recent times. The death of my father-in-law and my own father last year. Yesterday we had a memorial service here at Sugar Land Bible Church, and the week before that, we had a memorial service. I do not know what it is about death, but I have been thinking a lot about death lately, which is not a bad thing. Solomon says that is what makes you wise, because death all around us makes us aware how temporal life is. If I figure that out, I will number my days accordingly.

What does Solomon say, in the Book of Ecclesiastes? He says,

"Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth" (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

You would think that as people get older, their hearts would get softer to spiritual things. That is not how it works. We are living in a fallen world. Bad things are happening to good people constantly. What happens to the heart that does not know Jesus? It gets harder and harder and harder. Solomon says, "Remember your Creator when you are young, before this world runs its course on you." Here is a heart of wisdom. Number your days.

You know the verses, Genesis 2:16-17. God says, "...*the day you eat from [the tree of knowledge] you will surely die.*" "*For you are dust, and to dust you shall return*" (Genesis 3:19). First Corinthians 15:22: "...*all die.*" "*Death spread to all men*" (Romans 5:12). Romans 6:23: "...*the wages of sin is death.*" You know Hebrews 9:27: "...*inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.*"

Yet, what a wonderful thing it is to understand that we are moving into a world where there will be no death. Did you know that? Read the last two chapters of the Bible and you will see it.

"and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

That is the world that we are moving into if you know Jesus personally. If you do not know Jesus personally, you are stuck with the nasty now and now—perpetual death all around us. People think that that is how this world will continue. I am here to tell you it will not always continue that way.

There was a time in which death did not exist (Genesis 1-2). There is going to be a time in which it will not exist (Revelation 21-22). Everything else in between is abnormal, something went wrong. To my knowledge, that is unique to the Christian worldview, because you talk to the reincarnationist and the evolutionist and the rest of them, they think the process that we are in is going to continue on.

In fact, they call death progress. That is taught to little kids around the clock in the public school system, and then we wonder why they are miserable, cutting themselves, killing themselves. We give them a worldview that has no hope in it. But Jesus comes along and He says, "There is hope. I fixed something 2,000 years ago. When all is said and done, everything's going to be restored to what it was originally."

Then Joseph is buried (Genesis 50:26). Joseph died at the age of 110 years, and he was embalmed, placed in a coffin in Egypt; embalmed in a coffin so that his bones could be preserved. Then taken, roughly 400 years later, from Egypt to Canaan. So ends the Book of Genesis, at least here at Sugar Land Bible Church.

I do not know what the Book of Genesis did for you. It did wonders for me. Joseph's lifespan; Joseph's seed; Joseph's charge; and Joseph's death.

If faith pleases God so much as with the case of Joseph's bones, where he simply believed what God said, then that is what God requires for the gospel. Believe what He said in the proclamation of Christ's death, burial, resurrection, and ascension for the sins of the whole world, including yours, including mine. Believe what He said by putting your personal faith and trust in Him. I invite men and women to do that even as I am speaking.